

MSBO School Finance Committee Minutes Online Zoom Meeting

November 20, 2020

The meeting opened at 09:30 a.m. with Bob Dwan from MSBO and Stacey Viers, President, giving a welcome.

Chris Glass, Director of Legislative Affairs for the West Michigan Talent Triangle:

Election Update-provided update on the 2020 election and the challenges we have in MI. It is possible we may have additional federal funding yet under President Trump and those will need to be allocated. Biden has an “unrealistic plan for education”.

Staffing struggles continue with employees having to quarantine. Chris would be very surprised if we were able to open our high schools before 2 weeks post the New Year Holiday (approximately January 14).

Critical Shortage List expires in July 2021. What can we do to not lose the people that we have during this pandemic?

Robert Dwan, Nancy Hawkins, Scott Little Michigan School Business Officials (MSBO Update):

Nancy Hawkins-MSBO Awards and Scholarships-deadline is January 31, 2021. The Stebbins Scholarship can be used to improve your competency skills in any program (not limited to college courses). Wally Piper scholarships available for those furthering their college education. Additional information is available on the website.

Update on Treasury regarding hazard pay grant: MSBO has passed along questions to them. We are asking for the FAQ's to be updated. Financial Strategies Conference is being planned, it will be similar to MDE conference like we had in the fall. It may not be 2 days. Bob is looking for a presentation on “strategy, how are you surviving during COVID”. Annual conference is being planned, hoping for some live and online sessions. Read the FAQ's for the hazard pay appeal process. The hazard pay could be prorated if the allocation is not sufficient.

A CRF guidance document was just released this morning. The newest content is addressing documentation-less than \$500 per student does not need to be documented. The State will require amounts to be in the correct accounts and they will use FID data to track that so expenses need to be coded correctly. `

Ray Davis, Thrun Law Firm, “Pause to Save Lives” School Closure-Financial Implications

1. All districts need a remote work policy, approved by the Board. It needs to be prominent on your website or with your other policies. You must have an audit of your workplace with all employee classifications and which positions can do their job remotely. Jobs that cannot be done remotely include: custodians, food service, central finance office staff with confidential information etc.
2. Per state aid section 11p, a district must “to the greatest extent practicable, continue to pay employees and contractors”. However, we cannot use taxpayer dollars to pay employees to not work, according to the Constitution Article IX, section 18. Consider a benefit called “Emergency Shutdown Leave Benefit” day which would be included in an MOU. If you are looking to layoff, “contemporaneously record why it is not practicable to continue employment”. Consider alternatives such as benefit leave days or “on call” status. Under Fair Labor Standards Act, you can pay people for restricting their day such as being on call. ORS may look at this time as not credited as service time.
3. Contractors: follow contract terms
4. MIOSHA will ask “What evidence do you have as to why an employee needs to be working?”
5. EPSLEA leave is a minimum of 10 days (80 hours) but you can give employees more than that. However, you cannot give a member of a bargaining unit more leave than is in their contract so you would need an MOU in order to do that.
6. What if the employee refuses to work? This is handled like any other refusal of work. Make sure they do not qualify for any federal leave. You can give them a directive to report to work.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Submitted by:

Carol Laux (Secretary)
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