

OFFICIAL REGULAR CABINET MEETING MINUTES
Southern Minnesota Education Consortium #6083
Tuesday, January 17, 2023 at 9:00AM
SMEC Ed Center, 21697 State 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, January 17, 2023. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance followed by roll call and determination of quorum.

Attended in person:

- Executive Director Dan Armagost
- Director of Special Education Denise Kennedy
- SMEC Board Secretary Kylea Draayer
- SMEC Business Manager John-Mark Dundas
- Scott Hall (Southland)

Attended via Zoom:

- Brian Shanks (Alden-Conger/Glenville-Emmons)
- Paul Besel (Grand Meadow)
- Scott Klavetter (Kingsland)
- Jamie Goebel (Lyle)

Absent – Jennifer Backer-Johnson

Meeting Agenda

Dan Armagost noted that Go Guardian was added as 9G under new business. There were no other additions to the agenda from cabinet members. Jamie Goebel made a motion to approve the agenda, it was seconded by Scott Hall, all were in favor, motion carried.

Approval of the Consent Agenda

Approval items on the January consent agenda include:

Minutes from December 2022 regular meeting

Treasurer's Report/Financial Report

NEXT Step Bank Account activity

Resignation – Alison Munkholm (Level IV EBD Teacher)

Resignation – Kacie Sayles (Level III Paraprofessional)

Approval of Hire – Bill Carroll (Driver)

Approval of Hire – Stephanie Holland (HR/BO Assistant)

Approval of Hire – Chandra Gilles (Level III Paraprofessional)

Approval of Hire – Amy Sund (ALC Paraprofessional)

Approval of Hire – Anna Lane (ELL Teacher for 23-24)

Approval of Lane Change – Jennifer Hanna (BA Step 1 – MA Step 1)

Paul Besel motioned to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Jamie Goebel, all were in favor, motion carried.

Committee and Director Reports

Admin Council – Scott Hall: Summary of discussions held at the Admin Council meeting: Houston District, including Dan Armagost and Denise Kennedy during hiring process for Special Education teachers within districts. Next meeting is February 9th.

Building and Grounds – Dan Armagost: Buildings and Grounds Committee meeting has been rescheduled to Jan 24, 2023.

Policies and Procedures – Besel & Backer-Johnson: Meeting has yet to be scheduled. Moving meetings to every other month now that mandatory policies have been completed. Paul Besel suggested starting at the 100 series and moving up.

Transportation – Goebel & Shanks: Armagost shared that we have a third driver hired. Meeting to be scheduled.

Administration Negotiations – Besel & Hall: Nothing new. Begins in March.

Staff Negotiations – Armagost & Kennedy: Will begin Fall/Winter of 2023. Teachers are opposite of SMEC member districts.

Executive Director Evaluation – Backer-Johnson: Jennifer Backer-Johnson is not at this meeting. Process is continuing with Michelle Nelsen, board chair. No further update.

Business Manager – John-Mark Dundas: W2s were issued, 96 current, 33 resignations last year. PTO usage and staff turnover. Open positions listed. Working on a revised budget – hoping to have ready for March Board Meeting. Single audit this year, going out for bids. Mr. Dundas wants at least 3 bids. He will send emails to CPA firms after board meeting. “Grow Your Own” Grant, have spent approximately \$30,00 sending staff back to school, these are not federal special education funds. Have spent approximately \$11,600 of federal special education funds. Not signing any new contracts, could lead to a teaching shortage.

Director of Special Education – Denise Kennedy: Working on staffing projections, will meet with administrators in districts following CST meetings throughout February. Summer Programming plans are up and running with dates set.

Executive Director – Dan Armagost: memo was sent with major updates, “Grow Your Own” is an agenda item today.

Old Business

Houston School District – no major change to progress at this time. Dan Armagost is in communication with Mary Morem to further discuss what Houston joining the SMEC districts would look like for both sides. Armagost hopes to bring further details to the next cabinet meeting.

SMEC Evaluation Team – Continued growth in the co-op leads to this position being valuable to district teachers and the SMEC Due Process Coordinator. SMEC Governing Board requested job descriptions for these positions: Evaluation Facilitator (1.0 FTE) and Assistant Evaluation Facilitator (part time as needed). Sample contract presented, but data is still being collected to ascertain what rates are appropriate for this position. Klavetter requested clarification of the Evaluation Facilitator and Armagost confirmed that the position would be a salaried teacher position. Armagost wants to offer a stipend per evaluation completed to focus on rewarding efficiency. Tracking the number of hours to do an evaluation, it can range from 10-20 hours depending on areas needing evaluation. Over 100 evaluations per year are completed in the co-op. Starting with a part-time position and moving towards full-time to meet the needs of the co-op. Armagost will have this job posting approval as an action item at the next meeting. Billing of the cost of this position back to districts will be based upon use. Besel asked for clarification about whether this position would be allowable for reimbursement for the state – Armagost confirmed that it would be. Armagost stated that this position needs to be “rolled out slow” to make sure it is useful to the districts and is functioning appropriately to reduce the paperwork load on teachers and Due Process coordinator. Besel requested that this position be added to the Business Manager Meeting Agenda so proper attention can be paid to the financial aspects of this potential position.

ELL Curriculum – Benchmark ordered and delivered. 3-year online contract. Have a second teacher hired.

