



NORTHSHORE EDUCATION CONSORTIUM

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes February 7, 2024

Present:	Danvers:	Mr. Bauer
	Gloucester:	Mr. Lummis
	Hamilton Wenham:	Mr. Tracy
	Ipswich:	Dr. Blake
	Lynnfield:	Mr. Geary
	Manchester-Essex:	Ms. Beaudoin
	Marblehead:	Dr. McGuinness
	Masconomet:	Dr. Harvey
	North Reading:	Dr. Daly
	Peabody:	Dr. Vadala
	Pentucket:	Dr. Bartholomew
	Rockport:	Dr. Branco
	Salem:	Dr. Zrike
	Swampscott:	Ms. Angelakis
	Tri-Town:	Dr. Morrison
	Triton:	Mr. Forget
NEC:	F. Rosenberg	L. Fleming
	K. Mahoney	K. Mahoney
	M.Bourgault	NEC Facilities Director
	J. Zeigler	AFT local President 4293
	D. Petronzio	AFT local Vice President 4293
Guest:	N. DiPardo	AFT Field Representative -Massachusetts
Absent:	Beverly:	Dr. Charochak
	Lynn:	Dr. Alvarez
	Nahant:	Dr. Pierantozzi
	Reading:	Dr. Milaschewski

- I. **Call to Order:** Ms. Angelakis called the meeting to order at 8:01 am and read the following statement:
This Open Meeting of the NEC Board of Directors is being conducted remotely consistent with Governor Healey's extension of the temporary provisions pertaining to the Open Meeting Law to March 31, 2025.
- II. **Approval of Minutes and Attendance**
MOTION: A motion was made by Dr. Bartholomew and seconded Mr. Bauer to approve the January 17, 2024 BOD Minutes, January 31, 2024 Finance & Facilities Minutes and the February 2024 Communications. Roll call was done 13 voted present and to approve minutes and board communications.
VOTE: The motion was approved

III. Finance Committee Report - Presentation of Revised FY24 Budget and Tuition Adjustment:

Mr. Fleming gave an overview on revised FY23-24 Budget. The revised budget reflects the following changes since original budget was approved in April, 2023: we implemented a new accounting system, and a new CFO began. This has resulted in some changes in the way positions and overhead are allocated, resulting in a reduction in the "admin expense" category, and an increase in certain salary and overhead lines. The revised budget is an estimate based on the current HVAC project schedule. The total expenses and net income versus original budget has a variance of \$212,888.

Mr. Tracy, Ms. Beaudoin, Dr. Vadala joined the meeting at 8:07 am

FY24 revenue is projected to increase by \$2,683,949 due to the proposed tuition adjustments. In addition, there was an increase in the DPH grant for RHS, increased enrollment, and an increase in interest.

Expenditures for FY24 are projected to increase by \$2,471,061. This includes the cost for HVAC project, increased occupancy related to repairs for HVAC, flood at NSAL. It also includes increases in payroll, payroll taxes and benefits. Some of these increases reflect new positions or added hours in response to increased enrollment. There is also some variance in terms of the way certain positions have been coded under the new CEO.

Some of the variance noted in individual program budgets reflect the current CEO allocating overhead differently.

Mr. Fleming noted that all numbers related to the HVAC/Capital project are estimates, since it is not yet certain how much expense will be incurred in FY24 and how much in FY25, based on the shifting project timeline.

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Dr. Blake asked about three "new positions" and/if they were new to the budget.

Ms. Rosenberg explained these positions were approved last April, but had not all been filled, and they have just been coded in a different way within the budget. She clarified that these were not additional costs.

Mr. Fleming stated it is important to note, that if you "take away" the changes related to the HVAC/Capital project, the overall operating budget is tracking close to the original proposal.

NEC Revised Tuitions for FY24

Mr. Fleming reviewed the one-time tuition adjustments that had been previously discussed Non-Member districts will be billed \$5500 per student, and member districts will be billed based on a tiered system and divided by the number of students enrolled. Billing will take place in February 2024 and due by June 30th 2024. By individual arrangement districts can be billed in August 2025.

