



NORTHSHORE EDUCATION CONSORTIUM

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes April 3, 2024

Present:	Beverly:	Dr. Charochak
	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
	Pentucket:	Dr. Bartholomew
	Reading:	Dr. Milaschewski
	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
	D. Petronzio	AFT local Vice President 4293
Guests:	Samuel Rippin	Business Manager, Peabody Public Schools
Absent:	Lynn:	Dr. Alvarez
	Nahant:	Dr. Pierantozzi
	Peabody:	Dr. Vadala

I. **Call to Order:** Ms. Angelakis called the meeting to order at 8:03 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. Morrison and seconded Mr. Forget to approve the March 6, 2024 BOD Minutes, Finance 03.27.24 Minutes, April 2024 Communications. Roll call was done 13 voted present and to approve minutes and board communications.

VOTE: The motion was approved

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

III. **Executive Director’s Report-** Ms. Rosenberg gave a brief preview of the budget process and an update on the capital project at 112 Sohier Road. She stated that as always, NEC’s budget is driven by student enrollment and the high level of specialized staffing necessary to meet the complex educational needs of our students. We take seriously our responsibility to be fiscally responsible during this period of financial stress. However, we are also cognizant that we need to maintain a level of programmatic excellence and flexibility so that we can meet our

core mission of helping districts educate students with complex needs both within our approved day school programs and through regional consultation and support.

Ms. Rosenberg gave two recent examples of ways NEC has accepted complicated and challenging referrals and will continue to find ways to provide support to member districts. Her full report will be included in with minutes

Dr. Milaschewski joined the meeting at 8:15

- IV. Treasurers Report** – Mr. Mahoney reviewed the February 2024 Treasurer’s Report and gave a summary of the month’s activity. The Money Market accounts are at 3.2 million. Our goal is to stay at 3 million and we need to continue to keep a close eye on this during the HVAC project as we are at lower end of our “comfort zone”. Budget column has been updated to reflect the revised budget approved at our February meeting. Mr. Mahoney noted for a period of time we will be below that target and will need to watch our cash flow.

There were no questions from the board

MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. Bauer and seconded Dr. Bartholomew to approve January 2024 Treasurers Report. Roll call was done 17 voted to approve

VOTE: The motion was approved

- V. Finance Committee Report-** Ms. Rosenberg reminded the Board that we had done a detailed review of the proposed budget at the March meeting, and had review all changes with the Finance Committee. The budget packet includes a line by line budget, Tuition Rates and NEC calendars. Once finalized we will be sending board members a hard copy to share with districts.

Mr. Fleming stated that everything seems to be on track as projected for HVAC project and today he would be signing off on the loan. He stated we are feeling confident that we won’t have any hiccups for the closing. Mr. Fleming had a group call with all the parties involved yesterday and the CORI checks have all come in for employees who will be involved with the construction.

Mr. Fleming had only one update to the FY25 Budget. He stated that he wanted to be respectful of board members time so would not to go through “story behind budget” again, but could respond to any questions. He pointed out that he made a shift to the HVAC Capital Revenue, moving \$16,000 from FY24 into FY25 Revenue.

Mr. Fleming asked members if they had any questions or concerns.

Mr. Forget spoke on behalf of the Finance Subcommittee stating that this committee has reviewed the budget extensively

Ms. Rosenberg state that the updated written narrative is available in board folder and reminded members before we vote and finalize today to use this opportunity to ask any questions.

There were no additional questions from the board.

MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. Forget and seconded Dr. Bartholomew to approve the 2st vote of the FY25 Budget and Tuition Rates. Roll call was done. 17 voted to approve.

VOTE: The motion was approved

- VI. Facilities Committee Report-** Ms. Rosenberg stated that in the board folder was the detailed time line for HVAC project. She reviewed the impact on parking and stated that during school vacation the construction team will be working double shifts. The project will be completed one wing or segment of the building at a time.

There were no questions from the board.

- VII. New Business- Regional Transportation Grant update-** Mr. Rippin gave a presentation on the proposed regionalized special education transportation project. Mr. Rippin is the business manager in Peabody and he currently works with 10 different vendors, and like all districts, has had issues with the quality of service and

pricing has been consistently escalating. He applied for a "governmental efficiencies" grant to assist with the startup costs, and learned this week that we did not get the grant. However, he feels that if we could get 10 of the 20 districts to contribute \$5000 each, we could hire an expert to help create this model on our own. NEC would pay the vendor and any remaining funds would be held by NEC in escrow. He has partnered with Colleen Cavanaugh who could help create the model, analyze the work, develop a RFP. SEEM Collaborative Greg Zamutto has offered to help as well, as SEEM is managing a similar contract. There is a good chance that NRT/ Beacon would be the vendor...as they are the only local company large enough to respond to a bid of this size. . Mr. Rippin feels strongly we can create and pull this off. Idea would be the funding will be held by NEC as the regional entity, we would spend FY25 doing the analysis and going to bid, and the contract would begin in FY26. Census/pool was done to see the "level of interest" and 11 districts had substantial interest

Dr. Morrison asked about developing a way to see every student on a map of routes to actually see where all the students are and where they are going. He stated that Tri-Town would be interested. Rockport and Swampscott interested.

