



Meeker and Wright Special Education Cooperative

720 9th Ave, Howard Lake, MN 55349

Joint Powers Board Meeting

Tuesday, July 28, 2026 - 5:30 pm

Meeting Minutes - *Unofficial*

Present: Sarah Baker, Gena Jacobson, Jessica Johnson, Cindy Miller, Kelsey Puncochar, Jen Rasset

Absent: Alex Carlson

Others Present: Kim Geurts, Melissa Hanson, Kate Ryan

I. Call to Order/ Board Roll Call

The Regular meeting was called to order at 5:31 pm

A roll call was conducted:

Sarah Baker: Present

Alex Carlson: Absent

Gena Jacobson: Present

Jessica Johnson: Present

Cindy Miller: Present

Kelsey Puncochar: Present

Jen Rasset: Present

A quorum of six board members was established.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

The board recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Approval of Meeting Agenda

A motion to approve the agenda as presented was made by Kelsey Puncochar and seconded by Gena Jacobson. Motion carried unanimously.

IV. Consent Agenda

A motion to approve the consent agenda was made by Gena Jacobson and seconded by Sarah Baker. The board unanimously approved the consent agenda which included:

- Minutes of Previous Board Meeting
- Bills for payment and other financial reports as attached
- Personnel Items
 - Retirements/Resignations/Terminations
 - Resignation: Sarah Long, Special Education Paraprofessional, STEP, Effective July 2, 2026
 - Recommendations for Employment
 - Martha Lippitt, 0.5 FTE Due Process Specialist, Effective August 12, 2026
 - Holly Ninow, Special Education Paraprofessional, Wings, Effective August 12, 2026
 - Alexis O'Connor, Special Education Paraprofessional, Trek,

Effective August 12, 2026



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- Erin Schumm, Special Education Paraprofessional, STEP, Effective August 12, 2026
- Carmen Tormanen, Special Education Paraprofessional, STEP, Effective August 12, 2026
- Contract Changes/Approvals/Position Changes
 - Position Change: Olivia Kenning, from Behavior Analyst Intern to Board Certified Behavior Analyst, Effective July 1, 2026
 - Position Change, Anna Spencer, from Paraprofessional, Wings to General Education Teacher, Wings, Effective August 24, 2026
- Contract Items
 - Other Contracts
 - FY27 Sourcewell - Keep Certified Contract

V. Informational Items

A. Executive Director Report

At-Will Agreements

MAWSECO will begin developing the remaining at-will employment agreements following the anticipated ratification of the MSEA contract, with board action on the agreements expected at the August meeting.

Red Rover

MAWSECO has successfully completed the transition to the Red Rover platform for hiring and onboarding, replacing Frontline/Applitrack with a streamlined system that will support multiple HR processes.

Summer Work

Central office staff and directors have been actively preparing for the new school year by updating manuals, plans, employee records, and training materials.

Admin Retreat

The MAWSECO administrative team will participate in a summer leadership retreat focused on the 5 Voices leadership framework and assertive communication to strengthen collaboration and leadership effectiveness.

New Employee Orientation

Preparations are underway for the August 12 New Employee Orientation, which will welcome new staff, provide essential information, and connect employees with their mentors.

New special education teacher cohort

A new special education teacher cohort will be held in mid-August to provide new

staff with resources, information, and support for a successful start to the school year.

All-Staff Back to School Fall Inservice



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Planning is underway for the MAWSECO all-staff fall in-service scheduled for August 24 at the Education Center, with an invitation for board members to provide opening remarks.

Health Insurance Renewal Rate

MAWSECO received a higher-than-anticipated health insurance renewal rate and is working with its broker to negotiate pricing with the current provider while also seeking bids from other carriers.

Legal Update

The Minnesota Supreme Court denied the Delano District's petition for review regarding the Independent Education Evaluation (IEE) case, leaving the court of appeals' decision in place. The ruling creates continued uncertainty regarding the standards for IEEs.

ECSE Data for 2025-2026

ECSE referrals reached an all-time high during the 2025–2026 school year, with increased referrals for both Birth–3 and ages 3–5 programs, along with additional Part B evaluations completed by the Birth–3 team. Birth–3 services remained steady, averaging 95 families/children served monthly, with enrollment ranging from 89 to 101 children. MAWSECO will continue monitoring referral trends following the opening of a new daycare center in Waverly.

