

**Cooperative School Services Special Education Executive Board Minutes
November 14, 2023**

The Executive Board met on this date to review and discuss matters pertaining to special education programming. In attendance were Dr. Zupin, Mr. Sichting, Mr. Spanga, Mr. Middleton, Mr. Eccles, Mr. Craig, Mr. Hall, Mr. Culp, Dr. Rowe, Mrs. Dobson, and Mrs. Claton. Mr. Craig conducted the meeting. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved through a motion by Mr. Eccles and a second by Mr. Sichting. The vote was unanimous for approval.

Reports: Mrs. Claton provided the financial reports for October 2023 and October 2022. Dr. Rowe inquired about accounts 7911 and 7912. Mrs. Claton explained those accounts are the American Rescue Plan (APR) funds and the last day for reimbursement for those funds is December 15, 2023. Mr. Eccles made a motion to approve the financial report and Mr. Hall provided a second. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

PCG October Reimbursement reports were shared. Mr. Craig explained how the previous provider would provide more detailed reports that he could compare to the previous year. Those reports were broken down by service provider names. Mr. Craig asked how others compare funds. Dr. Rowe explained how to go through the FSSA site (state portal) to view where the funds come from. Mr. Sichting explained how when the check comes in some funds are state and some are federal. Mrs. Dobson explained a breakdown in reimbursement when Speech-Language Pathologists do not complete the SODA in a timely manner and then do not log services for reimbursement for several months. We are unable to receive reimbursement without all processes followed in a timely manner (finalized IEP, Medicaid consent signed by parent and uploaded into Indiana IEP, SODA completed by SLP and sent to CSS, SODA signed by school psychologist which becomes the referral date entered in Indiana IEP). When a service provider does not log services for several months, there is no way to know if there are missing pieces to be able to collect for reimbursement. In these circumstances, the superintendents would like an e-mail sent to them and the SLP. If the circumstance is not a speech-only student, email DSE and the coordinator.

The Preschool reports were reviewed. South Newton Preschool is experiencing a high number of students with high needs. The board reviewed several options which include opening a new site in North Newton at Lincoln Elementary, opening a new site at Tri-County, or shifting Tri-County students to Frontier. Mr. Middleton and Mr. Culp were interested in looking into the possibility of a new developmental preschool site within their school corporations. Concerns for opening a new location would be staffing and space. Currently, Benton Community does not have a licensed teacher. Mr. Sichting inquired about the requirements to teach in a developmental preschool. Mrs. Claton explained Rules 2002 and REAP 3 Mild or Intense Intervention would typically cover Pre-K depending on the university attended. ASSET information was provided which will begin again in July/August 2024. ASSET is an approved alternative licensure program through the Indiana Department of Education and Indiana State Board of Education. Successful completion of the ASSET program, coupled with passing the appropriate licensing exams, will enable educators to add either the Mild or/and Intense Interventions endorsement to their existing license. Dr. Rowe explained how there are not a lot of early childhood centers across the Cooperative. Dr. Rowe explained if West Central's numbers were higher, they would be interested in looking into the possibility of a preschool program but currently West Central has three students who attend Rensselaer Central's developmental preschool. Dr. Rowe asked Dr. Zupin about North Judson's preschool programs. Dr. Zupin explained how an outside entity rented space and were On My Way Pre-K and Paths to Quality programs. The board discussed eliminating peer models in programs that are reaching capacity. Dr. Rowe explained how peer models are essential to the developmental preschool program since they model appropriate language and social skills. The board will review the developmental preschool peer model requirements at the next board meeting.

The Manifestation Determination and Suspension reports were reviewed. The board discussed the follow-up emails informing them of the suspensions have been helpful.

Attendance of staff members who attended the Legal Sessions with Elizabeth Barnes from August 2021- August 2023 was provided to each superintendent.

Business: Mrs. Claton shared staffing updates. Courtney Wilcox resigned, and McKenna Boerner was hired as the new Job Coach. South Newton's virtual school psychologist resigned. The position was posted, and contract agencies were the only applicants. An offer was made to a contract agency applicant but was then retracted by the contract agency due to the applicant already having a full-time position with a different contract agency. Other interviews were held but the CSS team did not feel applicants were a good fit. Mrs. Claton reached out to Mr. Craig to discuss paying Mrs. Messman extra hours to cover South Newton's school psychologist duties. Mr. Craig explained how he does not like Mrs. Messman having to work all the extra hours but when there are no other options, the work has to be completed within instructional day timelines. The board agreed to pay Mrs. Messman to complete evaluations at South Newton.

