

**Paul Bunyan Education Cooperative
Board of Delegates Minutes
Thursday, November 5, 2020 12 – 1:00 pm**

The Paul Bunyan Education Cooperative (PBEC) Board of Delegates met on Thursday, November 5, 2020, 12 – 1:00 pm held virtually due to the Covid 19 Pandemic.

Present: Cindi Hills, Chris Lindholm, Dan Stifter, Jon Clark, Jamie Skjeveland, Julie Domino, Laine Larson, Lois Malepsy, Mike Malmberg, Tom Haglin, Tyler Ihmels, Chris Cunningham, Kirsten Morton-Aldous, Abby Geotz, Tracy Wallin, Jen Johnson, Kim Huether

Absent: Joe Dwyer, Scott Muddgett

Jen Johnson called the meeting to order. Introductions were held. Abby Geotz is attending in the place of Joe Dwyer (Crosby-Ironton). Mike Erholtz moved out of the Pequot Lakes district - Tracy Wallin is his replacement.

Moved and second approval of the current Agenda and the November 7, 2019 Minutes. Motion carried.

Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, the April 23, 2020 Board of Delegates Meeting was cancelled. The annual obligation to meet (November 7, 2019) was met.

Determination of Chair and Vice Chair for 2020-2021:

Motion was made to nominate Cindi Hills to serve as Chair. Second and carried.

Staffing:

- The Executive Board voted at a previous meeting to approve adding a 1 FTE Psychologist position. The position has been posted since January 2019. Jessica Rindal has now been hired. She is a former Pine River-Backus student who has moved back to the area. She is serving Pequot Lakes Eagleview, Charter Schools, and the Brainerd Learning Center.
- Bonnie Henningson, Early Childhood Coordinator retired February 2020. The position has not been posted until an assessment is done with the other Early Childhood Coordinators Tyler Ihmels and Julie Domino to determine the needs.

Special Education Services in a Pandemic:

PBEC Due Process and Programming Guidance: In March a due process question and answer document was developed. Intensive work was done to develop a plan on how to provide appropriate education to students. It has been revised eight times since July and aligns with MDE's updates.

There are three learning models districts need to be ready to provide:

1. In person learning,
2. Hybrid learning,
3. Distance learning

The timelines for due process remain the same. Due process involves a student being evaluated through an assessment process. If requirements for eligibility are met an education plan is developed for students with goals and services. Reports on the progress of reaching those goals and objectives are done approximately four times a year, but are based on a district's regular education reporting, so that may

vary. There is concern about children progressing in their education during the pandemic restrictions, which in turn may cause significant increases in the number of students that need special education. One struggle right now is how to identify disabilities - how to do the evaluations with all of the Covid19 restrictions.

All Individual Education Plans (IEP's) now have a Contingency Learning Plan (CLP) as well, which addresses the three learning models and how services will be provided to assure knowing what will happen when shifting models.

An important programming goal and recommendation is to have those students that are a setting 4 (60% or more in special education/self contained environment) in the schools whenever possible.

MDE has sent out language that states districts “may prioritize in person services for special education services when a district is in Distance Learning.” This may not always be possible due to staff issues and safety concerns.

Professional Learning in a Pandemic:

All trainings will be virtual to reduce the amount of spread of Covid19. The new teacher training that was held in October was in person due to the nature of the training. Professional Learning Groups are meeting virtually, as well as the trainings for DCD, EBD, ASD.

Early Childhood Special Education in a Pandemic:

Julie Domino, Brainerd Early Childhood Coordinator and Tyler Ihmels, PBEC Early Childhood Coordinator presented information to the board.

- Referrals are continuing to come in for B-3 and 3-5 age students. Screenings and evaluations are still required, along with meeting timeline requirements. Challenges due to Covid have been that families are reluctant to participate in screening/evaluations that are not in person. It is harder for teachers to connect and develop rapport with families. Meeting timelines has been difficult for teachers.
- Programming for B-3 is normally provided in the home. These visits are not allowed during Covid restrictions. They are being held on site in a school, outside in parks or virtually. Families that were already in programming are doing ok with this, but new families are having a harder time.
- All districts are participating in the Evidence-based Quality Intervention Practices through MDE which involves trainings, coaching and support for teachers and parents.
- Programming for 3-5 year olds Preschool ECSE: 5 out of the 6 member districts are participating in the Pyramid Innovation, which has been in place for 7-8 years. The model emphasizes building positive relationships with children and families, creating supportive environments, teaching social skills and individualizing interventions when needed. It's been difficult to maintain capacity of staff and transportation has been a challenge.
- Help Me Grow, which is a statewide referral system that is based on where the student lives, has been impacted starting in March 2020 by the Covid19 pandemic. A chart was shared with the board tracking numbers from 2010 to 2019, along with a breakdown by month of 2020. 2019 had a total of 22764 referrals, while in 2020 there has been 13200 as of the end of September. The prediction is that there will be a big influx of children that will need services.

Assistive Technology in a Pandemic:

Lois Malepsy and Kirsten Morton-Alodous, Assistive Technology (AT) Support for the PBEC, presented information regarding how critical AT is during this time.

A video presentation was played for the board. Assistive technology assists students with disabilities to increase their overall capacity to work, accomplish specific tasks, or participate in activities that otherwise might have been difficult or impossible. Assistive technology includes both devices and services.

Highlights of their presentation include:

- The PBEC has provided AT assistance for many years to students and teachers.
- Technology is constantly changing. Going in and out of distance learning is challenging.
- It's important to identify what supports are needed to use the devices in distance learning.
- Meetings and trainings have been held with staff, parents and students online to offer advice on many topics including: adjusting settings, screencastify, schoology, google classroom, Kami, to name a few.
- The importance of building student independence in using the AT tools was stressed.

If there are topics that the Board of Delegates would be interested in, send Jen suggestions. The next meeting is Thursday, April 22, 2021. The meeting adjourned at 1 pm.

Kim Huether, Secretary

Attachments:

- Agenda
- Minutes November 7, 2019
- Early Childhood Special Education Updates
- Help Me Grow Monthly Totals