

MINUTES

MISF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

MARCH 3, 2021

7:30 AM-9:30 AM

ZOOM MEETING

AGENDA

- Review and approve minutes from 12/2/20 meeting
- President's report
 - * Issues affecting private/independent schools
 - * Updates
 - * Advocacy update
 - * Development report
 - * Membership report
 - * Membership rate increase proposal
 - * Program report
 - * Education Awards- virtual event: April 29, 2021
- Finance report: balance sheet, income statement, restricted funds tracking, cash flow, dashboard
 - * PPP forgiveness and second draw
- Strategic plan prework and status
- Other business
- Executive Session

MINUTES

Those present: Tim Benz, Teri McCloughan, Josh Killian, Brian Lynch, Wyayn Rasmussen

Staff Present: Michele Skare

Meeting began at 7:34 AM.

Motion to approve the minutes as written made by Wyayn Rasmussen, seconded by Josh Killian, motion passed.

President's Report

While the pace of the year has moderated, we are still outside of our "normal" routines.

Federal funding is still at the forefront; the next round- Emergency Assistance for Nonpublic Schools (EANS) is the next rollout. A \$2.75 billion dollar package being rolled out to the states that is specifically for nonpublic schools. Minnesota's share of the funding is \$41.7M. States must apply for the funding; the original deadline was February 8, which was then extended to February 22 – the date

on which MN applied. This program will be managed by the MDE; they are hiring a part time employee (a recent MDE retiree) to oversee the program.

Our nonpublic school coalition (still meeting weekly) had advocated for funding to be distributed with a base rate for all schools plus a multiplier based on FRL student count; and MDE followed that advice. Funding will be at \$380 per student (all students) plus an additional \$2K per each FRL eligible student.

This program still needs approval from the US Department of Education, and the state legislature must grant the authorization to spend the money.

To address the issue of schools who do not report FRL numbers, MDE will allow verifiable numbers (from a third party tuition vendor, etc.) to be used.

When the program is announced and an application date set, MDE will roll out a webinar alongside it.

A caveat: schools cannot apply for and receive a PPP and EANS funding; they can receive one or the other.

COVID-19 Vaccinations: As vaccines become available and are distributed, nonpublic schools/faculty/staff have been receiving them equitably. While there are still not nearly enough vaccines available, progress is being made.

Our relationship with new lobbyist, Chas Anderson, is going very well; she is tenacious and well-connected at the legislature. More on this in the advocacy report.

Our second PPP loan has been secured, and the first loan forgiven. Premier Banks have been very helpful; we are grateful for this banking relationship.

Enrollment: We have heard of a 2% drop overall in public schools, while hearing about some increases in nonpublic schools. The Archdiocese has reported an 11% increase in the lower grades (K-3.)

The weekly nonpublic coalition calls continue, as well as our weekly calls with MDE and participating in the weekly call with all superintendents at MDE.

Advocacy Update

Chas Anderson will attend the upcoming board meeting. She has done a great job working on two paths, expanding school choice, and the every day “bread and butter” issues that we continue to monitor:

expanding the education tax credit to include tuition

education savings accounts. There will be a hearing about education savings accounts in the Senate Education Committee on Monday at 3pm.

Transportation capacity and costs (which can become an unfunded mandate for districts, because students must be transported)

Expanding counseling/mental health services into K-6

Safe Schools revenue piece that has been in the statute for approximately 20 years are set to expire at the end of June. Amount is \$36 per pupil. Senator Chamberlain is proposing including nonpublic schools in the funding and expanding the amount to \$37/pupil.

Minnesota has the only divided legislature in the US, presenting a unique challenge.

Development Report

Grant season seems to have spilled over into spring from its normal fall season, with a good amount of activity to report. Board member Anna Lima helped us with a connection to the Athwin Foundation. We submitted an LOI with a \$20K general operating funding request.

The GHR Foundation was very appreciative of the way we were able to organize and distribute the microgrant funding last year. We have been invited to apply for a \$50K grant this year, and are working on that this week.

We are waiting to schedule our annual meetings with both 3M and the Schott Foundation. The Schulze Family Foundation Grant is on track for April/May.

Sponsorships for the April Awards event are starting to come in, even as we just held an event in December. Sponsors are understanding that our reach and impact is greater with a virtual/online format.

Membership Report

We are showing net growth this year, with a retention rate of 95.5% last year. Our geography is continuing to hold at 60/40 metro to outstate.

The number of Associate members has doubled this year. Associate members are connected to other networks (LCMS, MNSAA, Dioceses) and play an important role in getting word out from and about us.

Question: Is this the year to do a “recap” piece, highlighting our accomplishments? This could be used in marketing and in grant proposals. Answer: Absolutely. We have never done a lot of boasting about our accomplishments, but this would definitely be the year to do so. This could also be a tool for principals to use when going to pastors/school boards to make their case to renew membership.

Perhaps a project for a summer marketing intern.

A point we may want to highlight is that many nonpublic schools have been holding in-person learning all year, as opposed to most public schools which are just beginning to return to the classroom.

Member Rate Increase: We are proposing raising our membership rate to \$5 per student, \$275 for smaller schools (less than 56 students) and also for Associate members. Especially this year, it is easy to make a case for the members' return on their dues investment. We will add the rate increase to the March board meeting agenda for approval.

Program Report

The 2021 Education Awards will be held as a virtual/online event on April 29th. We will once again be working with W2 Films, who produced the event last year. The winners will be announced in the Newsletter next Tuesday.

Finance Report

The Finance report is posted on the website. Brian and Tim highlighted these items:

The first PPP loan has been forgiven, and a new loan has been secured; as the first loan comes off the balance sheet, the second will be added. Again, we don't anticipate any issues with the next loan being forgiven.

Our cashflow position is very positive; even better than previously forecast earlier in the year. We continue to put \$3K/month into the reserve account – the balance is now \$136K.

Overall revenues are down, as are overall expenses. Sponsorship income is up significantly, due to having both the 2020 and 2021 awards events in the same fiscal year.

Strategic Planning Update

Following discussion with Veena Lakkundi, who will lead all strategic planning efforts, the strategic planning subcommittee decided to work with an outside marketing firm, Eight Moon, to take a closer look at our outward-facing branding: our name, our logo, and our tagline. Only after looking at all these will we move into reviewing our messaging – especially what it will look like to those who are not familiar with MISF.

This is a significant undertaking, and it was decided that in order to take a better look at the entire package, we would push the timing back, targeting the Fall of 2021.

This prework has been very helpful. As the committee discussed what MISF has become, and what we do for our members, does the word "Forum" adequately describe who we are? We advocate, we connect, we are a conduit.

We have provided Megan Junius (from Eight Moon) with information from other organizations similar to ours (connected to us through the national CAPE organization) on their branding. There are associations, federations... no other "forums." Even our logo, a graduation cap, may no longer adequately describe an organization like ours, where most members are now K-8 schools.

More to come as the subcommittee continues its work.

Executive Session

MISF staff were excused as the Committee met in Executive Session starting at 8:43 AM



Wyayn Rasmussen – Secretary

3/4/2021