Mr. Fleming asked if there were questions or discussion on revised FY24 Budget and Tuition adjustment.

Dr. Morrison asked about the tuition increase for non-member districts

Mr. Fleming clarified the formula he used and stated that the goal was to increase revenue by two million, most of which will be collected in FY24, and some in the early months of FY25.

MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. Lummis and seconded Mr. Forget to approve the revised FY24 Budget and Tuition Adjustment. Roll call was done 16 voted to approve revised budget.

VOTE: The motion was approved

IV. **Executive Director's Updates**

Ms. Rosenberg's full report is attached.

Ms. Rosenberg reported we have received and are applying for several state grants, which will both positively impact our bottom line for this year, and enable us to take on some new work to benefit our schools and the region.

- IEP Implementation Grant (DESE): \$18,000 received to support educators who are working to implement new IEP.
- DESE SEL/MH Grant (DESE): \$100,000 to support training and consultation for our staff, and for member districts.
- DPH Impact of Violence Grant (DPH): This grant will be spread over several fiscal years (annualized amount of \$97,000, with first installment this spring, and potentially extending through 6/26) and will enable us to expand our Connections programming, targeting communities impacted by gun violence. In addition, it will further support our ability to continue with the Trauma and Learning courses.
- Appleseed's Early Literacy Grant (DESE): We are applying for this grant which will provide curriculum and training related to K-2 literacy at the KOG and NSAL schools.
- Reducing the Use of Time-Out (DESE): We are applying for this grant which will help provide training and enable us to purchase specialized furniture and equipment for sensory rooms.

Dr. Branco and Dr. Bartholomew left the meeting at 8:30 am

HVAC Project Update: We are moving forward on the Capital Project at 112 Sohier. Construction contracts have been signed and we had our first meeting with the contractor and full team. Paperwork is in place with M & T bank and MDC for our financing. Several bank executives toured the building last week, and were impressed by the specialized nature of the school. The tour helped them understand the urgency of our need for the loan, and they expressed admiration for our staff and what they observed.

- V. **Policy Committee Report:** Ms. Rosenberg reminded the Board that this was the second reading and vote to approve updated policies. There were no substantive changes, just updates to comply with updated state regulations.

Motion: A motion was made by Dr. Blake and seconded Mr. Tracy to accept the 2nd and final reading of Bullying and Prevention and Behavioral Support policies. Roll call was done. 14 voted to approve

VOTE: The motion was approved unanimously.

- VI. **New Business** –Ms. Rosenberg and Dr. Vadala shared a proposal that Peabody's Business Manager had initiated regarding a regional special education transportation contract. The hope would be to have one large contract with an existing vendor, thereby increasing quality and efficiency and reducing cost. Many members expressed interest in being part of a conversation regarding regional transportation. The City of Peabody will apply for the initial grant which is a planning grant.

Mr. Bauer and Dr. McGuiness stated that they would be interested. Mr. Forget asked if we should consider having NEC run a transportation center, beyond just managing the grant with an existing vendor, since districts were not happy with vendor's services.

Ms. Rosenberg stated that it was her job to meet regional needs, but that she felt the best option was likely to do contract with an existing vendor, but that hopefully the planning grant would allow us to explore all options.

Ms. Angelakis asked for regional transportation discussion to be added to March BOD Agenda.

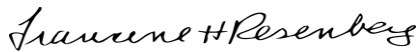
VII. Adjourn

MOTION: At 8:43 a motion was made by Dr. Blake and seconded by Mr. Forget to adjourn from public meeting and enter into executive session for the purpose of hearing of level 3 grievance. Roll call was done. 14 voted to enter executive session and then to adjourn out of executive session

VOTE: The motion was approved



Kathy Mahoney, Administrative Assistant to Executive Director



Francine Rosenberg, NEC Executive Director

Executive Directors Report

February 2024

I'd like to start with a story:

John (not real name) is a custodian at NEC. He is excellent at his work, but tends to present in a gruff and taciturn manner. The Recovery HS Principal has noted, that on several occasions, when John has been called to clean up vomit or deal with other "unpleasant" situations, he has always treated the students with respect and kindness and they have become fond of him.

