

**BITTERROOT VALLEY EDUCATION COOPERATIVE
MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING**

Thursday, July 16, 2020
9:00 a.m. – Online Meeting

AGENDA

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

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1. Call to Order

2. Consent Agenda

- A.** Minutes – June 16 Board Meeting
- B.** Warrants
- C.** Financial Report – N/A
- D.** Resignations – attached
 - 1. McKenna Mertes, CSCT Behavior Consultant, HMS
 - 2. HMS Thad Widmer, CSCT Therapist, HHS
 - 3. Michelle Welch, CSCT Therapist, HMS
 - 4. Kendra Tucker, Mental Health Program Clinical Supervisor
 - 5. Amanda Jensen, CSCT Behavior Consultant
- E.** Next Meeting – August date TBD based on MOA completion and ready for Board approval

4. Public Comment

5. Correspondence – attached

- A.** Letter from Korst to HSD Staff and Community
- B.** Letter from Miller to BVEC Staff and Community

6. Board Action

A. Reduction in Mental Health Program Manager Contract – 212 to 200 days

Chris proposed a voluntary contract reduction to reduce program costs due to staff cuts. We reduced the Mental Health Clinical Supervisor FTE by furloughing Kendra Tucker. Medical Director, Kirk Crews, agreed to freeze in his contract fee.

Recommendation: approve contract reduction

B. Layoffs – list attached

On June 16 the Hamilton School District Board elected not to offer a portion of the School Emergency Relief Funds to restart the district CSCT programs. At the superintendent's recommendation, it voted to end the contractual relationship with BVEC and enter a contract with another mental health services provider. Stevensville School District has elected to fund 2 rather than 3 programs due to space complications from building construction. With resignations and transfers, this will require that we lay-off five employees.

Recommendation: approve layoffs on list

C. Resignations-list attached

BVEC Contract of Employment stipulates Board may withhold up to \$500 from employee's paycheck to help defray costs incurred for substitute pay or locating and replacement of personnel. There are no associated costs incurred for the BVEC with the acceptance of the resignations as listed.

Recommendation: waive \$500.00 fee

D. MTSS Grant Application

Last year of MTSS coaching/training OPI grant (reduced to \$10,000). Wendy Wanner will continue to provide the coaching/training, Chris Hughes is project director.

Recommendation: approve grant application for submission to OPI.

E. Director's Phone

Tim Miller's contract provided BVEC to furnish the director with a phone. Miller proposes to pay the BVEC for the cost of the phone for purchase price at \$274 (invoice attached). A similar phone for the new director will cost approximately the same at the government rate. Running this past Bea, she said this transaction would *not* create a problem for the board or Miller.

Recommendation: N/A

7. Information and Discussion

A. Memorandum of Agreement with Union-Discussion with union on July 7, 2020 to discuss switching to hourly pay, reducing hours, and flexibility in layoff/recall procedures if conditions prevent schools and mental health programs from operating normally. Kaleva Law will review language in the MOA which will then be presented to BVEC Board for review in August 2020.

B. CSCT-BVEC is pursuing versatile options for both delivery of services and funding to provide continuation of services and sustainability in response to possible future school closures.

C. Zoom Meeting-Currently the cooperative is subscribing to both GoToMeeting and Zoom Video Communications. Due to access and compatibility, Zoom is used extensively in the CSCT program. To keep consistency with CSCT, Zoom will be the platform the BVEC will use for future board meetings. This will be a cost savings of \$600/year.

9. Adjourn

Bitterroot Valley Educational Cooperative

PO Box 187

Stevensville, Montana

59870

Dear BVEC Staff and Members,

It is with sadness that I inform you of my resignation from my position with the BVEC at the Hamilton Middle School as the 7th/8th grade Behavioral Consultant. As a result of the COVID-19 circumstances, my husband has taken a job back in South Dakota.

I have learned and enjoyed all my time working for such an outstanding organization such as the BVEC. I have gained insight and experiences I will take with me throughout my career in the mental health field. I appreciate the support and encouragement from my fellow Behavioral Consultants, Mental Health Therapists, BVEC Supervisors, and the Program Manager. And a big thank you to my partner, Ashley Hughes who has been such a fun, supportive, and knowledgeable guide in the field of mental health.

Wishing everyone well during this crazy time, I hope we can get back to normal and support our youth!

