

General Membership Meeting Notes  
**SCHOOLS FOR EQUITY IN EDUCATION**

Friday, November 22, 2013  
Ramada Plaza Minneapolis

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by President Kathy Bystrom at 9:30am.

II. ROLL CALL

**Albany** - Scott Hansen, **Albert Lea**-Bill Leland, Mike Funk, Jeff Halverson, **Annandale**-Steve Niklaus, **Anoka-Hennepin** - Dennis Carlson, Bill Harvey, **Big Lake** – Jonathan Miller, **Braham** - Steve Eklund, Greg Winter, **Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose** - Laurie Raymond, Scott Thielman, **Byron** - Jeffrey Elstad, **Centennial** - Dan Huffman, Suzy Guthmueller, **Chisago Lakes** – Lori Berg, Tom Lawlor, Joe Thimm, Jerry Vitalis, **Dassel-Cokato** – Irene Bender, Richard Tormanen, **Delano** –Carolyn Milano, Matt Schoen, **East Central** – Andy Almos, Peter Brown, Jeannette Kester, **Elk River** – Mark Bezek, **Forest Lake** – Ross Bennett, Kathy Bystrom, Linda Madsen, **Fridley** – Gordon Backlund, **Hinckley-Finlayson**- Rob Prater, Dwaine Palmer, **Howard Lake Waverly Winsted**– Brad Sellner, **Hutchinson** – Daron VanderHeiden, **Kimball** – John Tritabaugh, **Lake City** – Craig Junker, **Maple Lake** – Mark Redemske, Shelly Liljequist, **Medford** – Rich Dahman, **Melrose** – John Funk, **Milaca** – Jerry Hansen, **New Prague** – Lonnie Seifert, Tony Buthe, **North Branch** – Deb Henton, Tim MacMillan, **Northfield** – Chris Richardson, Ann Maple, **Owatonna** – Bill Bernard, Tom Sager, VJ Giga, Peter Grant, **Paynesville** – Robert Huot, **Princeton** – Julia Espe, **Rockford** – Todd Anderson, Paul Durand, **ROCORI** – Scott Staska, **Rosemount-Apple Valley-Egan** – Joel Albright, Jeff Solomon, **Royalton** – Liz Verley, Jon Ellerbusch, Dale Lenz, **St. Francis** – Paul Neubauer, Ed Saxton, **St. Michael-Albertville** – Jim Behle, Jeanne Holland, **Stillwater**-Mike Ptacek, **Waconia** – Nancy Rajanen, Cathy Thom.

SEE – Dick Berge, Deb Griffiths, Brad Lundell.

III. PROGRAM

Brad Lundell introduced a panel discussion on the work of the career pathways and technical education task force. The panel consisted of taskforce members Rose Hermodson, Assistant to the Commissioner at MDE, David Johnson, the Associate Dean at the U of M College of Education and Human Development, Julie Warner, former Director of the Wright Technical Center, and Sue Boehland, Secondary Coordinator at the MN for Career and Technical Education.

The taskforce is charged with recommending to the legislature how to redesign secondary and postsecondary education to improve outcomes for students, to create better alignment between systems, and to measure and evaluate the efficacy of the P-12 and postsecondary programs.

The members of the panel discussed the importance of students planning to and attending postsecondary education. The student plan beginning in grade 9 was emphasized as critical to student success. Parents, counselors and teachers need to be involved in the development of the plan.

The need for teacher licensure to become more flexible and allow teachers to work across systems was discussed. Collaboration between postsecondary and higher education was a theme shared by the panel members. Resources in many areas are needed to make this happen.

The panel fielded questions from the floor that included whether or not the recommendations of the taskforce would be adopted for incremental change or more rapid change. The response was that it is hoped the change comes more rapidly rather than slowly, but it is dependent on the legislature. Another question was related to assessments and measuring student “soft skills.” Other comments from the floor included

concern for students who went on to postsecondary education and were unable to find employment in their field upon graduation.

The panel encouraged members in attendance to find out how their local legislators viewed the work of the taskforce.

**IV. AGENDA**

The agenda was approved on a motion and a second from the floor.

**V. MINUTES**

The minutes of the September 19 were reviewed and approved on a motion and a second from the floor.

