A new board member orientation meeting was held at 6:00 PM

Attendees present were Heather Hala Lord, Margaret Larson, Melissa Nazzaro, Denise Storm, Bill Diehl, and Kelly Hernandez.

Call to Order and Introduce New Members

Dan Hayes called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

The Board did introductions and reviewed expectations of utilizing the mute option on Zoom and announcing your name when contributing and voting.

Public Comment

Dan continues to work with Cheryl on the Executive Director search. There has been great collaboration.

Approve the Minutes of the 8/12/2020 Board Meeting and of the 9/22/2020 Finance Committee Meeting (votes required)

A copy of the minutes from the August 12, 2020 Board of Directors meeting were included in the Board packet.

*Don Sluter moved that the Board approve the minutes from the August 12, 2020 Board of Directors meeting. Laura Fallon seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Melissa Nazzaro abstained. None opposed and the motion passed.*

A copy of the minutes from the September 22, 2020 Finance Committee meeting were included in the Board packet.

*Don Sluter moved that the Board approve the minutes from the September 22, 2020 Finance Committee meeting. Laura Fallon seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Melissa Nazzaro abstained. None opposed and the motion passed.*
**Election of Officers (votes required)**
Bill advised that this is the annual voting of committees and subcommittees. The open meeting laws require us to do a roll call and one will be done for each election/appointment.

- **Election of Chair and Vice Chair**
The individuals in these positions need to be from different counties- 1 from Franklin and 1 from Hampshire.

The role of the Chairperson is to be present at all meetings, assist with development of the agenda and materials, meet regularly with the Executive Director to provide guidance and direction, to push forward policies, convene the meeting. The Vice Chairperson will serve if the Chairperson is not available. Both positions will also participate as part of the Executive Committee.

One individual was put forward for the role of Chairperson and this individual was Dan Hayes. No other nominations were made

*A roll call vote was taken to move forward with the election of Dan Hayes as the Chairperson of the Board of Directors. Stephanie Conrod abstained. None opposed and the motion was passed.*

Dan graciously accepted the role as Chair of the Board of Directors. He proceeded to lead the meeting.

The Vice Chairperson will need to be from Hampshire county. There were no nominations and Dan asked who has the desire to fill this role. Laura Fallon stepped forward to fill this position.

*Jonathan Schmidt moved to approve the election of Laura Fallon as the Vice Chair of the Board of Directors. Don Sluter seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. None abstained. None opposed and the motion was passed.*

- **Election of At-Large Members of the Executive Committee**
The role of the Executive Committee is designed for when the board is meeting without a quorum and it is designed for the Executive Committee to vote and allow business at the collaborative to continue. This committee consists of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Board and three additional elected members. No more than two of the three additional members can be from the same county.

Jennifer Mallette, Don Sluter and Jonathan Schmidt volunteered for the At-Large Members of the Executive Committee.
Laura Fallon moved to approve the appointment of Jennifer Mallette, Don Sluter, and Jonathan Schmidt as the At-Large Members of the Executive Committee. Don Sluter seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. None abstained. None opposed and the motion was passed.

Appointment of Secretary and Appointment of Treasurer (vote required)
Typically, the Executive Director of the Collaborative serves as the Secretary as they are empowered to sign contracts, grants, and other official correspondence. The Treasurer is an independent person paid by the Collaborative and that person is Don Scott.

John Cotton moved to approve the appointment of Bill Diehl as the Secretary of the Board and Don Scott as Treasurer of the Board. Jonathan Schmidt seconded the motion.

Appointment of Finance Committee (vote required)
The Finance Committee consists of the Executive Director of the Collaborative, Director of Finance and Operations, two superintendents (one from each county), and 2 Board members (one from each county). Currently serving are Dan Hayes, Jennifer Mallette, and the superintendents are yet to be determined for 2021. Jennifer Mallette offered to continue service.

Laura Fallon moved to approve the appointment of Jennifer Mallette and Dan Hayes as the members of the Finance Committee. Don Sluter seconded the motion.

