

A.E.R.O. Special Education Cooperative
Minutes of the
Executive Board Finance Committee Meeting
November 3, 2010

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 am.

Present: Dr. Diane Cody, 124; Dr. Beth Hart, 231; James Gunnell, Director; Tom Brim, Asst. Director; Maggie Lesniak, Business Manager

Absent: None

Dr. Cody moved to approve the agenda. Dr. Hart seconded the motion.

Purpose of Committee

Mr. Gunnell explained that the purpose of the committee was to look over A.E.R.O. staffing patterns and to then make recommendations to the Executive Board based on information discussed at the committee meetings. He is anticipating that a total of three meetings will be needed.

Review of Staffing Patterns

Mr. Gunnell handed out the compiled data about the staffing across the cooperative and reviewed the first two summary pages.

Mr. Gunnell spoke about speech services and what is involved with issues like supervising speech paraprofessionals. He commented that A.E.R.O. has been moving away from the model of using paraprofessionals (due to supervision needs/expense) in recent years as we have been able to hire more speech pathologists.

Mr. Gunnell explained OT/PT staff had complicated caseloads due to the number of part time staff employed to deliver services.

Dr. Hart asked about whether or not it was appropriate for her to have a .4 speech person since she doesn't think the person is in those classrooms two days a week. Mr. Gunnell said we would look into that situation.

The group discussed staffing in a number of other programs. Questions about the PRIDE and STAR programs and whether there are ways to cut from those programs due to their high cost. Jim stated that the STAR program is based on a model that requires a great deal of individualized attention. This type of programming requires nearly one to one assistance at times, hence the staff to student ratio. Dr. Hart questioned whether or not the districts could afford this type of programming even if it was cutting edge in terms of research.

Mr. Gunnell went on to review and discuss all of the programs that were included in the information (staffing patterns). Committee members inquired about the staffing patterns in the mulit-Needs program. Mr. Gunnell explained that staffing ratios are appropriate given the lifting and positioning of students throughout the day along with the medical needs centering on feeding and toileting tasks that staff must perform.

Committee members asked questions pertaining to the Early Childhood and the ORS/WIA programs. Mr. Gunnell and Mr. Brim provided clarification about the specific programs/services.

There was a discussion about how Birth to Three (EI) program as it relates to children who are potentially referred for play-based diagnostic assessments at A.E.R.O.. Dr. Cody asked whether AERO and member districts were duplicating efforts in this area. It was explained that Program 72 included staff who were involved in screenings but were primarily assigned to do more extensive diagnostics during the school year to determine special education early childhood eligibility.

Dr. Cody mentioned that the social work and speech staff numbers looked reasonable given their caseloads. Dr. Hart and Dr. Cody questioned vocational services related to job coaches, specifically, their duties and the requirements for hiring them. It was explained that the job coaches did not require educational certification, and that we generally looked for employees with bachelor's degrees (they are paid on the starting teacher salary level).

Minutes of the
A.E.R.O. Executive Board
Finance Committee Meeting
November 3, 2010
Page 3

At the next meeting Mr. Gunnell indicated that we will re-examine the staffing patterns of STAR, PRIDE programs. Other items that to be addressed at the next committee:

- Dr. Cody requested more information pertaining to the services provided by the AERO Diagnostics/Screening programs
- The roles of the staff who are part of WIA/DORS programs

Dr. Cody and Dr. Hart also asked if there was comparable information about similar programs from surrounding special education cooperatives. Mr. Gunnell said he would reach out to other cooperative directors in order to obtain comparison data.

Mr. Brim explained about the roles of the job coaches and how the cost of that programming is offset largely by grants.

Future Meeting Dates

The next meeting will be held immediately following the December 1, 2010 Executive Board meeting.

Dr. Cody. 124 moved to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Hart seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 9:50 am.

Submitted by:

Thomas E. Brim Jr., Assistant Director

TEB/dk