



MISF Executive Committee Meeting
March 2, 2016
7:30 AM – 9:30 AM
Annunciation School, Minneapolis

AGENDA ITEMS

[Click Here for Meeting Documents \(added as they are available\)](#)

- Review minutes from 12/2/15 meeting
- President's report
 - Updates
 - Development report
 - Membership report
 - Advocacy update
 - Program report
 - Private & Independent Education Awards
- SCOPE (Statewide Census of Private Education)
- Finance report: balance sheet, income statement, restricted funds tracking, cash flow, operating reserve funds
 - Reissue of loan from Nonprofits Assistance Fund
 - Establishment of reserve funds account
- Other business

MINUTES

Those present: Tim Benz, Jennifer Cassidy, Greg Chamberlain, Josh Killian, Joel Landskroener, Greg Margarit

Staff present: Michele Skare

Meeting was called to order at 7:31 AM.

Motion was made by Greg Chamberlain, seconded by Greg Margarit, to approve the minutes from the 12/2/15 meeting as written.

President's report

Staff morale is strong, and we don't feel like we're "missing" anything. We are now running up to the awards event in April, and the logistics around that, and feeling good in terms of responsibility / accountability. We are mindful to always keep talking about grey areas, and making sure that everything is covered. In general, all is very positive as we work in the "new normal." We've not heard anything at all from an external standpoint.

Discussion – We need to be conscious/care about what we’re NOT going to do, with our small staff of 4 and our capacity. Partners that we work with are routinely surprised at the small size of our staff. Once we move into strategic direction/planning, it will help to clarify what we will focus on. Need to keep in mind that we have to be able to say no/what do we not do instead.

Tim Benz has been on several school visits over the last month, with an eye to new members/onboarding pieces/orientation:

- St. Agnes – They have been a legacy member since day one, and have a new leader who came from Providence Academy. They had a great discussion, and he wanted to make sure that we knew how much they value their relationship with MISF. Tim took the opportunity to ask him about Providence and MISF membership – he said that as a new school they belonged to several organizations, and were in the process of accreditation. MISF membership simply fell off their radar, and they never got back to it. There might be an opportunity for membership discussion there.
- Hill-Murray – Tim met with new President Jim Hansen, who came to H-M as a “non-school” person. Chuck Briscoe, Principal, was formerly principal at St Paul Prep, and has been a wonderful internal advocate for MISF. Jim said that he has heard great things about us, and that his staff are attending our events. They spoke about the School Leadership Conference, and Jim said that, being so new to the school and position, it was hard to justify going. Tim made sure to tell him that leaders from several other Catholic schools attend the conference.
- Shakopee Area Catholic School – new member this year, President Diane Lee indicated they have found great value in the membership. The School Leadership Conference was exceptional and they intend to remain members.
- Morning Son Christian School – small new member school in Fergus Falls. Their principal spoke of the fact that although they are a part of ACSI, they wanted to be a part of something bigger (greater voice, etc.). Encouraged her to attend the School Leadership Conference – good way to broaden their network.
- Hillcrest Academy – Tim enjoyed meeting with Steve Brue and seeing their school – a fascinating model, blend of the old seminary and new, modern school. Steve will be resigning this year, after 34 years at Hillcrest. He plans to move to the Twin Cities, and has indicated that he would like to remain involved on some level – possibility to approach him for board membership. They have not yet announced a search for his replacement.
- Linda Kaiser – She is the St. Cloud diocesan director of Catholic Schools. They are currently going through a strategic planning process. She mentioned that she would like to have all their diocesan schools become members, and they are having discussions around that.

Discussion: How do we craft a welcome plan for new members – something we have been talking about since before the change in personnel. Important for new members to get a phone call in first 90 days. Tim is designating days during which he goes to schools (new and current members). That kind of contact is important. Once a personal connection has been made, it’s harder for schools to not renew!

Suggestion: It's important to ask board members to step up, too. They could make those personal connections, share the story of MISF, and be good representatives for us.

MN Comeback.

Meetings are going well, and it's worthwhile to be a part of this group, even though there is sometimes a significant time investment. Other organizations that are involved are bigger than we are, and have more staff to cover the time. Still the connections we are making are very important. The group convened the seven Minneapolis schools: Hope Academy, St. Helena's, Cristo Rey, John Paul 2 School, DeLaSalle, Risen Christ, and Ascension. The Comeback team and schools were very excited and encouraged about efforts so far. There was discussion around what the schools need: teacher training, leadership development, etc. It was a great first step. This will affirm MISF's position and value with nonmember schools (example – Cristo Rey) so they can see what membership can do for them, and they'll hopefully want to be part of our movement.