Appointment of Warrant Subcommittee (3 members of Board) (vote required)
The Collaborative has designed a system where the Warrant Subcommittee reviews the warrants and signs them electronically. Currently serving are Don Sluter, Maureen Nichols, and Dan Hayes. No other individuals were interested in joining, therefore, Don Sluter, Maureen Nichols, and Dan Hayes offered to continue to serve in this capacity.

Laura Fallon moved to approve the appointment of Don Sluter, Maureen Nichols, and Dan Hayes as the members of the Warrant Sub-committee. Jonathan Schmidt seconded the motion.

Appointment of Policy Subcommittee (vote required)
The Policy Subcommittee meets to review policies and bring them forward to the Board. This sub-committee consists of the two superintendents (one from each county), 2 Board members (one from each county), and the Chairperson of the Board. Don Sluter and Laura Fallon offered to continue on this sub-committee.

Laura Fallon moved to approve the appointment of Don Sluter and Laura Fallon as the members of the Policy Subcommittee. Jonathan Schmidt seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken for the Secretary, Treasurer, Finance Committee, Warrant Subcommittee, and the Policy Subcommittee. Heather Hala Lord abstained. None opposed and the motion was passed.
New Hires and Separations for 8/16/2020-9/15/2020
The following documents were included in the Board packet on pages 15-16:
- New hires and Separations for 8/16/2020-9/15/2020

The collaboratives are required by law to vote when people are hired or leave the organization.

Jonathan Schmidt moved to accept the new hires and separations for 8/16/2020-9/15/2020 as presented. Laura Fallon seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Heather Hala Lord abstained. None opposed and the motion was passed.

Authorization
Vote that the Executive Director of the Collaborative for Educational Services (William A. Diehl) is authorized, empowered and directed on behalf of the Collaborative to sign, execute and deliver any and all contracts, agreements and other documents on behalf of the organization, as allowed by law (vote required)

Vote that the Deputy Director (Karen Reuter) and Director of Finance and Operations (Barbara Siegel) are each authorized, empowered and directed to act in place of the Executive Director to sign, execute and deliver any and all contracts, agreements and other documents on behalf of the organization, as allowed by law, if and only if the Executive Director is unable to fulfill these duties in a timely manner sufficient to meet specific deadlines (vote required)

Bill explained that this is a vote that the Board must approve annually for him to be held accountable and able to sign contracts and grants.

Laura Fallon moved to approve the Executive Director of the Collaborative for Educational Services (William A. Diehl) is authorized, empowered and directed on behalf of the Collaborative to sign, seal, execute and deliver any and all contracts, agreements and other documents on behalf of the organization, as allowed by law, and the Deputy Director (Karen Reuter) and Director of Finance and Operations (Barbara Siegel) are each authorized, empowered and directed to act in place of the Executive Director to sign, seal, execute and deliver any and all contracts, agreements and other documents on behalf of the organization, as allowed by law, if and only if the Executive Director is unable to fulfill these duties in a timely manner sufficient to meet specific deadlines John Cotton seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Heather Hala Lord abstained. None opposed and the motion was passed.

Fiscal Report
Barbara spoke on the financials of the Collaborative. She started with providing details on FY20 that closed on June 30, 2020. They are currently preparing for the audit that will begin on Monday. There will be around a 350K deficit, 100K better than had been expected. Bill took the opportunity to contribute the background that in March the Collaborative was on target to meet the budget but with pandemic expenses (largely related to Covid 19) began to exceed revenues.
Barbara contributed that the audit will be presented to the Finance Committee and the Board in November.

FY21 was then discussed and Barbara provided that in the FY21 budget, we had set a target of $25,926 in unknown grant indirect revenues figure and at the end of September we surpassed this target and were at $31,912. This also reflected additional revenue in grants and contracts. This is an encouraging trend so early in the year. At this time of year, we are running at a loss, which is common due to the expenses of upfront costs (insurance packages, fringe costs, software, and technology) but we are hopeful to iron out in a positive way. The Operational Continuity Team is working to move the organization forward in a financially positive way. Promising trends with contracts on the books for over 450K in revenue and that is a promising number for this time of year. The afterschool program was solicited by West Springfield for 5 nights a week while remote which has increased interest from other communities and is a great opportunity for CES. This type of project is a fee-for-service and we consequently apply the 11.22% indirect cost rather than the state’s 8% allowable, which is for grants. Summer school ended with a surplus. A lean budget for operating HEC is proving to be effective. The enrollment for PD has been strong and it is believed this is because it is virtual. Financials are not usually presented at this meeting; in November we will have financials for the period ending 9/30/2020.

