

**Southern Minnesota Education Consortium #6083**  
**APRIL 2022 CABINET MEETING MINUTES**  
TUESDAY, APRIL 19, 2022, at 9:00AM  
SMEC ED CENTER, 21697 HWY 56 AUSTIN, MN 55912

The regular meeting of the Cabinet of Southern Minnesota Education Consortium #6083 was called to order at 9:04AM by Dan Armagost on Tuesday, April 19, 2022. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance followed by roll call and determination of quorum.

Cabinet members in attendance in person were Scott Hall (SL). Members that attended virtually via Zoom were Brian Shanks (AC/GE), Jamie Goebel (LY) and Jennifer Backer-Johnson (LO). Jim Hecimovich (KSL) and Paul Besel (SL) were absent. Administration and staff in attendance in person were Executive Director Dan Armagost, Director Denise Kennedy, Business Manager John-Mark Dundas, and Administrative Assistant Ashley Rye; also present virtually via Zoom was Jeff Tietje (GE Principal).

**Meeting Agenda**

No additions or changes to the meeting agenda. Backer-Johnson motioned to approve the meeting agenda, seconded by Goebel. All were in favor by roll call, motion carried.

**Public Recognition**

Nothing to report.

**Approval of the Consent Agenda**

Approval items on the April consent agenda consisted of the March 2022 regular meeting minutes, the March 2022 special meeting minutes, the Treasurer's/Financial report, the NEXT Step bank account activity, the resignations of Joshua Benson, Taylor Wiste, Brennan Magnuson, and Camille Osmonson effective at the end of the 2021-2022 school year, the 2022-2023 contract for Jenna Clark (Qualified Mental Health Professional), the 2021-2022 paraprofessional contracts for Tiffany Raygor, Lyndsey Egge, and Danielle Davis, and the Augsburg University partnership agreement.

Goebel motioned to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Hall. All were in favor by roll call, motion carried.

**Committee Reports**

- A. *Admin Council – Scott Hall:* Met last week. Highlights included the coordination of handler requirements for service animals, all plan to take the MSBA 535 policy back to their boards to revise the policy as it fits to their district. Plans for the summer retreat are to wait to meet as an Admin Council until August to welcome new administrators and to reflect on the SMEC strategic plan. Principals plan on meeting in May to discuss staff development opportunities for the next school year and a follow-up will be provided at the Admin Council meeting in August.
- B. *Negotiations – Dan Armagost & Denise Kennedy (Staff), Paul Besel & Scott Hall (Admin):* Certified and non-certified contracts have been approved. Nothing additional to report.
- C. *Transportation – Jamie Goebel & Brian Shanks:* Four new vans have been ordered, SMEC will not be able to start assisting districts with transportation until these vans arrive, which is anticipated to be around October. The transportation committee has yet to meet but is waiting until Building and Grounds has moved forward with garage plans. Kennedy noted that SMEC jumping in to help with transportation mid-year will be helpful because of how additional students impact routes after school starts. Shanks shared that Glenville-Emmons is in negotiations with a company to sell out and contract their routes and busses. Armagost inquired about Alden-Conger. Shanks said there will be no change in Alden. Kennedy inquired if G-E will be keeping their vans. Shanks noted that vans will be provided by the contracted company. The contract was just presented to the board last night for review. Armagost noted that once SMEC vans come in, Glenville-Emmons will be the first to be

reviewed for help with level III transportation.

- D. *Building and Grounds – Paul Besel & Brian Shanks*: Shanks shared that the committee was set to meet last month, which had to be postponed due to scheduling conflicts. The committee rescheduled the meeting with the contractor to Thursday 4/21. The contractor will survey the site and discuss SMEC's needs before providing a quote. Shanks will connect with the contractor to confirm Thursday's meeting. The committee will also discuss the Next Step building at the meeting on Thursday.
- E. *Policies and Procedures – Paul Besel & Jen Backer-Johnson*: Backer-Johnson shared that the committee met a couple weeks ago to put process in place for reviewing and updating policies. The next committee meeting is tentatively planned for June. Prior to this meeting, Armagost and Rye plan to review and revise policies in the 500 series to bring back to the committee.
- F. *Executive Director Evaluation – Jen Backer-Johnson*: The focus of evaluating the executive director will be based on the MSBA processes. Baker-Johnson shared that although the Board and Cabinet aren't Armagost's supervisors, but it will be a good reflection and process of moving forward with goal setting. Armagost shared that SMEC Board Chair and evaluation committee member Michelle Nelsen and Armagost will be starting the goal-setting process for the 2022-2023 school year.