Tim has been working to make connections with various smaller trusts and foundation departments; getting in front of them, helping them to understand what we do. These trustees have portfolios of funds that they manage, and these funds that have to be distributed. In meeting with us, they are able to ascertain if we are a good fit for them. Generally an LOI and cover letter are all that is needed – not necessarily another large grant request that would have to be written. Tim will continue to explore this funding avenue.

Tim has been appointed to the Nonpublic Education Council. It's good for MISF to be at the table representing all private/independent schools. Their next meeting is about equity in title funding.

MISF Website

It is currently on a Joomla platform and is 5 years old. We've been hacked twice in the last month, so a website redesign has now become a priority. After talking with several designer/developer, we have decided to go with Digital Solutions, our current hosting service. Cost will be approximately \$13,000, and expense is anticipated in our next fiscal year. However, looking at our cash flow, we may be able to commence working on the project in this fiscal year. If we could start the project in the May/June timeframe, we'll have it done by September.

Legislative session report:

Working alongside OAK, one of our priorities is the education tax credit. Currently at \$1000, the goal is to expand it to \$1500, and add "and tuition" to the legislation. Representative Knobloch has carried the bill into conference. When he did so, he floated out a figure of \$3500 and said that it was important to stress that this is NOT a voucher, and to focus on the fact that this helps lower income families. When the new budget forecast was released, with a surplus that was \$300 million dollars less than originally forecast, everything changed. The focus is now back on expanding the credit from \$1000 to \$1500, and getting tuition added to the credit, which is exactly what we wanted.

Education Savings Accounts

Passage is more of a marathon than a sprint, as is true with the tax credit scholarships. The fiscal note on these is \$20 million, which is very small for the state but huge for families. We need to activate network when this comes up in front of the legislature. School leaders need to push information out to families and supporters and urge them to call their legislator. When legislators get multiple calls on an item, it gets their attention and an item suddenly becomes an issue.

The next session begins a week from yesterday (March 9th), and there are tight timelines. Because it is a fast session, anything controversial is won't be dealt with. The economic disparities piece has changed and is now focused on the iron range, so hopefully ours will just slide by unnoticed. The challenge is to remind lawmakers that the credit expansion (\$1000-\$1500) is for EVERY family, and the additional "and tuition" just change affects private school families, and both are focused on lower income families. We feel that we are positioned well, and if we get a win on this it's good for families, and important for us.

Question: Is Governor Dayton still pushing for full time PK? Because the budget surplus is less, he will have to ratchet down this issue. While the Senate is focusing on early learning scholarships (vouchers), the issue of universal PK has died down. The success of early learning scholarships will address what we want to do.

ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act, replaces No Child Left Behind)

The National CAPE has been very involved in the writing of this legislation and MN Representative John Kline is a sponsor. The legislation is very favorable and equitable for privates. Tim will get a more thorough understanding, as well as hearing directly how they see this rolled out into state when he attends the State CAPE meeting in Washington DC on March 13-14. One important component of the legislation is the creation of an ombudsman for nonpublics to ensure equity in nonpublic school funding.

Development report

Hard copies of reports were distributed. Highlights:

All areas are in line where we need them to be. Sponsorships – while we didn't hit the School Leadership Conference sponsorship numbers, all the rest in great shape.

February is a stronger month for us. The 3M grant was approved and received on February 2nd, and the Harrington Trust money came in that day as well. Both of these grants will be reflected in the February financials that will be distributed next month.

Our donor numbers, both individuals and corporations, are strong. Board member giving will be at 100% by end of year.

Grant pipeline – The 3M Foundation Grants have been approved, and many others are in process. Steve Hoepfner of the Richard Schulze Family Foundation came to our office. We are in their cycle, and had good site visit. They've previous funded us, and Steve is a big supporter of what we're doing at MISF. We are writing the grant for \$10K more than last year. Mark Dienhart was at the Leadership Conference in September, and will be visiting Mayer Lutheran on 4/27.

We had a knockout STEM site visit with Xcel at Totino-Grace. The Xcel Foundation now knows more about MISF. We requested an additional \$5K this year. The board recognizes and thanks Greg for this connection. Totino-Grace has an E3 (Engineering) program. About 1/3 of all kids in the school are enrolled at any given time, and half go on to engineering/science majors.

Membership Report

We've gone from 160 to 156 schools, but we are not overly concerned. Last year's grant from the Schulze foundation was used to help scholarship schools into membership. We anticipate that some part of any other grants we get from them will be used for that again.

Our Metro/Greater MN ratio of schools is reflected on our Dashboard (61% metro, 39% greater MN). Good to see that we do represent schools in greater MN. Need to continue to ensure that our schools are a good blend of schools all over the state.

Governance Committee Report

The committee will meet on March 17th, but have had conversations in the interim. Several new members have come onboard and three will be attending their first board meeting next week: Kevin Gyolai, Phyllis Karasov, and Veena Lakkundi.