Conversation/Questions

- Expenses are reduced for workshops and other PD due to having no catering and mileage costs.
- The Board was reminded that we did not receive any funds for Covid 19 relief from the CARES act; CES estimated that we had 150K expenses related to PPE and
- CES started the year 850K deficit and we are chipping away at this.

Barbara discussed the PPP Loan of 5.825M. She is working with accountants, who have reviewed her figures, and providing additional information that is needed. The next step is to submit the application for loan forgiveness with the accountants’ support. The loan was spent on the specific approved expenses and that is why there is some funding remaining. She suggested that she would ask for forgiveness on the spent funds and return the excess. The process is long and decisions about the current fiscal situation can not be made until we hear the results of this request. Therefore, CES will move forward to increase revenue and reduce expense.

FEMA has a program that we can apply to be reimbursed for protective equipment. For CES, the cost has been due to PPE and we are being considered as a regional school district. This will be the focus after the PPP forgiveness application is complete. We will not be double dipping because we did not apply the PPP loan to the PPE supplies purchased. These funds would be in addition to the $225 per Academy students’ CARES act funds. The CARES act funds are only for 20-30 Academies’ students. The FEMA funds will be used to assist all the PPE expenses across the state. Timeline is unknown but more information will be provided in November.
Dan contributed that MOEC is supporting all the collaboratives in striving to get Covid relief funding. He also discussed CES’s efforts in cutting costs and cost effectiveness. In addition, the Cabinet assists with collaborating to streamline lowering costs and creating opportunities. CES entrepreneur creativity is being used in meetings and discussions on how to cut cost, increase revenue streams, seek service needs, and state/local/federal support options. CES is also looking at this as an opportunity to generate ways to serve students and families during this crisis.

**Planning for the future and development of a new strategic plan**

Karen Reuter, Deputy Director, discussed the Preparing for the Future Together (PFTF) team that she had the opportunity to lead. A group of individuals from across the agency met with an internal facilitation team that worked on identifying ideas, needs, and opportunities that CES could consider investing time and resources in during this strategic plan gap year. Some of the major themes that arose included deeper and expanded services with our Social Justice and Equity initiative, focusing on K-3 literacy, trauma-informed practices, climate change, and enhancing PD around remote learning, to name a few. The ideas were prioritized and presented to the Cabinet on 9/16 and now it is up to the Cabinet to establish what can be addressed now and what should be brought to the strategic planning consulting team for the next multi-year strategic plan.

During the transition of the Executive Director, there was concern if this was the right time to establish a new strategic plan with a consensus to move forward and create a roadmap for the next 5 years. Strategy Matters consultants were hired as they aligned/matched best with CES’s mission and values and had worked with some of our partnering agencies. They launched the work with an 80 person Zoom meeting to review the mission, values, and to create a vision statement for the work ahead. There is a Strategic Planning Committee that will be the conduit for the consultant and will be capturing the spirit and ideas of the vast range of those who make up CES. The consultants have been flexible and adapting to the shifts of leadership and financial challenges. They will be creating goals with a mission driven budget and benchmarks to reach established outcomes.

Laura Fallon, who attended the initial Zoom meeting along with Dan Hayes, expressed her positive impression of Strategy Matters and it really struck her about the theory of change and how school committee members were named in the vision. However, there is a gap between the Board and those that do the work at the Collaborative and she hopes that we can bridge the gap. The Board votes on decisions that affect those who work at CES, but we don’t have personal relationships and it would be nice to find a way to close that gap.

Dan expressed that he felt a good process = good outcomes. He found it interesting to see all the stakeholders’ interest in the process. It was engaging and agrees it is time to establish the strategic plan and is off to a good start. It behooves the Board members to engage by attending CES student events such as DYS art shows, the Academy graduations, etc. He encouraged
seeking engagement and seeing the student transformations as they make an impact and reinforce the reasons to continue this work.

