Gallatin-Madison Special Education Cooperative
Regular Council Meeting

The regular council meeting of the Gallatin-Madison Special Education Cooperative was held at the Gallatin Madison Special Education Cooperative Office on 9/19/19, for the purpose of considering business to come before the Council. Chair, Kevin Flanagan, presided.

1. **Call to Order**

Kevin Flanagan called the meeting to order at 11:56am.

**Members Present**
- Anderson-- Scott McDowell
- Big Sky-- Dustin Shipman
- Ennis-- Casey Klasna
- Gallatin Gateway—Theresa Keel
- Gallatin Co. Supt.-- Matthew Henry
- LaMotte-- LeeAnn Burke
- West Yellowstone-- Kevin Flanagan
- Willow Creek-- Bonnie Lower

**Members Absent**
- Amsterdam-- Katherine Dawe
- Harrison-- Fred Hofman
- Monforton-- Darren Strauch
- Willow Creek-- Bonnie Lower

**Visitors**
None

2. **Public Comments**

SAM Letter- The School Administrators of Montana wrote a letter to the Board thanking them for their support of Michelle Halberg throughout her service as the 2019-2021 President of MCASE. The letter highlighted Michelle’s superb performance thus far and positive growth in educational leadership across Montana.

**Staff Present**
- Michelle Halberg, Director
- Riley Russell, Executive Assistant
- Joyce Schmidt, Clerk & Business Manager

**Staff Absent**
None

3. **Consent Agenda**

**Approval of Minutes & Expenditures**

Motion: Theresa Keel
Second: Casey Klasna
- Passed Unanimously.

4. **New Business**

   a.) Staff Handbook: Proposed changes.

   *(Informational)*

Lewistown Co-op shared their newly revised policy manual with The Gallatin-Madison Special Education Cooperative. Michelle recommended that the GMSEC utilize this as a template to generate our policy manual. She recommended that documents be added within and as addendums to the manual such as the Interlocal Agreement and professional bargaining agreement. The board recommended reviewing and editing by series then getting board approval. Kevin Flanagan and Dustin Shipman volunteered to assist with editing. Once changes have been made and approved by the board employees should be required to sign a document stating they have read and understand the changes.
b.) Directors report:

(Informational)

A change in staffing has occurred as there was a loss of a visually impaired student at a member school so there is no longer a need for Braille specialist or O & M trainer. Michelle updated staffing needs and her efforts with the recruitment project to hire school psychologists. The goal is to employee the equivalent of three full time school psychologists immediately and sustain this FTE for the 2020-2021 school year.

In the past the Cooperative has always filled out each school’s MOE for them, Michelle asked the Board if they would like to continue doing it this way or would they like to fill it out themselves. The Board agreed to continue doing it as they always have but would like to review.

Due to a high degree of errors and struggles within the special education module of Infinite Campus/AIM this Fall, Michelle would like to set up training for System Administrators with a provider (e.g. Mary Anne Skinner, Todd Larkin, Mary Graff). Michelle set up a date and time if Administrators will release their staff to attend. The Cooperative will cover any associated costs. It was suggested to offer this training in mid-August in future years.

Calendars of staff assignments were shared with the board and they were informed that staff assignments will change once Amanda is back and the new Psych arrives. Michelle requested that the Board have the School Psychologists focus only on Referrals, Evals, and documentation for the time being as they are being stretched thin. Retired school psychologist are being recruited to help by conducting private school evaluations. Administrators were encouraged to pursue CSCT programs for their schools. Michelle offered to connect them with Intermountain as a provider given the positive work they are doing in the Bozeman district with therapists, behavior specialist and school-based outpatient providers

Michelle encouraged each school to review their policy about outside, private entities providing services in the school building during school hours. She would like to speak with Bea assisting the Co-op schools with policy language as there has been a significant increase in private providers diagnosing students with dyslexia and telling parents that they can provide these services in the schools and during the school day. This is a serious concern if the district allows this as it is supplanting the offer of FAPE if a student is already identified with a specific learning disability in reading. For students in RTI that are being provided interventions in Reading, the outside diagnosis confuses parents into thinking this then qualifies them for special education services. The eligibility for students with suspicion of a specific learning disability, reading, still requires a discrepancy between ability and academic achievement. Michelle suggested that the school visit OPI website with information on Dyslexia and dyslexia screeners. [OPI Dyslexia page](#)

c.) Personnel: Recommended School Psychologist Pamela Hall, Ed. S/MA45(p); at .5FTE - $31,695; $1,000 National Cert. ($32,695)

(Motion/Discussion/Action)

Pamela Hall is a candidate from Virginia. Bozeman district and GMSEC collaboratively advertise for full time position and Pam answered the advertisement on NASP, interviewed and was offered a position by Bozeman District. Michelle is recommending confirmation of hire for the .5FTE position as advertised. She would have two separate contracts. Bozeman district director, Chad Berg, and Michelle are navigating this shared position details such as days working and employee costs such as background split. Michelle is recommending the provision of a fleet vehicle and a $3,000 moving expense reimbursement in lieu of health insurance benefit. Michelle is considering placement within at least one distant school and local schools that feed into Bozeman district for high school such as LaMotte, Anderson, Gateway.

Motion to hire School Psychologist Pamela Hall.

Motion: Theresa Keel
Second: Scott McDowell -Passed Unanimously
5. **Cooperative Business Manager Report:**

The issue the Co-op had with tracking the Director’s vacation leave is now solved. Discussion regarding sick leave banks and bereavement leave paid vs. unpaid. Fund balances were distributed. Joyce explained the process of signing and submitting and making changes to the Trustees Report. Joyce informed the board that the Co-op has been randomly selected by both PERs and Worker’s Compensation to be audited for FY 2018-19. Fieldwork for the Co-op’s external audit is scheduled for October 7, 2019.

6. **Board Meeting Schedule & Future Agenda Items**

- Thursday, October 24th at 11:30 a.m.
- Thursday, November 21st at 11:30 a.m.
- Thursday, January 23rd at 11:30 a.m.
- Thursday, February 20th at 11:30 a.m.
- Thursday, March 26th at 11:30 a.m.
- Thursday, April 23rd at 11:30 a.m.
- Thursday, May 21st at 11:30 a.m.

7. **Adjourn**

Motion to adjourn meeting at **1:55 pm**.

Motion: Scott McDowell
Second: LeeAnn Burke  - Passed Unanimously.

Submitted by: ________________________________ Date: ________________

Board Chair: ________________________________ Date: ________________