Mr. Rippin stated it's not just 7D vans taking students to NEC programs but to other programs as well.

Mr. Bauer stated that Danvers would be very interested. Danvers trying to find ways to save. Very well received in concept with his committee, willing to help in way they can.

Mr. Forget stated that NRT rates have been good for Triton.

Ms. Rosenberg thanked Mr. Rippin for coming today and will proceed in setting up a meeting and get back to board with more information.

Ms. Rosenberg stated that in the board folder are the school calendars and proposed board meeting dates which should be informally approved. She suggested that if board has no other business we can adjourn meeting and vote on calendars in the same motion.

Ms. Angelakis – would like to keep Wednesday morning meetings at 8:00 am. There were no disagreements or other suggestions.

Ms. Angelakis stated that her only other business was to inform the board that the committee had met to discuss Ms. Rosenberg's contract and we hope to have finalized by the May meeting.

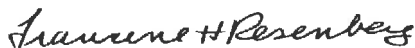
VIII. Adjourn

MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. Bauer and seconded by Dr. Milaschewski to adjourn from the meeting and to approve the FY25 Board Meeting & NEC Calendars at 8:54 am as presented. Roll call was done with 17 voting to adjourn

VOTE: The motion was approved



Kathy Mahoney, Administrative Assistant to Executive Director



Francine Rosenberg, NEC Executive Director

Executive Directors Report

April 2024

At today's meeting we will present the FY25 Budget for your final approval.

The creation of this year's budget was complex, given the major capital project that is about to begin. In your folder is a copy of my email to staff outlining the anticipated timeline for the project and impact on programs. A similar letter was sent to parents.

As always, NEC's budget is driven by student enrollment and the high level of specialized staffing necessary to meet the complex educational needs of our students.

We take seriously our responsibility to be fiscally responsible during this period of financial stress. However, we are also cognizant that we need to maintain a level of programmatic excellence and flexibility so that we can meet our core mission of helping districts educate students with complex needs both within our approved day school programs and through regional consultation and support.

Although our resources are stretched by ongoing workforce and capital expenses, I am committed to finding ways to remain nimble and creative, so that we can accept complicated and challenging referrals AND find innovative ways to provide support.

Here are two recent examples:

1. A member district referred a student to Northshore Academy for an extended evaluation. Our middle school team was already over-enrolled, and this student has a complex combination of needs including trauma, emotional and behavioral challenges, and extensive learning delays. Initially, our team said that we couldn't meet his needs. At the request of the district, I asked the Principal to take another look. Our team rose to the occasion, did a comprehensive evaluation and worked with Rockport's Special Education director to develop a specialized plan.
2. We received a grant from DPH to support trauma informed learning. The grant specifically targeted expanding our ability to provide wraparound services to communities affected by gun violence. We reached out to our colleagues in Lynn, and our senior Connections clinician started to work with some high-needs students and families, including a girl whose brother was recently killed in a gang-related shooting. Our social worker has been out to the home, and is meeting with the child and her extended family trying to help them navigate this crisis, understand the impact of trauma on a middle-school child, and create a plan to get the girl back to school.

Progress Towards Goals

Student Learning and School Climate

- At KOG, MCAS Alt portfolios have been sent to DESE. In other schools, students are working hard on grade-level MCAS.
- We have started training on the new IEP.
- We have applied for a DESE Early Literacy Grant and are hoping to implement the Appleseed Curriculum for our early learners.
- On March 29th, we had a productive PD day. Highlights included wellness activities for staff and a parent panel. The panelists eloquently spoke of the challenges and isolation they face as parents of children with severe disabilities. It was an emotional and impactful reminder for our staff.

Finance and Infrastructure

- HVAC Project and Capital Planning: The project is proceeding on schedule.
- Recruitment and Workforce Development: We are continuing to hold monthly sessions for new employees, and are working on updating our recruitment materials and hiring practices. We are also piloting a new “Instructional Assistant Buddies” program at KOG.
- Friends of NEC/ Grants:
 - We received a \$100,000 DESE grant for SEL and Mental Health. This is helping to fund a variety of both internal and external training initiatives.
 - We have received a multi-year grant from DPH which will enable us to expand the capacity of our Connections Program, and provide additional training for staff in our therapeutic programs.
 - We have recently learned of an incredible gift from our friends at The Tower Foundation. As part of their pilot program for general operating funds, we have been selected to receive \$350,000, spread over 5 years, of unrestricted operating support. This is a huge “vote of confidence” in our mission and our leadership. The Tower Foundation prioritizes the support of individuals struggling with mental health, intellectual disabilities, and substance use. We were selected because the Trustees have been impressed with the ways in which we have used previous grants to develop innovative programs such the Connections program and peer mentoring for young adults with intellectual disabilities. This unexpected gift will help us to sustain our operations during a tight budget period.

Advocacy and Regional Initiatives

- I have had the pleasure of visiting several schools in member districts in recent weeks, and observing some best practices. I continue to meet with district leaders to think creatively about potential future collaborations, and to explore whether NEC’s strategic plan should include developing smaller, public-school based satellite programs and/or how we can expand our capacity to support in-district programming.