

Minutes of the Annual Meeting  
Cooperative Educational Service Agency 4  
June 5, 2024

The forty-first Annual Meeting of the Cooperative Educational Service Agency No. 4 was held on Wednesday evening, June 5th, 2024 at CESA 4, 923 East Garland Street, West Salem, Wisconsin.

Catherine Griffin, Chair called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**Program: School-Based Mental Health Frameworks** (presented by Abby Fernan, Jennifer Riggle and Christy Tainter)

The current reality is that today's learners have grown up with a cell phone in their hands from a very young age. Whereas previous generations had different technological devices whether it was the cotton gin, automobile, or television. Those items didn't affect the mental health of youth when they left school each day. Now with phones and social media, students are always connected outside the traditional school day. Previous generations spent more time at creative play and problem solving. Communities speculate whether it's the school's responsibility to address mental health, but students cannot perform to their fullest potential without addressing their mental health concerns. In surveys conducted recently in Wisconsin the percentages of students noting: anxiety, depression, self-harm and considering suicide has increased. The pandemic only seemed to exacerbate the situation.

Mental Health also needs to be addressed for the school staff as well. With the increased demands and excessive workload, burnout and student behavior, educators are leaving the profession in unprecedented numbers. Restoring teacher and principal well-being is an essential step for rebuilding schools and to decrease the number of staff who are leaving the field of education.

To create healthier schools and communities, we can't focus on just work and productivity; we have to recognize that work-related achievement and mental health are intertwined.

CESA 4 can assist districts through innovative leadership, training and collaboration.

Michelle Kotek read the notice of the annual meeting.

A roll call of delegates indicated that the following were present:

Alma Center-Humbird-Merrillan – Jim Wright  
Arcadia – Tonya Rebhahn  
Bangor – Julie Meyers

Black River Falls – Brad Dobbs  
Blair-Taylor – Sarah Staff  
Cashton – Sara Cook  
Cochrane-Fountain City – Larry Cyrus  
De Soto – Teresa Christianson  
Gale-Ettrick-Trempealeau – Cindy George  
Hillsboro – Mitchell McCoic  
Holmen – Khadijah Islam  
Independence – Joe Brägger  
La Crosse – Jim Bagniewski  
Melrose-Mindoro – Geoffrey Rozek  
Norwalk-Ontario-Wilton – Kevin Bauman  
Onalaska – Erik Archer  
Royall – Melissa Murray  
Sparta – Colin Burns-Gilbert  
Tomah – Teresa Devine  
Viroqua – Kim Littel  
West Salem – Catherine Griffin  
Westby – Gerald Roethel  
Whitehall – Stephanie Brueggen

Also Present: Paul Fischer and Michelle Kotek

Absent:

Alma – Doug Kane  
La Farge – Aaron Nemec  
Wonewoc-Union Center – Melanie Benson

### **Nominations for Convention Chairperson**

Julie Meyers nominated Catherine Griffin as chairperson. Kevin Bauman seconded the nomination. Joe Brägger moved that the nominations be closed and an unanimous ballot be cast for Catherine Griffin. Stephanie Brueggen seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Roberts Rules of Order**

Joe Brägger moved to adopt Roberts Rules of Order to serve as a guide for the convention. Sarah Staff seconded the motion. Motion carried.

### **Reading and Approval of 2023 Annual Meeting Minutes**

Joe Brägger moved that the minutes from the June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023 meeting be approved as distributed. Motion seconded by Sarah Staff. Motion carried.

The chair announced the expired terms of Julie Meyers (Bangor) La Crosse County; Lindsay O'Hair (Hillsboro) Vernon County, Gerald Roethel (Westby) Vernon County and Sarah Staff (Blair-Taylor) Buffalo/Trempealeau Counties.

The delegates from Buffalo/Trempealeau, Vernon and La Crosse counties were asked to caucus and nominate candidates for the expired terms. Delegates convened at 7:25 p.m. The meeting was called back to order by the chairman at 7:44 p.m.

### **Election of Members to Board of Control**

Joe Brägger representing Buffalo/Trempealeau Counties nominated Sarah Staff, Blair-Taylor School District for a 3-year term. Other nominations were called for from the floor, there were none. Cindy George seconded the nomination. Motion carried unanimously.

Khadijah Islam representing La Crosse County nominated Julie Meyers, Bangor School District for a 3-year term. Other nominations were called for from the floor, there were none. Erik Archer seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Kim Littel representing Vernon County nominated Lindsay O'Hair, Hillsboro School District and Gerald Roethel, Westby School District for 3-year terms. Other nominations were called for from the floor, there were none. Mitchell McCoic seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Review of Annual Report/Year End Summary – Paul Fischer**

CESA 4 has been partnering with the DPI along with the 11 other CESAs on the EMLSS (Equitable Multi-Level Systems of Supports) this year. Two coaches have supported nine school districts by providing training on the framework and positive behavioral interventions.

The need in area school districts for itinerant staff in the areas of occupational and physical therapy, deaf and hard of hearing, visually impaired, audiology and orientation and mobility continue to expand.

Framework for Success: continuous improvement in school-based mental health was piloted this year and was well received by those participating in the services offered. Through partnerships with CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) and the WISH (WI Safe and Health Schools) Center, CESA 4 was able to utilize state and national resources when working with area school districts.

Paraprofessional Summit in August of 2023 had over 120 paraprofessionals participate from 19 of our school districts. Diverse topics included youth drug trends, student behavior, inclusion and equity for all. We are planning our upcoming summit for August 2024.

Career and Technical Leadership and Youth Apprenticeship programs continue to thrive in the region. These programs link the business community/ employers with the area classrooms to offer hands-on experiences to our high school students. Some of the opportunities included agriculture, construction, business, education, technology and communication, finance, health and manufacturing to name a few.

Paul Fischer thanked district for their support of CESA 4 and the Agency looks forward to working with districts in the 2024-25 school year.

### **Date for 2025 Annual Convention**

Joe Brägger moved to hold the 2024 Annual Convention on Wednesday, June 4, 2025 at 6:30 p.m. Sarah Staff seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Catherine Griffin announced that there will be an organizational meeting of the Board of Control immediately following the Annual Convention.

### **Adjournment**

Joe Brägger moved to adjourn the meeting. Larry Cyrus seconded the motion. Motion carried. Meeting was adjourned at 8 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Michelle Kotek