

SEEM Collaborative Board of Directors Meeting
SEEM Administrative Office
1/25/2022
9:00 am – 11:00 am

Superintendents Present

Mr. Doug Lyons, Wakefield
Mr. John Macero, Stoneham
Dr. Patrick Daly, North Reading
Dr. Julie Kukenberger, Melrose
Dr. Thomas Milaschewski, Reading
Dr. Matt Crowley, Woburn
Ms. Erin McMahon, Saugus

Superintendents Absent

Dr. Frank Hackett, Interim Superintendent, Winchester
Dr. Kristen Vogel, Lynnfield
Dr. Gregg Gilligan, North Andover
Dr. Glenn Brand, Wilmington

Collaborative Staff Present

Dr. Cathy Lawson, Executive Director
Mr. Greg Zammuto, Director of Finance and Operations

- A. The meeting was called to order by Dr. Patrick Daly at 9:05 am.
- B. Public Comment – There were no public comments.
- C. Approval of Consent Agenda
 - a. General Session Minutes of 1/25/2022

Motion made to approve the consent agenda as presented by Mr. Doug Lyons, seconded by Dr. Julie Kukenberger, all in favor.

- D. Administrative and Committee Reports
 - a. Executive Director's Report – Dr. Cathy Lawson gave an update on the collaborative and programs. She reminded the Board of some of their duties as board members. Once the annual report and the budget are approved by the Board, they need to go to the respective district's school committees as an information item only. Another reminder is, under the regulations, they board members supposed to provide a quarterly report to their school committees. Typically, that is done by using the Executive Director's report from the meetings and presenting that as an information item.

Some work that SEEM has been doing with the districts is a joint Special Education Directors and Curriculum Leaders meeting to discuss some of the bottle necking that is happening around students that need out-of-district and also the trend of what is happening in general education where students are changing into special education out of urgency because of some of the mental health challenges that are happening, as well as learning loss, literacy challenges and the shortage in community-based supports that are typically in place for children, so the only available option becomes special education. There will be more meetings in the future to see what types of cross-district work can be done to support general ed teachers and they are targeting Tier 2. Some of the next steps that were discussed were foundations training, differentiating instruction and behavioral and anxiety. We will be reaching out to Jessica Minahan to do some presentations in the spring. On a different level, Dr. Cathy Lawson had a meeting with Russell Johnston, Special Education Commissioner, along with Maureen Ryan, of Woburn and Dawn Trainer of Saugus, about specific issues regarding challenges we are having as a result of learning loss. There is a problem in the special education work with eligibility. Looking at learning loss due to Covid vs learning gaps due to disability, however, neuro psychs have not been renormed, has opened up a whole new set of challenges. It is challenging for people to stay in their percentages right now. This was a conversation that put the issue on DESEs radar that districts need help, particularly with messaging with families and understanding the SLD vs Covid Learning loss and hoping they can help us. Dr. Erin McMahon, shared that she and Dawn Trainer looked at the need to address mental health and from the state level, if they could give money to collaboratives or directly to districts for 2-3 FTEs that would support with providing training and coaching to teachers on how to address Tier 2 and Tier 3 differentiating instruction in the classroom. There has been a huge uptick in funding and it's hurting the districts. In terms of policy, she would like the Board to think about the policies for eligibility for raising the threshold for which students are eligible. We need to make it harder for students to get into out-of-district placements. She would like the Board to advocate for state funding beyond extraordinary relief for circuit breaker, and let them know we need a policy that increases the difficulty for eligibility and increases the training for Tier 2 and Tier 3 differentiating instruction in the classroom. Dr. Cathy Lawson stated that this could become part of the agenda and goals of the Special Education Directors and Curriculum Leaders group. The other goal could be collecting data of out-of-district placements to present to DESE. Dr. Patrick Daly stated that there is a need for outside counselors as well and it would be great to be able to get preference for services if the request came from a school. Dr. Cathy Lawson stated that timing is good to be advocating because DESE is planning now what to do with the money for next year. Dr. Lawson will communicate back to the Board as there are new developments. One of the outcomes of the collaborative legislation is the idea of the collaboratives acting as an intermediary unit with DESE in terms of providing and streamlining support and each region has a representative that meets with the commissioner. Dr. [Cathy Lawson](#) has asked the Executive Director [Joanne Haley-Sullivan](#) to also talk to the commissioner and put this on his radar when they are trying to figure out how we can start streamlining support into the districts. This is another layer of

advocacy that they are doing. It would be powerful and impactful if we band together. Dr. Erin McMahon suggested that the Board come up with a one page ask on things that DESE could do and it could be used as a template for them. She will draw up a sample and share it with Dr. Cathy Lawson as a starting point.

b. Financial Update - Mr. [Greg Zammuto](#)

1. Enrollment Report as of 1/31/2022 – At that time the enrollment was 297.47 FTE. That is an increase of 9.73 since the last report. For the year we are projecting that our enrollment will be approximately 307 FTE which is down from our budgeted amount. We have been tracking that all year. SEEM is running into a similar situation as districts as far as the acuteness of students that we are getting including regression of children and the staffing shortage on top of it also. We are trying to accept students, but the need is beyond anything we have seen before.

2. Revenue & Expense report as of 1/31/2022 – Things have improved since the last report. We are projecting a year-end balance of \$295,015. This is an increase of just under \$25,000 from the last report. The reason is projected increase in service revenue as well as shifting some money from expenses to the grant that we have received for the covid-related summer program money. One of the most significant changes is that we received \$200,000 for a Covid summer grant and we were able to shift the expenses out of the general operating budget to the grant so that helped significantly. Other than that, there isn't anything significant to report.

3. Profit and Loss as of 1/31/2022 - Budget vs. Actual, shows a breakdown of the expenses by expense line item. **Motion to approve the financial report as presented by Mr. John Macero, seconded by Dr. Doug Lyons, all in favor.**

c. Facilities Update - Dr. Cathy Lawson stated that SEEM is in need of facilities. Five programs are in substantially separate settings and we lease buildings from member districts. She wanted to put out a request for space. If anyone anticipates any space becoming available in the next 1 to 3 years, please let her know.

E. Future meeting dates - March 12, 2022 - this meeting will be remote. The last meeting will be in person with breakfast and farewell to retiring Board members.

F. Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 9:25 am. **Motion to adjourn made by Dr. Julie Kukenberger, seconded by Dr. Doug Lyons, all in favor.**

Respectfully submitted by,
Catherine Lawson, Executive Director