Mrs. Claton and Mrs. Dobson met with Data Specialists from FR, KV, RC, SN, TC, and WC. Mrs. Claton and Mrs. Dobson also met with Treasures from BC, FR, KV, NN, NW, RC, SN, TC, and WC. Mrs. Claton shared the current Grant Cycle and discussed proportionate share. Mrs. Claton explained that the treasures received this information last week and she would be sending out a follow-up email with FY 2023 totals. The board discussed meeting the proportionate share amounts has been a struggle. Mr. Craig shared it was a finding in Rensselaer's audit, encumbering funds for non-public students and then not spending it on non-public students. Mrs. Claton explained it is better to leave the funds than to encumber them, get a penalty, and then have to pay the funds back. The board discussed checks and balances with time and effort logs to track if the corporation will meet the proportionate share amount. Mrs. Claton explained during the last three months of the 27-month grant cycle, with proper documentation, the unspent proportionate share funds could be waived back to public funds through the waiver process if approved.

The transfer bill flat fee was reviewed by the board. In the 2016-2017 school year, the overhead cost per student was \$200.00. In the 2018-2019 school year, the overhead cost per student increased to \$300.00. The rate has not increased since 2018-2019. There did not appear to be a formula for the calculation of the overhead cost. According to the Joint Service Agreement on page 8, the flat fee/overhead costs are explained as a fixed cost. The board discussed increasing the rate due to inflation but would like guidance from other Cooperatives on a formula to determine an increase. Mrs. Claton will reach out to other Cooperatives and report back at the next board meeting. Dr. Zupin suggested that this should be addressed at least bi-annually.

The Joint Service Agreement was reviewed. The last time it was reviewed was in 2011. Mrs. Claton shared the Joint Service Agreement with Elizabeth Barnes, the Cooperative School Services attorney from Church Church Hittle + Antrim, for review and feedback. Mrs. Claton will provide Elizabeth Barnes' feedback with the board once received. The Joint Service Agreement will be reviewed in full at the next board meeting.

Dr. Zupin shared concerns about finding a balance between providing FAPE and protecting staff who work with physically aggressive students. Dr. Zupin inquired about whose insurance would pay for due process after meeting with Mrs. Claton and Mrs. Barnes. Mrs. Claton explained how the Joint Service Budget covers all special education legal fees. Federal grants cannot pay for legal fees. Mrs. Barnes shared that even if the school wins the Due Process, the cost of that would be around \$30,000.00 with an increase to insurance for every claim filed (court fees: Hearing Officer and court clerk). Mr. Sichting shared that the Joint Service Budget is paid by all nine school corporations. Mrs. Barnes also shared that lobbying could help make changes to the definition of serious bodily injury to protect teachers and school corporations from litigation from staff.

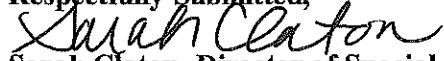
Mrs. Claton presented a draft procedure for transportation training and discipline for students who are IEP placed outside of their home school corporation. The board approved the new procedure.

The board reviewed updates on the building maintenance. Mrs. Claton reviewed the building fund, fund 1338, currently has \$53,715.52. Mrs. Claton shared the CSS Building Fund bill will be emailed to Superintendents and Treasures following the meeting. The building maintenance fund will be funded at \$20,000.00 per year (until the total reaches \$100,000.00) with each corporation contributing to the fund based on their current ADM percentage. Mrs. Claton shared that the windows seal project has been completed. Drywall repair of the damaged office window is the only item left to complete that project. The HVAC bids with additional information was reviewed. Dr. Zupin made a motion to approve bid number 4: Krooswyk Plumbing, Heating & Air Conditioning (\$55,571.94) and Mr. Hall provided a second. The motion was approved by unanimous vote. The female restroom

repairs will be completed (\$1,066.18) along with the building security (\$3,811.00) and training room audio and video updates (\$8,890.00) once payment has been received for the CSS Building Fund. Mr. Craig shared that in the future, building maintenance projects under \$1,000 can be repaired without board approval.

The meeting was adjourned through a motion from Mr. Eccles with a second by Mr. Hall. The motion passed unanimously. The next meeting will be on Tuesday, January 9 2024, at 12:00 Central / 1:00 Eastern.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah Claton".

Sarah Claton, Director of Special Education