ELL Newcomers – Lyle District will host in the EBD room. Goebel confirmed this room for ELL use. Goebel also requested clarification on transportation plans for this program.

ELL Paraprofessional – Armagost requested to post and hire a second ELL Paraprofessional. Goebel motioned for approval and Hall seconded. All in favor, motion carried.

New Business

SMEC Drivers Position (add 3rd for 23-24 SY) - Armagost requested approval of a 3rd SMEC driver contract, to be hired for the 23-24 school year. Shanks motioned to approve; Goebel seconded. All in favor, motion carried. Armagost noted that if any candidate wanted to start yet this year, he would bring it back to the Cabinet for approval.

ICS Facilities Maintenance – Dundas presented documentation of the current state of the building and the expected upkeep. Dundas and Armagost noted that this version is a draft and incomplete version – final documents will be presented to the Building and Grounds Committee when available. Top priorities are the well, security cameras, and general upkeep in the Level IV side of the building.

Grow Your Own Grant \$500,000 – SMEC submitted the GYO grant with Region 10. Armagost noted that federal dollars can be used to help those already licensed to gain additional certification. We cannot send our paras or general education teachers back to school for special education certification with these monies. SMEC will have a gap in staffing due to this. Armagost has met with Rep. Bennett and her bill writer to assist our districts with the GYO bill in the future. They are working on a separate bill with Legislators to send teachers back for Special Education.

Addition of Student Custodial Assistant (ALC) - Armagost requested the approval of a student helper outside of school hours. Contract would be on the tiered system of summer help as previously discussed. Besel motioned to approve; Goebel seconded. All in favor, motion carried.

Office Space Lease – Armagost presented the lease for a centrally located office space, off site. This would be in a professional building in Austin. This office space is to be used by MARSS coordinator and Third-Party Billing staff to allow for quieter space to maintain focus and efficiency. This space also has a conference room available for SMEC use on an as needed, first come first serve basis. Armagost noted that space for itinerant staff as well as growing administrative team is short. This expense would be paid by SMEC's federal dollars, and not billed back to member districts. This is a 2-year lease, wherein other arrangements for staff on SMEC sites would be investigated. Hall motioned to approve. Armagost called for a second. Goebel and Besel requested more discussion. Hall rescinded his motion to further the discussion. Armagost discussed the type and size of the building, and available space in that building. He noted that he is not in favor of long-term off-site locations. Besel noted that level 3 programs are hosted in each district at no cost to SMEC. He requested time for administrators to review their space within districts to see if there was any room available. Shanks echoed Besel's recommendation for looking within the district. Armagost stated that space for itinerant staff such as OT, Speech, and PT are already getting pushed out of previously established spaces to make room for students. Armagost requested the cabinet to make a recommendation for the next step. Kennedy requested clarification on the related service providers space vs administrative office space. Klavetter noted the difference between a space that would be used strictly for a confidential adult workspace vs a space used by staff and students for related services. Besel also questioned why the need for office space vs working from home. Armagost noted that the home model offers its own distractions, and it is not helpful to still have the two staff separated. He also noted that the two staff requested a dedicated workspace to be most efficient. Besel called attention to the cost of the lease space and the additional cost of other services related to this office space. Besel additionally made a motion to table this discussion until the following week after the administrators have been able to review space within their districts. Shanks seconded the motion to table. Armagost noted the timeliness of responding to the building owner, and a special cabinet meeting was scheduled for 10am on Wednesday 1/25/23.

Addition of ALC Evening Session – Armagost noted that with the rapid growth of the ALC population, the consideration of an evening session could be opened. He noted there would be more staff required to handle the addition of this session. Meals would be a challenge as SMEC's meals are brought in from Southland. Possibility of this happening next year. Armagost presented that this programming would require 1 teacher and 2 paras for this addition.

Go Guardian – Armagost brought to the cabinet the purchase by SMEC of this software but it has yet to be used. SMEC only has a handful of usable devices with this program. Are the member districts interested in this software? Goebel has reached out to Jeff Oian to establish this program in Lyle District. Besel and Klavetter noted that their districts do not have Chromebooks to use with this software and were not interested in pursuing this software in Grand Meadow or

Kingsland. Kennedy noted that Glenville has been using something similar, but none were aware of what that might be, possibly related to Apple products. Goebel did not want to split the 50 current licenses with only SMEC. He requested that this topic be tabled until the special meeting on the 25th. Armagost confirmed that Oian would be in attendance to further explain the software, its requirements, and its uses.

Other Discussion Items and Cabinet Comments

Besel requested the date of the organizational board meeting – Dundas confirmed it is on 1/25/23 at 6:30pm.

Goebel asked Kennedy about transportation for Credit Recovery students being dismissed at 11:30am instead of 1pm as had been discussed. Drivers are being instructed by teachers to pick up at the earlier time. Kennedy confirmed that drivers should only be taking direction from their transportation supervisors. Kennedy also mentioned that dates and times of summer programming have been lined up carefully and thoughtfully to ease the burden of transportation and scheduling.

Motion to adjourn by Hall, seconded by Shanks. All in favor, motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:43AM.

Next regular meeting is February 21, 2023, at 9am at the SMEC Ed Center building.

Respectfully submitted,

Kylea Draayer, Administrative Assistant