### **New Business**

*\* indicates action items*

- A. *Additional FTE for DAPE\**: Armagost shared the rationale for requesting an additional 1.0FTE for DAPE. Armagost noted that this suggestion arose from staff concerns discussed during contract negotiations. SMEC has struggled to find teacher coverage for prep time and lunches. Armagost noted that adding PE and DAPE classes is a way to build preps and lunches into teacher schedules. An additional FTE would expand DAPE services for level III and IV programming, and then SMEC would also be able sell DAPE services to member districts to help fulfill their DAPE needs.

Shanks noted that Alden-Conger PE/DAPE teacher Cody Eckhardt is resigning at the end of the school year, so this would significantly help with the DAPE needs. Kennedy shared that review of the current PE and DAPE teachers' schedules is one reason why this additional FTE is so important; these individuals need lunches and prep time built into their schedules as well. Armagost clarified that the DAPE teacher will be primarily in level III programs for SMEC, but that if districts have PE teachers without DAPE licensure they can purchase DAPE teacher time from SMEC as the need arises for level 1 and 2 students.

Shanks motioned to approve the additional FTE for DAPE, seconded by Hall. All were in favor by roll call, motion carried.

- B. *New ECSE Paraprofessional Position\**: Armagost justified the need for an additional 1.0FTE for an ECSE paraprofessional. SMEC plans to move a program from a .5 to a 1.0, requiring additional staff. SMEC would like to post and hire this year to start training the staff for next year.

Goebel motioned to approve a 1.0FTE ECSE Paraprofessional position, seconded by Shanks. All were in favor by roll call, motion carried.

### **Old Business**

*\* indicates action items*

- A. *Next Step Building Update*: Armagost shared that a tour has been taken in the old floral shop in Alden. The business owner may continue to run her flower shop part-time, which would be an opportunity for the Next Step students to help with floral arrangements and running a business. Armagost noted that another building owned by Mayo Clinic is also being considered. Mayo Clinic prefers to sell the building over leasing. Armagost

shared the price of the lease in comparison to the price of purchasing the other building. Owners of the floral shop prefer to lease for a maximum of two years with intent to sell the property. SMEC inquired about how much they want to sell the property for, which would include the building and a small part of the lot next door. Armagost asked Shanks to confirm this if this information is correct. Shanks stated uncertainty as he is only aware of the parking lot aside from the building.

Shanks inquired if Armagost toured the Mayo Clinic building, Armagost confirmed that he toured the building about two weeks ago. Shanks asked if Armagost had noticed any water damage to that building. Armagost noted that the individual who gave the tour had minimal information, but Armagost could see that there was water damage by the tiles and warping on the ceiling. Armagost noted that if SMEC were to purchase that building, there would be some work to do. The building is also set up for office space, which would be ideal for transient staff, but it is not conducive for the Next Step program, meaning more work would need to be done to make it the ideal space to host Next Step.

Armagost noted that his first choice would be the floral shop as the buildings are updated and the space is more ideal and requires minimal work. Armagost presented financing options to the Cabinet. SMEC could lease the building, but Armagost stated favor for purchasing the building and selling in the future. Armagost stated that it is not ideal to only lease a property for two years. Shanks stated mixed feelings on purchasing the property as property in Alden isn't a hot commodity. Shanks stated the risk involved in purchasing the property, noting that he suspects the owners have been looking to sell the building for some time with minimal luck on finding businesses that want to move to Alden. Shanks recommended leasing the building of a couple of years to see if the program grows enough to justify purchase.

Hall inquired if lease-to-own would be an option. Armagost said the owner did not seem to be against the option of lease-to-own, but the problem is that Armagost and Dundas need to look at how that impacts SMEC funding sources. Federal dollars are restricted on how they can be used to pay for space. Special education dollars may not allow for lease-to-own options, which may require digging into general education revenue to go the lease-to-own route. Armagost inquired if lease-to-own is something the Cabinet would like to be investigated further. Shanks asked if SMEC has the funds to purchase the property. Armagost noted this is yet to-be-determined depending on what the cost of building the garage is; SMEC needs both and the need is now. Armagost stated that if he had to make a choice for purchasing, the garage would be a first choice and then SMEC still must, at least, lease a building to host the Next Step program next year. Shanks noted that lease-to-own is also the most favorable option in his opinion and recommended researching this more.