Thank you,

McKenna Mertes

Hamilton Middle School 7th/8th grade BC

Bitterroot Valley Education Cooperative
Hamilton School District
Hamilton High School CSCT

Thad Widmer, LCSW
Leah Jessop

June 18, 2020

Bitterroot Valley Education Cooperative
PO Box 178
Stevensville, MT 59870

Dear Chris, Steve and Tim,

It is with a heavy heart that I write this letter of resignation. I have worked for the COOP for the past 15 years and believed I still had a solid five year plan. I had a five year exit strategy and was planning on leaving on my own time frame. However, COVID came and disrupted our lives and we all had to adjust accordingly. The time has come for me to say good bye to an organization that I truly enjoyed and appreciated being a part of.

The BVEC-COOP has prepared me well to walk out on my own and start a full time private practice. I have learned many aspects of what is needed to operate a healthy and ethical practice. I will miss the organization, the comradery and most of all my coworkers. It is hard to leave an organization that has been a part of one's life for 15 years, but the times has come. I appreciate and value the knowledge I have gained and will forever be grateful.

My intention is to finish out my duties and am willing to stay on board as long as needed to finalize all paperwork, close out client files and transition students as necessary. Again, I appreciate my time, experiences and most of all the relationships I have developed over my 15 years with this organization. I wish the COOP well and plan on working with COOP employees in some capacity in the future. Thanks for helping me to grow, mature and develop into the Therapist I am today. Without the COOP's guidance and support I would not be have been able to take this next step in my career.

Sincerely,



Thaddeus J. Widmer, LCSW
PO Box 676
Hamilton, MT 59840

Good Morning,

I have been given the opportunity to move forward with employment with another company due to not being able to be rehired by the co-op for the school year of 2020-2021.

It is hard to say "good bye" however I will definitely be applying to any therapist position that does become available in the future. The last three years have been a great experience and I cannot thank you for all the support that the co-op has given me specially during this difficult times.

The experiences and feedback over the last three years has helped my grow personally as well as professionally.

Thank you for all the support during COVID as well as during several different transitions over the past several months.

Thank you again,

Michelle Welch

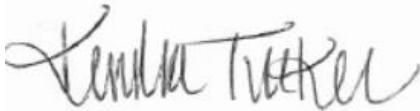
June 25, 2020

To the Bitterroot Valley Education Cooperative Administration and Board,

Please accept my resignation as the CSCT Associate Clinical Supervisor at the end of my contract year, effective June 30, 2020. I am resigning to focus on my outpatient private practice work with children and families in the Bitterroot Valley, and my certification as a Registered Play Therapist.

I am so appreciative of the experiences and opportunities I have received through my work as a CSCT therapist, clinical supervisor, and CPI instructor. I am proud to have been part of a team that provides such high-quality services to children and families. I wish you all the best and look forward to collaborating in the future!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kendra Tucker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kendra Tucker, LCSW



Hamilton School District 3

13 mins •



👉 An important message from our Superintendent on HSD#3's immediate transition from CSCT to Western Montana Mental Health.

Hamilton PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Hamilton School District #3 • 217 Daly Avenue • Hamilton, Montana 59840-2827

Thursday, June 18, 2020

Staff and Community:

At the June 16th Special Board Meeting, the Hamilton School District Trustees approved my recommendation to transition Comprehensive School and Community Treatment (CSCT) services to Western Montana Mental Health. The Bitterroot Valley Education Cooperative has been providing CSCT services for nearly 20 years but won't be able to provide CSCT services this fall without assessing the Hamilton School District approximately \$108,000 for the 2020-21 school year.

The potential cost of reopening Hamilton schools in the fall could foreseeably cost between \$400,000 and \$700,000 for additional staff, sanitizing protocols, social distancing, personal protective equipment, technology needs and transportation needs. With all of the unknowns associated with this current pandemic, expending \$108,000 at this time would create a financial risk for Hamilton as we plan to prepare, prevent, and respond to the Covid-19 virus. Therefore, Hamilton sought a different provider for CSCT services that did not require a prepaid assessment.

After researching eleven other providers, Western Montana Mental Health (WMMH) is our best option. WMMH currently provides services for Marcus Daly Memorial Hospital, the Bitterroot Valley Education Cooperative, Missoula County Public Schools, Hellgate Elementary School District, Thompson Falls School District, Butte School District, Lolo School District, Clinton School District, and Target Range School District as well as a full spectrum of community-based mental health services.

The transition from the Bitterroot Valley Education Cooperative to Western Montana Mental Health will begin immediately and continue throughout the summer and into the fall. Transitions are sometimes difficult but we believe that we can do a great job of ensuring continuous high quality services for our students, families, staff, and the community at large.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call me.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Korst

July 14, 2020

Dear BVEC Staff and Bitterroot Valley Communities (posted to BVEC home page),


In response to Superintendent Korst's letter to Hamilton School District Staff and Community and his recommendation to discontinue school-based mental health services (CSCT) with the Bitterroot Valley Education Cooperative: We would like to express our heartfelt appreciation to the dedicated teachers, principals, school counselors, paraeducator, custodians and office staff who have been loyal partners in providing these essential services in Hamilton schools for the past 20 or so years. We have accomplished significant outcomes for our students and their families together. Most of all we want to thank all the students and families we have had the privilege to collaborate with over the years. We are deeply disappointed that our partnership is coming to an end.

