

**Paul Bunyan Education Cooperative**  
**EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES**  
**Thursday, February 11, 2021 12:00 pm**  
**Via Google Meet**

The Paul Bunyan Education Cooperative (PBEC) Executive Board met on Thursday, February 11, 2021 at 12 pm held virtually due to Covid 19 Pandemic .

**Present:** Chris Lindholm, Dan Stifter, Jamie Skjeveland, Jon Clark, Laine Larson, Mike Malmberg, Jennifer Johnson, Mike Parry, Kim Huether, Wanda Lane and Karla Nesheim

Jen Johnson called the meeting to order. Introductions were made. Dr. Mike Parry attended as part of his internship working towards his director's license.

A motion was made to approve the February 11, 2021 agenda. Second. All present voted in favor thereof. Motion carried.

A motion was made to approve the minutes from December 10, 2020. Second. All present voted in favor thereof. Motion carried.

**Budget:** Karla Nesheim, PBEC Business Manager reviewed the projected budget that was approved last June, 2020 along with the revised budget (February 2021) which is proposed for approval at this meeting.

In the revenue column, interest reflected a drop because of a reduction in interest rates. Donations of \$2500 were added. Revenues always match the expenditures. The interest and donation revenue is spent in supplies and materials. The co-op did have some mileage savings due to the virtual activity of the past year. There was a savings in staff development as well, resulting in a decrease of approximately \$80000.

EQUIP programming is in year three of five decelerating funding project. These funds cannot be carried over.

The final allocation will be awarded in March from MDE. A summary of the federal programs and carryover was presented with a projected carryover of \$607,113.17.

A motion was made to approve the budget as presented. Second. All present voted in favor thereof. Motion carried.

**Maintenance of Effort:**

Maintenance of Effort refers to the requirement placed upon many federally funded grant programs, that a recipient demonstrate the level of local funding for a particular program remain constant from year-to-year. The local MOE requirement obligates any LEA receiving IDEA Part B funds to budget and spend at least the same amount of local –or state and local –funds for the education of children with disabilities on a year-to-year basis. The intent behind the MOE requirement is to help ensure that the SEA and LEAs are expending at least a certain level of non-federal funds for the education of students with disabilities. Failure to meet MOE

requirements may result in the LEA losing eligibility to receive federal funding, or a reduction in the amount the LEA would receive, or a repayment of funds. For year 2021, there may be drops related to the pandemic in transportation and the fact that special education staff may have been reassigned to other duties. If the MOE is not met, there are five exceptions to justify the reasoning. Exceptions are clearly spelled out and working with MDE would be necessary. Karla and Jen will be monitoring moving forward.

### **Child Count 2020:**

Jen presented the 2020 Child Count information for the PBEC - current year and 2016-2020 comparisons. The board would like to see a breakdown of resident and non resident student numbers that are actually in attendance in the buildings. The MDE report only reflects a district's resident students, whether they are in the building or not in the building (they could be attending elsewhere). It also does not reflect non resident students that are in attendance.

### **PBEC Staffing:**

There are two staff members retiring:

Nancy Anderson, assistant director, will be retiring in August after 34 years. Her position has been posted through the Brainerd district and Ed Post. There are ten applicants so far; the closing date is February 26 with interviews to be scheduled early March. Liz Lee, the other assistant director, has four more years. Jen is looking at the leadership structure to evaluate strengths and weaknesses for possible adjustments. This is an opportunity for possible changes in structure to benefit the co-op in the long term. Jen is confident that there will be a pool of strong candidates. There is a wide variety of applicants from both within and statewide.

Rose Town, COTA submitted her notice as of today (February 11, 2021). Her last day will be the end of May. She is the only COTA for the co-op. An evaluation is being done and data examined to determine if a COTA or an Occupational Therapist is needed to fill the position. A COTA does not do evaluations, only services to students. Rose was mainly working in the Early Childhood student base.

### **Third Party Billing Update:**

Handouts created by Wanda Lane, 3rd Party Specialist for PBEC were included in the attachments. A summary of 3rd Party billing timelines and calculations was included. District specific 3rd Party trends and data were given to each superintendent for their district. Schools are reimbursed when a child has a disability, an IEP or IFSP, requires health-related services in order to benefit from special education, and is eligible for Minnesota Health Care Programs.

Reimbursable IEP health-related services include assessments and services for: Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech-language, Mental Health services, Nursing, Personal Care Assistance services, Assistive Technology devices (medical equipment), Special Transportation, Oral and Sign Language interpreter services.

Third Party Billing revenue can fluctuate due to many factors including:

- information entered incorrectly in SEDRA, UFARS,
- staff changes that affect salary expenditures,
- changes in laws or guidelines as to what is billable, especially PCA services,
- students move, need less service, age out, new students move in (average revenue/student is \$10000 with PCA services)
- Logs not submitted or submitted too late to fix mistakes
- Paras not DHS certified
- Private insurance denials
- Duplicate eligibility numbers at DHS
- Covid has impacted the revenue as well. There is a 6.2% increase in settle up amounts but losses have also been incurred.

Wanda shared that districts will soon be allowed to bill for non IEP students for medical school-based services. More information will be coming from MDE/DHS in March. The rollout is expected to happen in July 2021.

#### **Record Retention Schedule:**

Discussion was held regarding each district's record retention policy for special education records. Because storage space is such an issue, it is time to make some changes. Superintendents are interested in having Jen formulate a process to follow, to research where the authority comes from and the legal framework that will need to be followed. Jen will update the board at the June 2021 meeting with her findings.

#### **Transportation Policy for Open Enrolled Students:**

Policy 707 was adopted which states that districts are not responsible for transporting open enrolled students (general education and special education) past the border lines. Families within the cooperative were notified. Brainerd district did have a parent file a complaint. In late December, MDE ruled in Brainerd's favor. Jen considers this a huge achievement for special education throughout the state, with the ruling setting precedent for other districts. Jen noted that all districts should have adopted the Policy 707 statement.

#### **School Resource Officer:**

Questions have arisen regarding the role of a school resource officer in situations that involve special education students. Because they have not had the training in Handle With Care and the fact that they are not a school employee, it is recommended they not be part of intervention unless it's as a last resort to prevent harm to others.

This topic brought about the discussion of cameras in the classrooms, specifically in the EBD rooms as a safety measure. It was advised that ALL classrooms would need to have cameras in them, not just a specific one for EBD students. This would be considered discriminatory. These cameras were installed years ago and should be removed. Cameras cannot be relied on for staff safety.

**Retention:**

Because of the pandemic, the subject of retaining students has been a topic of discussion at many meetings. Principals, admin teams, school psychologists have all been questioning policy and guidance. There is concern that there will be an influx of referrals after the standardized assessments results are known. Districts are looking at summer school for all students, coming up with creative ways to help students be successful, having a personalized plan for individual students, to mention a few. It is agreed that there will be a significant learning gap. Some questions concerning this issue that need to be addressed include budget, staffing, timing, locations, etc.... It was mentioned that the CARES/ESSER funding should be available to use. Superintendents are waiting for official guidelines to come out from MDE and/or the governor.

**Next Meetings:**

- April 22, 2021 - Board of Delegates
- June 20, 2021 - Executive Board

Motion to adjourn. Second. All present voted in favor thereof. Motion carried.

Submitted by Kim Huether

**Attachments:**

- Agenda
- Minutes from December 10, 2020
- PBEC Budget FY 2021
- Child Count 2020
- Third Party Billing Information