Armagost and Dundas will work with the landowner and Attorney Vogt Sween, who assisted with purchasing the Ed Center property to see what a lease-to-own contract would look like. Armagost will also consult with MDE about the funding and how funding will impact possibility of a lease-to-own agreement.

- B. *SMEC Strategic Planning Update*: May 25<sup>th</sup> is the scheduled date for the listening sessions; Armagost requested that the Cabinet join for these. Armagost shared that a time would also be scheduled for the Board to do this. Armagost inquired what time would work best for the Cabinet to participate that day; all showed favor for the afternoon times of 1:00 PM or 2:00 PM. Armagost will work with Gilman to establish a time to bring back to the Cabinet. Armagost noted that Gilman has minimal flexibility in her scheduled dates. Armagost will share the dates and encourages participation of everyone but understands that everyone has other commitments in the summer months. The plan is to have strategic planning done by August. Armagost will share the working session schedule with the Cabinet once the schedule is finalized; participants can attend in June. Kennedy inquired if there is homework and to-dos in between meeting sessions. Goebel shared that this has been the experience with the current strategic planning sessions in Lyle. Goebel recommended SMEC complete these tasks as they will be beneficial in the long run.

## **Administrative Reports**

### **A. Business Management – John-Mark Dundas**

- Working on cleaning up open accounts payable and accounts receivable invoices and making sure everything is up to date.
- Business managers confirmed that funding for SMEC Academy targeted services does not come to SMEC, it goes to the member districts. Dundas is going to continue to follow up on how to bill this out.
- Working on cleaning up account codes and ensuring funding sources are being used appropriately
- Bank account balance as of 03/31/2022: \$1,355,684.55, this is based on where Dundas has reconciled to for cash in Smart Finance.
- Billings that were missed in December have been sent out; anything in circulation right now is accurate.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter billings will be sent out in Mid-June
- Next Business Managers meeting: Thursday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022, at 10:00AM.

### **B. Director Denise Kennedy**

- *MSBA Policy 535: Service Animals in Schools* – documents have been sent out to all admin so it can be revised by district.
- *LETRS Graduate Credits* – many are attending LETRS training, a few are applying to receive these graduate credits. Denise advised all to be on the lookout for lane change requests for this.
- *SMEC Academy* – registration is closed, the committee is working on creating rosters and getting materials orders completed. The process has been much smoother since there is more time to plan.

### **C. Executive Director Dan Armagost**

Additional Department Lead Position – Armagost shared that department lead positions were approved last year, which are teachers on special assignment that receive an additional stipend. Armagost is looking to bring on an additional department lead to oversee the EBD programs. Sheena Gasner is currently the department lead of the EBD and mental health programs. SMEC needs Gasner to be able to focus on the mental health programs with the increasing student need for mental health services. Armagost proposes having one of the EBD teachers to fulfill the department lead need for EBD programs, having this teacher in the classroom for half a day, and then back filling the teaching position for the other 0.5 time. The EBD program department lead would be in a classroom and then travel to mentor the other program staff, especially those new to the field, programs, and SMEC. A contract for the additional department lead will be presented with the other department lead contracts for annual approval.

Armagost also shared that the focus next year will be team-teaching models in most programs, with hopes this helps eliminate substitute shortage issues. Although there are many tight-knit teams this year, Armagost hopes this presents the opportunity for veteran teachers to mentor new teachers and staff. SMEC has not implemented or finalized these changes yet, but discussions will begin around May or June. Armagost and Kennedy will continue to update the Cabinet as everything is finalized.

## **Cabinet Comments**

No additional comments.

The next regular Cabinet meeting will be Tuesday, May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2022, at 9:00AM at the SMEC Ed Center. The Cabinet listening session for SMEC strategic planning will be May 25<sup>th</sup>, time TBD.

Motion to adjourn by Hall, seconded by Backer-Johnson all were in favor by roll call, motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 9:44AM.

*Respectfully submitted,*

Ashley Rye

SMEC Administrative Assistant