We would like to clarify the reason that a portion of funding from the Emergency School Relief Funds was essential to continue services. The COVID-19 crisis and school closures had a devastating financial impact on our programs that relied on billing third parties for face to face services. To keep essential services and continuity of care in place as long as possible, we drew far into our cash reserves until we were forced to furlough eight of twelve staff in the Hamilton School District. Four mental health therapists and one behavior consultant were held in place to provide an essential level of continuity of care, through telehealth, for students and their families, while deficit spending on payroll continued.

Other *non-profit* CSCT providers received CARE Act Payroll Protection Program funds to keep staff in place without drawing down cash reserves. Unlike other providers, and like school districts, we are a *local education agency* making us *ineligible* for CARE Act Payroll Protection Funding. School Emergency Relief Funding, on the other hand, *is* our designated source of relief. The BVEC provides these services to six school districts in Ravalli County. The other five school district Board of Trustees acknowledged this fact, validated by our state and federal elected representatives, and approved a proportional allocation of their Emergency School Relief Funds to restart school mental health services in their respective districts.

The allocation of \$15,500 per CSCT team was the amount required to replenish depleted cash reserves required to restart CSCT programs upon start of the 2020-21 school year. Each team consists of a licensed mental health therapist and a behavior consultant working full time in the schools. With six teams in the school district, this came to \$93,096. The district requested one additional expansion team (total 7) in 2020-21 which increased the proportional allocation to \$108,000.

The HSD decided to end our long-term partnership for these services and switch to a different provider that accessed the payroll protection support through the CARES. We are disheartened by this recommendation and board's decision, but we absolutely wish nothing but the best outcomes for the students and families of Hamilton School District in their new partnership with Western Montana Mental Health.



Tim Miller
Director, BVEC

July 9, 2020

Jenny Rammell
CC: Chris Hughes

Bitterroot Valley Education Cooperative
PO Box 187
Stevensville, MT 59870

Dear Ms. Rammell,

After careful consideration and contemplation, it is with a heavy heart that I have decided not to return to work with the BVEC as a CSCT Behavior Consultant. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all our lives in many ways, and it has changed my professional path in a way I never could have imagined. Due to the unprecedented and uncertain times we are experiencing, I will be pursuing other career opportunities outside of the social work field. Please consider this letter as my formal notice of resignation as of July 9, 2020.

I cannot express how difficult this decision was to make, and how grateful I am to the BVEC for employing me over the last year. I learned so much from my time as a CSCT Behavior Consultant and I will always carry those memories and lessons with me. I sincerely value the relationships that I formed, opportunities offered to me, and leadership bestowed upon me from the BVEC and Florence School District.

I understand that there may be ramifications of this decision regarding my contract for the upcoming school year, so please let me know what additional action I am required to take.

Thank you for understanding and I wish you all the best,

Amanda Jensen

1053 Park Lane
Stevensville, MT 59870

CSCT Employees

Layoff List and Order of Layoff by Job Category

Mental Health Therapist

1. Shelby Schultz
2. Lindsay Trowbridge

Mental Health Behavior Consultant – Classified

1. Jaime Johnson
2. Shannon Thompson



Director's phone

Have questions? Get the answers you need. Sign in at vzw.com

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IPHONE XR BLK 128GB SKU: MT362LL/A IMEI: 356451101068141 ICCID: 8914800005447418096 Retail price: \$649.99	Mobile no.: 406-360-8565 User name: Timothy Miller Contract term: 12 month(s) Early Term. Fee: up to \$650	1	\$199.99	\$199.99
SCR OT AMP IPXR SKU: 77-61915		1	\$37.49	\$37.49
CAS OTT SYS IPXR BLK SKU: 77-59846		1	\$37.49	\$37.49
1 YR. MFG. WARRANTY SKU: WAR6002		1	\$0.00	\$0.00
2 DAY BY 8PM SKU: SHP002		1	\$0.00	\$0.00
Order Subtotal				\$274.97
			Total	\$274.97

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C SCT Employees

Resignation List

Mental Health Behavior Consultant

1. Thad Widmer
2. Michelle Welch

Mental Health Behavior Consultant

1. Amanda Jensen