**Plans for transition of responsibilities**
Bill expressed his excitement about the direction the Collaborative is headed. COVID has made education completely different and we have an opportunity to rethink how we can best educate students, as well as creating a supportive relationship in the community. Bill also discussed the transition at CES for the Executive Director. Bill is working with Sarah Molloy, Special Projects Coordinator, to capture his historical knowledge, information about CES relationships, information about departments, grants, and contracts, and related information. Sarah is working with Bill to get this written down to create a guide for Karen (who will be serving as an Interim Executive Director) and for the future Executive Director to use while transitioning into their roles. Karen appreciates the opportunity to have the background, history, and wisdom that is the most important piece of the transition process.

In the Business and Operations Office, a similar process is happening. Barbara advised that she is in her 20th year and has great institutional knowledge. This too needs to be put to paper and needs to be shared as well. Rebecca Lincoln, Assistant Director of Finance, is her backup and manages the Business Office and staff along with the software administrator. She too will be working to get this committed to paper and training another individual while refining the Standard Operating Procedures to more granulated details. They also are cross training across the business office. It has been established that Rebecca will be attending meetings of MASBO (the Massachusetts Association of School Business Officials).

Dan commented that the Board role and input is invaluable to setting the tone, direction, and climate with being involved in ED search, policy review, decisions, reviewing the budget, and helping administration to prioritize. The BoD has an important job, a vital role, and he appreciates the Board, past and present, with the impact they have made.

Albert Johnson-Mussad joined the meeting at 7:57 pm

**Presentations:**
The two presentations were about examples of direct ways we support districts.

- **PLC / Job-alikes**
  Angela Burke, Director of Professional Services (Professional Development, Licensure, Research & Evaluation, Healthy Families & Communities) shared Professional Learning Communities and Networks presentation. This presentation is attached. Some notes:
  - PLC are made up by teachers to discuss ways to have greater success with their students and most meet monthly. With the virtual option, it is expected to increase the PLC attendance.
  - Professional Networks are for the schools’ administration.
• Networking has been valuable since COVID to discuss problems and create similar solutions.
• These are a free service to CES members

- **Title III Consortium**

Albert Johnson-Mussad, Leadership and Instruction Continuous Improvement Specialist Professional Services, presented the details of the Title III program and consortium. He proceeded to answer the following 3 questions: What is the Title III program? What services does the Collaborative FY21 program provide? Whom does the Title III grant serve?

• This is part of the ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) and each state allocates funds to support the students learning English as a second language.
• The FY21 proposal includes: PD for principals, teachers, special support; direct instruction through tutoring; parent, family, community engagement options; and allocations for instructional materials for direct student use (not required).
• It serves a total of 23 school districts and 3 private schools enrolling a total of 931 English learners in PreK-12; the consortium includes 14 member districts with 638 English learners. Each has a Title III director who oversees the funds in the district and participates in a monthly Title III director meeting.
• Some services ELs require, and districts are mandated to provide, Title III funds do not pay for - translation and development of curriculum services.
• This is a staff-intensive program and CES retains approximately 7% of the grant allocations for the services that the staff provide; this is a modest allocation for the many staff members involved. The remainder is used for services in districts.
• Without this Title III Consortium, districts with less than 100 ELs would not get any funding because DESE requires a minimum number of ELs in a district to obtain funding. The Consortium districts all have less than 100 ELs, and this consortium then allows the districts to obtain Title III funds and support.

**Executive Director Evaluation**

**a. Process and timeline**

Bill provided the background of this annual process and how it does not fit with the transition of the Executive Director (ED) position, to an Interim Director mid-year. Karen and he would like to recommend a modification of the process to fit the Collaborative’s goals and benchmarks. The intention is to have ED goals that are not specific to the individual in the position, but rather reflect the work of the position and what was accomplished. Board members agreed this was a good approach to transitioning leadership and evaluation of the ED

**b. Goals for 2020-2021 (vote required)**

The following documents were included in the Board packet on pages 17-18:

• GOALS for the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR POSITION 2020-2021

Bill presented goals #1 - Instructional Leadership / Student Learning and #2 - Meet Member District Needs/ Promote CES programs and services. Karen then presented goals # 3 - Ensure the stability and growth of CES during uncertain times and #4 Development of New, Multi-Year Strategic Plan.
Dan asked if the plan is to present the goals and the progress or would the Board have the opportunity to provide feedback? This would be up to the board.

