

# **Board of Education**

## **Northeast Kansas Education Service Center**

### **Minutes**

**Date: November 19, 2003**

**Time: 7:30 p.m. Call Meeting to Order - USD #341 Central Office - Oskaloosa**

At 7:30 p.m. President, Tom Holroyd called the meeting to order. Members present: Leonard Lange, Keith Ostrander, Carol Meneley, Julie Zule, Tom Holroyd, and Mike Miller (arriving at 7:33 p.m.); Jim Wheeler, Ph.D., Executive Director; Patty Hart, Director of Special Education; Judy Denton, Assistant Director; Susan Aspinwall, Business Manager/Clerk; Dona Higgins, Accounting; Jean Rush, and David Grove, Superintendents; Sharon Branson, SETA Representative; and Tom Singleton, CPA.

- **Consent Agenda**

Lange moved to approve the consent agenda. Zule seconded and motion carried 5-0.

1. Action - Approval of Agenda
2. Action - Approval of Minutes
3. Action - Approval of Bills and Claims

- **Receive - Communications from Visitors Present**

There were no communications from visitors present.

- **Receive - Communications**

1. Treasurer's Report  
Susan provided copies of the treasurer's report for the month of November.

Miller arrived at the meeting at 7:33 p.m.

- **Audit Report**

Tom Singleton, CPA, was introduced and presented the audit report for our 2002-2003 FY completed by Lowenthal, Singleton, Webb and Wilson, PA. He explained there are three areas an audit addresses: financial management, material weakness, and material non-compliance. NEKESC received no exceptions in any of the three areas. He did, however, note that even though NEKESC is the fiscal agent for K-FAST, we have no financial authority to spend NEKESC funds and then get reimbursed by K-FAST like we do with our other federal grants. Even though the organization is related to NEKESC, it has its own board and the grant was awarded to K-FAST and not NEKESC. He thanked members for having his agency do the audit, and added that he enjoyed working with our staff because we always have everything ready for the audit upon the arrival of his staff. Holroyd thanked Singleton for his presentation and he left the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

- **Special Education**

1. **Action - Personnel Update**

Judy reviewed the list of contracts, resignations and terminations for approval. Zule moved to approve as listed. Lange seconded and motion carried 6-0.

2. **Information/Discussion - Drug Free Communities Grant**

Patty explained that the Jefferson County Alliance of Service Councils (JCASC) is an organization of school officials and representatives of the Health Department, Mental Health Center, Regional Prevention Center, SRS and many other groups. This group has obtained funding and addressed problems in Jefferson County for more than 10 years. The JCASC recently received a federal grant of nearly \$80,000 to address drug and alcohol use/abuse, increase school readiness for preschool

children, and to strengthen parenting skills. The Alliance will be able to renew the grant for up to 5 years. Representatives of the Alliance discussed the grant with Superintendents and explained that the evaluation tool for the grant is the Communities That Care Surveys given in schools.

Superintendents expressed some concerns about the surveys, but agreed to the use of them. Patty added that Big Brothers/Big Sisters will be the agency receiving the funds for this project.

### 3. **Information/Discussion - Class Size/Caseload for Special Education Teachers**

Patty explained we are required to have a procedure for determining appropriate caseloads for special education teachers. Our current policy stipulates the use of a computerized formula as well as input from other sources. She provided a list of our current teacher caseloads explaining why some appeared low and others appeared high and the steps that are being taken to ease some of the higher caseloads. The CSCL formula is used twice a year to assess teacher caseloads.

## • **Regional Service Center**

### 1. **Rethinking Information/Discussion - Rethinking Special Education - Reading**

Jim reported that NEKESC administrators have been reflecting on NCLB and its impact on special education programs and services. They are in the process of developing a plan that will help meet a vision of increasing special education student achievement rates so they are in a "catch up" trajectory to their regular education peers. To this end they will be administering pre-post reading comprehension assessments to complement our CBM and DIBELS data. The *Degrees of Reading Power Assessment* (DRP) will be utilized. They will also be using some standardized language/communications assessments in our early childhood programs - using the *Early Communication Indicator* developed at K.U. In addition, plans are to implement a research based reading comprehension approach for secondary students called *Cognitive Apprenticeship*. Jim then provided data comparing NEKESC to State averages on reading assessment scores. Secondary teachers will learn how to help students read and comprehend what they read in the process of learning the math, history or social studies that they are teaching. Teachers will have to determine if the materials they are using are working. Regular education teachers will be allowed to get involved with this as well. Patty explained that five years ago NEKESC did a big push to help our teachers learn to teach reading and we are now ready for the second phase of this endeavor.

### 2. **Information/Discussion - Facilities Committee**

Jim reported on the update from the Superintendents' meeting last week. He provided a summary of the facilities study and the discussion held by Superintendents including long-term goals and planning financially for that vision. Applying for a new charter could be a possible source of funding, but at this point, no district has indicated an interest in sponsoring a charter. At the same time, if we move JDLA to Ozawkie, there will be room for more students producing more tuition. It was the consensus of members to use the recommendation as a starting point and see what Jeff West has to say.

### 3. **Information/Discussion - Fire Marshall Report**

Jim reported that the NEKESC was visited by the Fire Marshall on November 3rd and was cited for not having a couple of the things corrected from last year's visit. However, the fire marshal likes our fire escape and sprinkler system and since the emergency lighting has been taken care of, we should be OK if he shows up for a reinspection.

### 4. **Information/Discussion - Pass Plan Update**

The Pass Plan is up and running. Jim reviewed the Pass Plan and how it fits into a strategy to help meet a vision to increase special education student achievement on state assessments. It gives the students the opportunity to do tests that are similar to the state assessments, only on computers instead of bubble sheets, as this is how the state assessments are probably going to be done in the near future. Teachers can generate computerized assessment at the easy, medium or hard level.

## • **Adjournment**

At 8:40 p.m. Meneley moved to adjourn the meeting. Lange seconded and motion carried 6-0.

---

---

Tom Holroyd  
President

Susan Aspinwall, CPS  
Business Manager/Clerk