B. Director of Finance Report

FY27 Purchase Service 90% prebilling funds have been received, and the 90-day short-term loan is anticipated to be paid off by July 31, 2026. Spring General Education and Title I billings have been sent, a new procedure for requisitions and professional development requests has been published, and the FY26 audit is scheduled for October 26–30, 2026.

C. Summary of Executive Director Evaluation from June 23, 2026 Closed Session Meeting

On June 23, 2026, the MAWSECO Board completed its annual evaluation of Executive Director Melissa Hanson in accordance with Board policy and her contract. The Board recognized her strong, effective leadership, successful completion of professional goals, and significant contributions to advancing the Cooperative's mission, while affirming its confidence in her leadership and continued support of MAWSECO, its member districts, and the students, families, and staff it serves.

D. Policy Review [First Reading]

The following policies were brought to the board for a first reading. No action was taken.

1. Policy 101.1 - Name of the School District
2. Policy 201 - Legal Status of the School Board
3. Policy 203 - Operation of the School Board - Governing Rules



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4. Policy 203.1 - School Board Procedures; Rules of Order
5. Policy 203.2 - Order of the Regular School Board Meeting
6. Policy 203.6 - Consent Agenda
7. Policy 209 - Code of Ethics
8. Policy 211 - Criminal or Civil Action Against School Districts, School Board Member, Employee, or Student
9. Policy 212 - School Board Member Development
10. Policy 213 - School Board Committees
11. Policy 404 - Employee Background Checks
12. Policy 404.1 - Authorized Drivers
13. Policy 405 - Veteran's Preference
14. Policy 406 - Public and Private Personal Data
15. Policy 427 - Workload Limits for Certain Special Education Teachers
16. Policy 502 - Search of Student Lockers, Desks, and Personal Possessions & Student's Person
17. Policy 503 - Student Attendance
18. Policy 505 - Distribution of Nonschool-Sponsored Materials on School Premises by Students and Employees
19. Policy 506 - Student Discipline
20. Policy 515 - Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records
21. Policy 516.5 - Overdose Medication
22. Policy 602 - Organization of School Calendar and School Day
23. Policy 608 - Instructional Services- Special Education
24. Policy 609 - Religion and Religious and Cultural Observances
25. Policy 615 - Testing Accommodations, Modifications and Exemptions for IEPs, Section 504 Plans, and LEP Students

E. Policy Rescission [First Reading]

The following policies were brought to the board for a first reading. No action was taken.

1. Policy 533 - Wellness
2. Policy 534 - Unpaid Meal Charges

VI. Action Items

A. Old Business

1. 2026 Board Stipends

A motion to approve the 2026 Board Stipends was made by Kelsey Puncochar and seconded by Jen Rasset. The motion carried with all votes cast in favor; Chair Jessica Johnson abstained from voting.

B. New Business

1. Ratification of 2026-2028 Collective Bargaining Agreement between MSEA and MAWSECO



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A motion to approve the ratification of the 2026-2028 Collective Bargaining Agreement was made by Gena Jacobson and seconded by Jen Rasset. Motion carried unanimously.

VII. Discussion Items

A. Review Board meeting dates for the remainder of the calendar year The board reviewed the remaining board meeting schedule for the calendar year. Due to the audit scheduled for the end of October, the board approved moving the October meeting from October 27 to October 20. In addition, because of the holiday schedule, the board approved moving the December meeting from December 22 to December 15.

B. Sub Rates of Pay

The board reviewed the current substitute pay rates and agreed to keep the rates unchanged for the current school year. Formal action will be taken at the August board meeting.

VIII. Future Board Meetings

- A. August 25, 2026, 5:30 pm, Regular Board Meeting, MAWSECO Ed Center, Howard Lake
- B. September 22, 2026, 5:30 pm, Regular Board Meeting, MAWSECO Ed Center, Howard Lake
- C. October 20, 2026, 5:30 pm, Regular Board Meeting, MAWSECO Ed Center, Howard Lake

IX. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Gena Jacobson and seconded by Sarah Baker. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 pm.

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