**VI. TREASURER'S REPORT**

The treasurer's report was provided by Tom Sager. The current financial report indicated that the revenue may look a little light on the statement, but that is not the case in reality and the next statement will reflect revenue is on target. Expenditures are right on track.

The financial report was approved on a motion and a second from the floor.

Tom reported that we had a clean unqualified opinion on the audit. Congratulations and thank you to Dick, Brad and Deb.

The audit results were accepted on a motion and a second from the floor.

Tom noted that about 18% of the school districts belong to SEE, but 36% of the SEE districts will participate in the Prep Bowl. Go students!

**VII. LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT**

Nancy Rajanen shared that input had been gathered on the draft platform at regional meetings and reviewed by the legislative committee. Members were presented with the most recent draft.

The 2014 Legislative Platform was approved on a motion and second from the floor.

**VIII. COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH REPORT**

Deb reported that about 35% of the membership responded to a recently released survey by SEE staff, including 56% of SEE superintendents. The survey is providing good information to staff that look forward to learning more about how to better service SEE members.

Deb offered to come to SEE districts to give presentations. She will also make a schedule to have SEE days at the capitol. Deb emphasized that though not a budget year, SEE needs to be present at the capitol.

**IX. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT**

Brad shared thoughts on the upcoming session. He focused his remarks on school facilities financing reform. He noted that the proposals will bring greater equalization into the system and that operating capital will be expanded. Very good for SEE districts!

Brad encouraged all members to respond to the recently released SEE survey. Brad wants to know what members value and how SEE can better help the membership.

Brad will begin blogging and tweeting more frequently. He is also eager to come out to districts.

The legislative platform is a good one according to Brad. He believes the session will be "fast and furious." He has heard that the legislators want to have a short session.

No questions from the floor.

## **X. PROGRAM**

Brad introduced guest speaker and State Senator Dave Thompson. Senator Thompson is a republican candidate for governor. He shared that he was educated in public schools and has a great deal of respect for public education.

Senator Thompson observed that you don't have access to a dream unless you have education. He said that, "Equality of education should not be a fantasy. It should be a reality."

Senator Thompson identified a number of issues. First, he said the funding formula is very complicated with only a few people understanding it. The senator believes that certain school districts are favored over others. Second, some school districts don't have a property tax base. Third, he doesn't believe local levies are a good idea. He would prefer increasing the funding formula over putting funding into school districts that are able to pass levies.

The senator said that the amount of money for education will likely not increase and that it needs to be distributed differently.

He is an advocate of school choice, tax credits, and competition for public schools. The senator believes that competitive pressure will make schools better.

The senator closed with saying that something needs to be done with union contracts.

Senator Thompson fielded questions from the floor. A member asked about the length of contracts and whether as governor he would look at longer contracts. Another question was asked about the appointment of the commissioner and how to make that less political. The senator responded that he would like the appointment of the commissioner to be less political and that he wants more local control for school boards and they should be able to set terms of contracts, including length. Comments were made to the senator about how competition for school districts is not equal. The senator responded that the regulatory structure restricts public schools and that private schools have the ability to select students. He said that needed to be addressed. The senator was asked whether or not he supported local control included allowing school boards to levy without going to the voters. Under the current system he does not support. A question was also asked about the agrarian calendar and summer vacation. The senator said he believes that kids should have a summer vacation but he is open to listening to hearing discussion about how this might be getting in the way of educating children. Another question from the field was whether or not he believed the dollars we currently have in education are enough. He responded, "Yes." A member followed up on the senator's statement that more money should be put on the formula but that there is enough funding currently. He further explained his position. The senator does not believe in requiring participation in PEIP. He does not support the current bullying bill. The senator was asked about teacher evaluation and he responded that it is very complicated. Another member shared that the senator's comparison of education to business was concerning. The senator reiterated that he believes in education and that teachers are sometimes asked to do the impossible. He believes funding is relevant. A member discussed the governor's taskforce on funding and how the work of that group indicated that there was not enough funding. The senator said that the "governor's people had the reigns and he was a bit shocked" at what they did in the taskforce discussion. A final question was about assessment and why there isn't a taskforce of educators on assessment. The senator said kids need to be tested but there is too much testing and that the testing should occur at the local level. He agreed that a taskforce on assessment should be made up of educators.

## **XI. ADJOURNMENT**

President Bystrom adjourned the meeting at 11:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Deb Henton