Last week, John's dog died and he was devastated. Hearing about this, one student asked John for a picture of the dog, and proceeded to use her time in art class to create a beautiful memorial plaque which she presented to John. He was deeply touched, and the next day brought her flowers as a thank you, stating that the plaque had been hung in his home.

When I saw John in the hallway the next day, he told me that he had been a "troubled teenager" and that it meant so much to him to work in a place where he could make a difference in the lives of our students.

In the midst of budget stress, political pressures, and workforce challenges, it was a beautiful reminder of the fact that our work touches lives in ways we expect, and in ways that we can't always see.

Major Updates:

As you will hear in today's meeting, we are moving forward on the Capital Project at 112 Sohier. Construction contracts have been signed, we had our first "kick off meeting" and paperwork is in place with M & T bank and MDC for our financing. Several bank executives toured the building last week, and were struck by the specialized nature of the school. The tour seemed to help them understand the urgency of our need for the loan, and they expressed their admiration for our staff and what they observed.

I am pleased to report that we have received and are applying for several state grants, which will both positively impact our bottom line for this year, and enable us to take on some new work to benefit our schools and the region.

1. IEP Implementation Grant: \$18,000 received to support educators who are working to implement new IEP.
2. DESE SEL/MH Grant: \$100,000 awarded. This will pay for PD and consultation that we have already committed to, and will enable us to send more employees to Trauma and Learning courses at Lesley University which have been very beneficial. Additionally, it will enable us to offer additional consultation and training to districts this spring.
3. DPH Impact of Violence Grant: This grant will be spread over several fiscal years (annualized amount of \$97,000, with first installment this spring, and potentially extending through 6/26) and will enable us to expand our Connections programming, targeting communities impacted by gun violence. In addition, it will further support our ability to continue with the Trauma and Learning courses.
4. Appleseeds Early Literacy Grant: We are applying for this grant which will provide curriculum and training related to K-2 literacy at the KOG and NSAL schools.

Progress Toward Goals

Student Learning and School Climate

- We have successfully rolled out the Dreambox curriculum in several of our schools to give teachers better baseline data on reading and math skills, and to help “fill in the gaps” that many of our students have in their learning.
- High school students are enthusiastically participating intramural basketball and volleyball.
- Our ASOST program at RHS has been well attended. In addition to recreational activities, students have been volunteering at Haven for Hunger.
- We had several successful family engagement events in December and a well-attended Parent Advisory Group meeting in January.
- Despite statewide issues with attendance and acuity, attendance in our schools has been good, and we continue to receive many new referrals.

Finance and Infrastructure

- CEO Transition and Business Office Procedures: The transition to our new CFO has gone very smoothly, and we have implemented a variety of new procedures in the business office that should help us with cost-containment and efficiency. The PO system is in place and staff are consistently using both the HR and finance components of the Tyler Technology/ Infinite Visions systems.
- HVAC Project and Capital Planning: The major HVAC project is on track. Unfortunately, there have been some smaller, unanticipated capital expenses. We are working on developing a comprehensive 5-year capital plan.
- Recruitment and Workforce Development: One of our goals for this year was to improve the onboarding of new employees. We have updated our website and recruitment materials, implemented monthly orientation sessions for new employees, and are working on making our interview and entry process more consistent.
- Friends of NEC: Friends continues to be successful in raising philanthropic dollars. The Festivus 5K brought in almost \$30,000 which go directly to student curriculum and technology.
- Safety Planning: We have rolled out the RAVE Panic Button app, and continue to work with local first responders around implantation of ALICE and Standard Response Protocols.

Advocacy and Regional Initiatives

- I continue to be very involved in advocacy efforts through MOEC. In addition, I co-taught a 4 part Leadership Academy for new and aspiring Collaborative Leaders, which was very well received and will hopefully help to strengthen special education leadership across the state.
- We continue to provide support to the region through training, PD, grants, and our very popular and well-attended job-alike groups. The grants mentioned above will help us continue and expand these initiatives.
- I am speaking with several board members about potential regional initiatives which will come to the board at future meetings.