As board member terms are ending, the committee is mindful that having some historical perspective of the organization is good, but we need to continue to bring new members onboard. Members who are rolling off the board will be offered a seat on the President's Cabinet, which is a good way to keep up important connections. The committee anticipates bringing forth a new slate for any new members, as well as new officers, for approval at the June meeting.

Janet Miller has given up her board position; she is heavily involved in CSCOE (Catholic Schools Center of Excellence) as their PreK liaison. She has offered to stay connected to us as an early ed consultant, and would consider coming back to the board if her schedule allows for it.

Program Report

The Awards event is coming up on April 24th. The nomination process was changed and streamlined, but we may have oversimplified! We received over 70 responses this year, compared with just over 30 last year. The Awards committee met last week to confirm the Behind the Scenes, Community Champion, Program and Leadership awards, and to choose the Honor Teachers from the list of finalists. The committee members are: Greg Anklam (chair), Paul Cerkvenik (MN Private College Council), Linda Holmen (former board member/chair), Kelly Regan, Todd Russ (St. Croix Lutheran School President), and Tim Benz.

There will be some changes to the program this year, including a sit-down dinner rather than hors d'oeuvres (and, interestingly, having dinner is less expensive, because we can predict the amount of food we need to order), as well as a cash bar. The evening will begin with a short welcome message, and then presentation of the STEM awards. After that, we will allow 40 minutes to eat, then present the rest of the awards. We are working with a new videographer this year, and will be doing interviews with the winners and finalists. All in all, it should be a very different feeling event. A key piece of the event are

the sponsorships. The budget is set at a semi-challenging \$65K, and Michelle and Tim are currently working on securing sponsors. If board member can secure 2 tables each, that would go a long way towards helping us meet that number.

SCOPE

We are working with Wilder Research on the next SCOPE study (which is being funded by Katherine B. Andersen Fund), with an eye to launch in late March. We have been meeting with Wilder about questions, and have asked both Barry Sullivan, and John McCall to look at the questions and give us feedback. We are meeting with Wilder tomorrow to finalize the survey tool and will communicate out to schools in the following week. For the purposes of this study, we will be using school data from the 2014-15 school year. We have communicated with our partners at MNSAA, LCMS, and the Archdiocese, and have asked them to stress with their memberships the importance of this study. Data collection will begin at the end of March and continue through the end of May. The final report will be issued sometime during September or October, in time for Wilder to attend the School Leadership Conference and do the rollout while there. The plan is to create a communications plan on the back side of the process, and will include press releases, and the opportunity to talk about the report in front of legislative committees.

The board asks that it would be able to view the report first, prior to all others, in order to comment on and help to shape the final outcome. We will make sure that the board receives the draft first.

The last time the survey was conducted, in 2011, there were approximately 500 nonpublic schools in Minnesota. That number is now closer to 470 schools. We received 220 responses to the 2011 survey. The Archdiocese has worked with us to align their school census with SCOPE study, so that some of their schools' data can be directly imported by Wilder.

Finance Report

In looking at the summary and variances provided by Debbie Kaliszewski (Business Manager): There is nothing surprising. The balance sheet program line is mostly STEM funds and reserve dollars. The assets held for differed comp is the 457 plan for Jim Field. Regarding the note payable line: we have retired the \$50K bridge loan. Balance-wise there are no major issues.

The Income Statement YTD vs. Budget, all is well. Dues income is right on, while food and venue expense is up, but that is tied to revenue. Our seminars have had greater attendance this year over last year.

The temp restricted funds are from STEM and SCOPE.

Cashflow: We are in a good spot. Debbie and Tim continue to refine this report, and obviously sponsorship money is very significant. Money from the Schulze foundation is not baked into this yet. We hope to receive it by the end of this fiscal year. Grant applications to Schulze are by invitation only. This year we asked for \$35K: \$10K restricted funds, \$25K unrestricted.

Nonprofits Assistance Fund loan was approved for reissue (still at 6.5% interest) for the term remaining on it, which is 34 months. There will be no change in the payment amount, and we continue to put \$500

per month into reserves. We could retire the loan early if we wanted to/were able to. We did not need a board resolution for this transaction, because it was simply a reissue of the loan.

We currently have 2 accounts at Bremer: an operating account and a restricted funds account which includes our reserve funds. Debbie has requested that we open a separate account for just the reserves, to simplify bookkeeping. We are hoping that the same good interest rate would apply to all of our accounts, based on the total balance of all three accounts. The Executive Committee agrees that this is a good idea, and Debbie and Tim will continue to pursue this with Bremer.

Adjournment

There being no other business brought forth, Joel Landskroener moved to adjourn, seconded by Josh Killian. Meeting adjourned at 9:05 AM.



3/23/16

Greg Anklam/Secretary