It was agreed that it would be difficult to evaluate a single individual but it would be good for Board members to have the opportunity to provide feedback to Karen with a review of the set goals and outcomes.

A review at the end of FY21 would be important for setting goals for FY22.

Might be good to create a new survey or other means to get superintendent feedback on the goals themselves.

Consideration seeking Board volunteers that can work with Bill and Karen to create something that is reflective.

Dan suggested moving forward with voting on only the goals.

The Evaluation Committee needs to be set up and help establish a format to reflect on the progress of meeting goals.

*Laura Fallon motioned to approve the Executive Director’s Position goals for 2020-2021 as presented. Jonathon Schmidt seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Barbara Doyle abstained. None opposed and the motion was passed.*

**c. Evaluation Committee**

Margaret Larson, Don Sluter, and Dan Hayes volunteered for the Evaluation Committee.

*Jonathon Schmidt moved to approve the appointment of Margaret Larson, and Don Sluter, and Dan Hayes as the members of the Evaluation Committee. Laura Fallon seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Barbara Doyle abstained. None opposed and the motion was passed.*

**Executive Director’s Report**

The Executive Director’s report was included in the Board packet on pages 19-38

Updates not in the report included:

- Karen shared that the HEC Academy nurse has resigned requiring the need to delay the in-person learning services at the Academies. Collaboratives are required to have a nurse on staff and we are on the path to hiring someone as soon as possible. DESE is aware of this and has approved the delay. Bill contributed that many districts are having similar issues and there are staffing concerns across districts.

- Bill also contributed that the student enrollment for school districts is of increasing concern. Data is showing that public school enrollment is going down while the number of students transferring to private or parochial school, or opting for home schooling is going up quite a bit. This will create a financial challenge for districts as funds for next year will reflect this decrease. Bill also shared that there is a major decrease in Kindergarten enrollments.

- Several Board members shared about either the impact or reasons for declining enrollments in their districts, as well as ways their district had been proactive in trying to meet the challenge.
Bill advised that, as part of the Student Opportunity Act, DESE and the Department of Revenue are required to report on “the equity, predictability and accuracy of the method of determining each municipality’s ability to contribute toward education funding and the calculation of each municipality’s required local contribution.” There were recommendations submitted by the MA Business Alliance for Education/Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce. These recommendations all threaten hold harmless aid, minimum per pupil aid, and the 82.5% cap toward MLC as a percentage of foundation. These changes would certainly negatively impact most of the districts in Franklin and Hampshire counties. Bill said that there was an open comment survey that has just been released with a response deadline of Oct 16. He will be forwarding this survey to the district School Committee chairs to disperse to other committee members.

Bill explained the purpose of the Executive Director report and how information is collected and compiled to provide a snapshot of the work within the departments. He proceeded to review some highlights of the Executive Director Report. A conversation ensued, including the following questions and comments:

- An inquiry was made if there has been any interest in training for substitute teachers on delivering remote instruction. There has been interest but it is challenging to decipher what specifically is needed.
- It was asked if the SPIFFY webinars were recorded and if they could be forwarded to the districts. Bill will inquire and advise.
- Dan explained that the Executive Director report’s bullets may pertain to your districts and Kelly will send the report to the Board to forward along to the districts.
- CES has developed web audits to look at district websites in terms of basic accessibility for people with special needs. Some themes include colors and contrast, graphic and image files, etc. The accessibility audit will also address if the content can be read by a screen reader or assistive technology devices for those with visual disability. Kathy, Director of Business Development, will send out what the accessibility requirements are.
- MASC has been compiling MOU and MOAs about contract negotiations.

**Adjournment**

Dan Hayes adjourned the meeting at 9:08 PM.