

**Paul Bunyan Education Cooperative  
Board of Delegates Minutes  
Thursday, May 20, 2021 12 - 1:30 pm**

The Paul Bunyan Education Cooperative (PBEC) Board of Delegates met on Thursday, May 20, 2021, 12 - 1:30 pm at WESB in Brainerd.

**Present:** Cindi Hills via hangout, Chris Lindholm, Dan Stifter, Jon Clark, Jamie Skjeveland, Laine Larson, Mike Malmberg, Tom Haglin, Tracy Wallin, Joe Dwyer, Sara Nagel, Jen Johnson, Kim Huether  
**Guests:** Tyler Ihmels and Julie Domino

**Absent:** Chris Cunningham

Jen Johnson called the meeting to order. Introductions were held.

Jamie Skjeveland made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 5, 2020 Board of Delegates meeting. Tom Haglin seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Dan Stifter made a motion to approve the agenda for May 20, 2021. Laine Larson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**Determination of Chair and Vice Chair for 2021-2022:**

According to the bylaws, the main duty of the chair is to assist the director in developing the agenda. The vice chair fills in when the chair is unavailable. Tom Haglin made a motion to nominate Cindi Hills as Chair. Cindi accepted the nomination. Mike Malmberg seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Tracy Wallin volunteered to be the vice chair. Mike Malmberg made a motion to accept Tracy Wallin as vice chair. Dan Stifter seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**Staffing Updates:**

- Nancy Anderson, assistant director who covers the Brainerd school district will be retiring in August after 30 years.
- Rose Town serves in the Certified Occupational Therapist Assistant (COTA) position and has worked in all of the PBEC districts over the past 31 years. She will be returning to work this fall in a job share situation for two days per week.
- Joselyn Rhein, Occupational Therapist, is resigning after four years and has accepted a position to be closer to family.
- Tyler Ihmels, the Early Childhood Special Education Coordinator, has worked for PBEC for five years and has accepted a speech/language pathologist position in the Chaska district.

Thank you to all for their services. They will be sorely missed.

- **New Hires:**
  - Joel Anderson - Assistant Director of Special Education. Joel is from St. Croix Ed. District and comes with 10 year of experience and expertise to join the leadership team
  - Jaiden Wentz - Occupational Therapist - moved to the Crosby/Ironton area from out of state
  - Katie Sweney - Occupational Therapist
  - Tyler Ihmel's position was just posted today and interviews will be mid June.

**Child Count:** The December 1 Child Count is a snapshot of the number of students in each district who are eligible for and receive special education services. This covers the age range of birth - 21. The students reported are residents of your district (they may be attending elsewhere). The child count by districts was presented in the powerpoint graph. The average percentage of students receiving services across the co-op is 20.9%. Statewide the average is 16%, so the co-op is a little higher. There may be some over identification. Information is now being tracked for students that are enrolled and actually in seats in your buildings (not necessarily residents).

### **Early Childhood Special Education Innovation:**

Tyler Ihmels and Julie Domino presented information to the board regarding the Evidence Based Quality Intervention Practices (EQIP). They wanted to share the progress that has been made since asking permission to offer this in the co-op three years ago.

The program runs through MDE (formerly known as FGRBI). It's an approach for B-3 that offers more of a coaching formula of working with families within their daily routines.

There has been a lot of progress in three years of the five year program. Julie and Tyler broke down the components of the program including implementation teams, mission statement, system components needed to reach goals, coaching training and goals, action items in place for year three, to name a few. Having the coaching style to ask questions to build capacity and not be told what to do, along with having one primary coach that works with the family has been more effective and less stressful for the family.

There is a road map for new staff coming in with resources, welcome video, and guide trainings through MDE. Related services providers new this coming year will be coached by teachers that have taken the training and have been certified (which is done in the normal contract day - time is given to keep sustainable so not requesting after school hours.)

The PBEC was one of 29 sites selected to participate. Thank you to the board for their support.

### **Covid - 19 Compensatory Education Services:**

The definition of Covid-19 compensatory services: services and programming that make up for any loss in the student's skills and any lack of expected progress in the general education curriculum or towards any of the students IEP annual goals, that resulted from the district's inability to provide IEP services or the student's inability to access appropriate IEP services, during the Covid-19 pandemic.

MDE has issued guidance that may require compensatory education be offered by districts. They have done a good job to help determine when lack of progress was due to the pandemic. There is a 'sticking point' in one area with the statement put forth by MDE when they speak of qualifying for comp ed "regardless of the cause".

Some ways that PBEC districts are addressing the compensatory education include: targeted services for general education recovery, offering robust Extended School Year Services (ESY), offering ESY for students who typically do not qualify (students do not automatically qualify), proposing additional sped services in the upcoming year and providing support (i.e. paraprofessional) in Community Education classes. There have been conversations with families and it is felt that the Coop is in a good place partly because there was limited time spent in Distance Learning for sped students across the cooperative. Parents are pleased that this is being addressed proactively. Families have the opportunity to decline the comp ed, but cannot come back later and say it is needed.

**Celebrations and Challenges in a Pandemic:**

Many challenges were faced during the pandemic including:

- Moving in and out of learning models
- Due process - Individual Distance Learning Plans (IDL) and Contingency Learning Plan (CLP)
- Technology
- Specialized services

Positive outcomes of the pandemic include:

- PBEC staff were able to attend more meetings because they were held virtually. The hope is to continue having that option.
- Professional learning costs have decreased while attendance has increased because of the virtual option
- The MDE Director forum was a virtual format which allowed equitable participation
- All staff had to learn various electronic platforms

**Next Meeting Date:**

Meetings will be scheduled for 2021-22 on Thursdays during lunch hours with one in the fall and one in the spring. A meeting invite will be sent out via email.

Tom Haglin made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Laine Larson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Kim Huether, Secretary

**Attachments:**

- Agenda
- Minutes November 5, 2020
- Meeting Powerpoint