

Committee Three Meeting Notes Fall MCASE Meeting, Bozeman, MT

Verne reported that the SAM Delegate Assembly approved a proposal authored by Tim Miller and Merle Farrier to include Coops in the basic per school entitlement payment. This will now be included in SAM's resolutions for future action. While this is not one of SAM's identified priorities, it will remain a position of SAM so that over time, and when the opportunity is there, SAM will be prepared to promote this funding proposal.

Verne reported that SAM, and MPEC have taken a position that the Governor's proposal for "Early Edge" (PK funding) be an "additional" education allocation as opposed to taking the money for other funds. The position of MPEC is that they will support Early Edge, with this condition.

Verne reported on his visit to Washington DC. The most noticeable effort in Congress at this time is an effort to get "full funding" for special education. He visited with our congressional delegation requesting their support for this proposition. Daines, Tester, and Walsh all agreed that full funding should be a goal of Congress. Currently Congress provides 15.6% of special education costs, whereas full funding would be 40%.

During open discussion people shared the challenges they face. For example, Browning has resource teacher caseloads of between 25 and 30 students, they are always short one or more teachers and specialists, and they continue to receive ever greater numbers of impact students. Carol from MSDB shared the challenges they face servicing our hearing and visually impaired students. Sylvia has 30 schools in her Coop, which makes it hard to meet all their unique needs.

Action Plan:

1. Karen Underwood volunteered to solicit a few articles for the SAM Bulletin. As of 12/4/2014 she has contracted two individuals to write articles, in addition to those submitted by Chris.
2. We will try to find out how many schools used the tuition fund for high needs student costs (SB191). Several schools have used the fund, but we have no hard data at this point. Information should be available once the Trustees Financial Reports have been submitted and accepted by OPI (December).
3. When we next meet we will brainstorm ways to increase funding for special education. One of the consistent themes we need to promote is the need to "close the gap" between increases provided in the past for general education vs. what has been provided for special education.
4. There was a suggestion to have one of our members, and a knowledgeable clerk, present at the June MASBO convention on MOE. Kris Magruder is going to contact a clerk who has significant experience to see if she would be interested in helping present at MASBO.

5. There was a suggestion to have a few of our members host a special education question and answer sectional at next year's MCEL conference. One option would be to create a quiz for principals and superintendents regarding special education – as a vehicle for helping them understand what is required under the IDEA.