

**Cooperative School Services Special Education Executive Board Minutes
February 13, 2024**

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. Street, Mr. Middleton, Mr. Eccles, Mr. Craig, Mr. Hall, Mr. Culp, Mrs. Dobson, Mrs. Claton, and Mrs. Barnes. Dr. Rowe was not in attendance. 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 January 2023 and January 2024. Mr. Craig shared how it is nice to see a positive balance. Mr. Sichting made a motion to approve the financial report and Mr. Middleton provided a second. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Manifestation Determination and Suspension Reports were shared. Mrs. Claton shared an update on the Results Driven Accountability. STNs have been provided to the state for their review to determine if the RDA data is correct. Data is incorrect for IAM (1% cap participation for the alternative assessment, IAM). Mrs. Claton is waiting on the results from the state.

Preschool reports were shared and reviewed. The board discussed how the Preschool numbers are continuing to grow.

Business: Elizabeth Barnes from Church Church Hittle + Antrim presented proposed changes to the Joint Service Agreement. The last time the Joint Service agreement was updated was in 2011. Mrs. Barnes shared that the complete, red-lined version is available upon request. Mrs. Barnes proposed a side agreement explaining how West Central is the LEA and Rensselaer Central is the fiscal agent. The board discussed keeping the current arrangement. Mr. Craig agreed the side agreement would be a good idea. Mrs. Barnes explained how most of the adjustments condensed information. A new section, Section 4. B. Participating Corporations, was added to the agreement to condense information. In Section 4. C. Executive Board, electronic voting was removed. Mrs. Barnes suggested electronic voting be a policy instead of in the Joint Service Agreement. The board members discussed a proposed change to Section 4. E. Certified Personnel (proposed change: addition of and approval of administrating corporation, recommendations go through West Central Board for dismissal). The board members discussed proposed changes to Section 5. G. Legal Fees. Mrs. Barnes explained how the proposed changes create protection for the member schools. Dr. Zupin asked clarifying questions about the final say being the Director of Special Education. Mr. Sichting explained how the proposed changes would still allow the discussion of legal situations with the executive board before legal fees become the responsibility of the local school. The update would be going against the written advice of the Special Education Director and is not within the legal bounds of Article 7 and IDEA. Mr. Street asked clarifying questions about Section 7. A. Duration of Agreement and Withdrawal. Mrs. Barnes explained how the current agreement is 18 months' notice by December 1st. The board requested an example be added to the agreement. The board discussed Section 7. H. Change of Administering Corporation (language changed from majority to unanimous). This section is also a 12-month process unless otherwise agreed upon by the executive board. Mrs. Barnes explained how all participating members school board will need to approve the Joint Service Agreement before it would go into effect. Mr. Sichting proposed a two-week period to review the proposed changes and provide feedback to Mrs. Barnes. After the two weeks, member

schools should begin having conversations with their local school boards. After a month and a half, member schools should review proposed changes with their local council and provide feedback to Mrs. Barnes. Mrs. Barnes will work on a side agreement per the board's request.

The Peer Model Application and the monthly fee were discussed. Mr. Sichting made a motion to accept the new Peer Model application with a monthly fee increase to \$120/month and a peer cap of 4 per session. Mr. Culp made a second and the motion passed unanimously. Mrs. Claton reviewed the proposals for the current growing numbers of South Newton's preschool classrooms. Splitting the sessions from two to three was not an option due to transportation and corporation prep time concerns. Adding additional staff of a paraprofessional was discussed and ultimately not agreed upon due to the high number of students, high needs of the current students, and small classroom size. Moving Tri-County students to Frontier was discussed but transportation was a concern along with changing locations during a school year. Opening an additional classroom location for the 2024-2025 school year was discussed. North Newton and Tri-County expressed interest in opening an additional Developmental Preschool classroom. Mrs. Claton reviewed the proposed changes to the Joint Preschool budget if an additional preschool site would open. The increase would be a teacher's and two paraprofessionals' salaries and benefits. This would increase the Joint Service Preschool budget by a minimum of \$104,000.00 (first-year teacher salary and para salaries were calculated using North Newton's pay scale which does not provide benefits to paraprofessionals). The cost increase does not consider materials and supplies for the new classroom. North Newton principal, Stacey Schwuchow, shared there is a current classroom with tables and chairs available at Lake Village Elementary School. Mr. Middleton shared that the corporation is exploring this additional classroom with an architect and will have more information by the March executive board meeting. Mr. Middleton shared that some of the current school board members are supporting the addition of Developmental Preschool. Mrs. Claton shared how the current occupational therapist and physical therapist would be able to service a new location. The mileage would increase for those departments. The current Speech Language department would not be able to service a new location. The proposal would be to maintain the current staff (1.5 SLPs and 3 SLPAs) and add a full-time Speech Language Pathologist. The Speech Language Pathologist position has been posted for two years and has always been filled with a Speech Language Pathologist Assistant. Speech Language Pathologist Assistants cannot administer evaluations. If adding a Speech Language Pathologist position is approved, Medicaid reimbursement for preschool services would be able to increase due to having the proper oversight of services. Historical December One Child Count information was provided. Mr. Middleton and Mr. Culp will continue to explore the possibility of adding a Developmental Preschool classroom and report back to the executive board at the March meeting.

Mrs. Claton shared staffing updates. Amanda Shedrow was hired to replace Kristy Wireman as a Certified Occupational Therapist. The Preschool SLPA, position is still unfilled. Taylor Hook will begin her maturity leave in March 2024. Mrs. Claton shared the shortage of SLP and SLPA staff. Contract companies have had no luck with providing interviews for in-person services. Mrs. Claton will continue to search for an SLP/SLPA to fill the open position.

Legislative update and discussion. The executive board discussed House Bill 1073. Mrs. Claton discussed schools with seclusion/ time-out areas should ensure they are following the Seclusion and Restraint Policies.

Mrs. Claton shared we are ready to schedule meetings with Non-pubs and parents regarding APC funds.

Mrs. Claton shared the Para Grant was included in the CSS newsletter that went out to all administrators and special education teachers. The total amount is \$21,480.00 to purchase the Why Try Social Skills Curriculum and train 20 Para's through an online Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) course. Principals have already emailed their interest in training their staff. Mrs. Claton shared how Cooperative School Services does not have a licensed Board-Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) who can supervise the RBTs once trained. Mrs. Claton shared the board may need to consider the additional position of a BCBA to supervise RBTs for each member school.

Other: Mrs. Claton shared updated Cooperative classroom enrollment information for Life Skills, Functional, Basic, and Levels classrooms. Mrs. Claton share Proportionate Share monitoring workbooks have been completed and turned into the State for review.

Mr. Culp proposed reducing the monthly meetings to quarterly. Mr. Craig agreed. Mrs. Claton will have a proposed schedule for executive meetings at the March meeting.

Mrs. Claton reviewed building maintenance updates. Plumbing issues in the women's restroom continue to be a concern. Mr. Street shared a new plumbing service to consider for future repairs.

Mrs. Dobson shared the Champions Together basketball game that took place in Kankakee Valley. Mrs. Dobson also shared how Twin Lakes had a successful visit to the middle school Levels program at Kankakee Valley Middle School. The visit was facilitated by John Bryant to help Twin Lakes staff learn a structure to support students in need of a behavior program.

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, March 12, 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