

Board of Directors Board Meeting Minutes



March 11, 2025

BOARD MEETING

Ms. Tiara Mays-Sims, board vice president, called the Heartland AEA Board of Directors meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

Board Members Present: Ms. Margaret Borgen, Ms. Liz Brennan, Mr. Pete Evans, Mr. John Kinley, Ms. Tiara Mays-Sims, Dr. Steve Rose, Ms. Margie Schwenk and Ms. Heather Sievers. *Absent:* Mr. Alex Piedras.

Administrative Staff Present: Mr. Kevin Fangman, Dr. Susie Meade, Ms. Jenny Ugolini, Dr. Kristi Upah, Mr. Brian Whalen and Dr. Cindy Yelick.

Approval of Agenda

A MOTION was made by Mr. Kinley and seconded by Ms. Schwenk to approve the agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes from Feb. 11 and 25, 2025

A MOTION was made by Dr. Rose and seconded by Mr. Evans to approve the minutes from Feb. 11 and 25, 2025. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Forum and Correspondence

No one from the public was present to speak to the Board.

Iowa Department of Education Accreditation Site Visit

Dr. Cindy Yelick, Heartland AEA Chief Administrator, discussed the Agency's spring accreditation visit from the Iowa Department of Education. A site visit will be held in Johnston on April 7 and 8. Board members may be called upon to participate in the interview process. The Department has requested artifacts around the state's standard areas to review. All nine AEAs will go through the process this year. The results will go to the State Board of Education in June for approval.

Legislative Update

Dr. Yelick provided a brief legislative update.

- The AEA Task Force has not been able to schedule an additional meeting due to health issues of some of its members. The Task Force has 13 items they are supposed to review. Pending their recommendations, the items are still open and the Iowa Department of Education will use current statute to make determinations.
- House File 914 is a new bill that was introduced after the funnel date; therefore, it can't move forward in its current state or be voted upon. The bill proposes to reverse some of the stipulations in HF 2612, including restoration of AEA boards and funds.
- Several of the Governor's proposed bills remain active, i.e., cell phone restrictions, math curriculum, food/nutrition and school safety.
- Dr. Yelick noted the increase in public and non-public schools the Agency will serve next year. The number of public schools will increase from 53 to 57, non-public schools will increase to 47, and there will be an additional 13 charter schools next year.

Discussion Items

Sharing Agreements: Grant Wood AEA and Green Hills AEA

Dr. Yelick noted two sharing agreements between Heartland AEA and other AEAs.

- The sharing agreement for Dr. Susie Meade as Interim Chief Administrator with Grant Wood AEA. The contract is in progress and will be brought forward next month for approval.

Board of Directors Board Meeting Minutes



March 11, 2025

- The sharing agreement for Talented & Gifted (TAG) services at Green Hills AEA. AEA's must be able to provide services even if a district does not request it. A plan must be in place to implement it should there be a need. The Department indicates agreements must be on file, so the Board should anticipate more sharing agreements in the upcoming months.

Staffing in Districts

Dr. Yelick discussed allocating staff across each of the Agency's service areas. Each district will have access to a core team of service providers, e.g., school social workers, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, challenging behavior specialists, etc. Allocations have gone to the regional directors as they finalize staffing in the buildings.

The Board recessed for dinner from 5:14 to 5:52 p.m.

Heartland AEA Tentative Agreement with the Heartland Education Association for 2025-26

Mr. Kevin Fangman, Heartland AEA Chief of Human Resources, shared the tentative agreement that was reached between the Agency and the Heartland Education Association for 2025-26.

Personnel Report

Mr. Fangman reviewed the personnel report.

Action Items

Personnel Report

A MOTION was made by Mr. Kinley and seconded by Mr. Evans to approve the personnel report. The motion passed unanimously.

Heartland AEA Tentative Agreement with the Heartland Education Association for 2025-26

A MOTION was made by Dr. Rose and seconded by Ms. Brennan to approve the Heartland AEA Tentative Agreement with the Heartland Education Association for 2025-26. The motion passed unanimously. (The agreement is for a 2.25% increase in the base salary (3.51% with TSS), which includes step increases with the remainder going to base salaries. The mileage reimbursement will increase to .54¢ per mile starting July 1, 2025.)

Consent Agenda

Ms. Borgen reviewed the Agency's financial statements. She shared how the financial documents are organized during normal times, and even more so during trying times. The Agency's employee count is down by 10%, so it impacts the cost of salaries and benefits. She noted the insurance plan is still solvent and working well and there is capacity to change if needed. A MOTION was made by Dr. Rose and seconded by Mr. Evans to approve the consent agenda including payment of warrant numbers 422205 through 422290 and electronic warrant numbers 52280 through 52657. The motion passed unanimously.

- Purchase Orders
 - *Apple Computer, Inc.* - \$197,775.00
- Green Hills and Heartland AEA Sharing Agreement for Talented and Gifted (TAG)
- Order of Service Agreement between Heartland AEA and Mississippi Bend AEA
- Memorandum of Understanding between Heartland AEA and Kerri Baish for Dyslexia Consulting

Chief Administrator Comments

- Dr. Yelick and Mr. Brian Whalen, Heartland AEA Director of Business Services, will present the Agency's budget to the State Board of Education on March 20 as part of the annual budget hearing process.

Board of Directors Board Meeting Minutes



March 11, 2025

- Dr. Yelick shared that 90% of the District Service Plan (DSP) meetings have been completed. Some themes have emerged around ESSA, math and literacy support. A large number of districts have shown little to no interest in purchasing resources from the Agency's library collection. It's the one significant feedback received.
- The Agency intends to send contracts to Certified staff around March 17.

Board Member Comments

- Dr. Rose noted the state and federal education agencies that have been impacted by funding reductions.
- Ms. Mays-Sims asked for an update on the composition of AEA boards of directors as a result of HF2612. Dr. Yelick shared that the AEAs are consulting with Jodi Flory, GIS consultant. She has been tasked with looking at census data and AEA board seats. The Board composition will consist of five citizen board members and four superintendents. If a board member has an interest in staying on the Board, contact Jenny Ugolini. The new board will be seated in December 2025.

A motion was made by Mr. Kinley and seconded by Mr. Evans to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 6:12 p.m.

Reports and documents and the full text of motions, resolutions or policies considered by the Board at this meeting are on file in the Board Secretary's office, (515) 473-6644, Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Handwritten signature of Elizabeth Brennan in cursive.

Ms. Liz Brennan
Board President

Handwritten signature of Jenny Ugolini in cursive.

Ms. Jenny Ugolini
Board Secretary