

**Approved  
September 7, 2023**

Illinois State Board of Education  
ISBE Board Room, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
100 N. First Street, Springfield, IL  
*Meeting also held via webinar*

Finance and Audit Committee Minutes  
August 3, 2023

**I. Roll Call**

Chair Chris Benson brought the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was present with three members. Chair Benson and Mr. Eddy were physically present, and Dr. Anderson was present via video conference.

**Members Present**

Chair Chris Benson  
Dr. James Anderson  
Roger Eddy

**Members Absent**

None

**Other Board Members Present**

Dr. Steven Isoye, Chair of the Board

**Staff Present**

Dr. Tony Sanders, State Superintendent  
Kim Clarke, Executive Assistant to the State Superintendent  
Jo Ireland, Board Services Coordinator  
Dr. Kimako Patterson, Chief of Staff  
Kristen Kennedy, Interim Chief Legal Officer  
Dr. Annie Brooks, Executive Director of Regulatory Services  
Carisa Hurley Davis, Director of Early Childhood Development  
Jennifer Saba, Executive Director of Improvement & Innovation  
Irma Snopek, Chief Policy and Communications Officer  
Dr. Jason Helfer, Chief Education Officer – Instruction  
Dr. Jennifer Kirmes, Executive Director of Teaching & Learning  
Madan Damodaran, Director of Software Solutions  
Barbara Moore, Director of Special Education Operational Support  
Dr. Sean Clayton, Director of Assessment  
Kim Barnes-Cummins, Director of Wellness  
Dr. Christine Paxson, Director of School/District Improvement  
Tassi Maton, Chief Internal Audit Officer  
Dr. Matt Seaton, Chief Financial Officer  
Mallory Morton, Senior Budget Analyst

**II. Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

**III. Approval of the June 6, 2023, Meeting Minutes**

Dr. Anderson moved that the Finance and Audit Committee approve the June 6, 2023, meeting minutes. Mr. Eddy seconded the motion, and it passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

**IV. Review of Contracts and Grants Over \$1 Million – for August Approval**

A. Contracts and Grants Over \$1 Million – Approval of Dolly Parton Imagination Program

Dr. Helfer discussed this item.

Chair Benson noted that this was a powerful way to introduce a love of reading.

**B. Contracts and Grants Over \$1 Million – Approval of Grant to YouthBuild Illinois**

Dr. Kirmes discussed this item.

Chair Benson asked if the program had successfully expanded to other areas of the state. Dr. Kirmes said that she could obtain additional information from the program during the grant application process on locations, services, and subgrantees.

Mr. Eddy asked about the number of young people participating. Dr. Kirmes said there was currently no count for each subgrantee for fiscal year 2023, but that ISBE had requested this data. Mr. Eddy stated this was particularly important information given that funding for this program had doubled over the past year. Dr. Kirmes said she would provide those numbers in a future update.

**C. Contracts and Grants Over \$1 Million – Approval of Grant to It Takes a Village**

Mr. Eddy confirmed that ISBE was required by statute to approve this funding and asked about program auditing, as there is a high per-pupil investment. Dr. Helfer explained that staff salaries were the main source of expense and that these staff were highly qualified. Mr. Eddy noted the importance of accountability, follow-up, and oversight for all programs.

Ms. Hurley Davis then discussed this item and said that ISBE had held discussions with the grantees on how the funds were spent, in addition to budget oversight through IWAS.

Dr. Sanders said he was glad that these member initiatives were being brought to the Board for expedited approval. Chair Benson noted her appreciation for these programs and hope for future expansion.

**D. Contracts and Grants Over \$1 Million – Approval of Grant to Early CHOICES Project**

Ms. Hurley Davis also discussed this item. There were no questions.

**V. Review of Contracts and Grants Over \$1 Million – for September Approval**

**A. Contracts and Grants Over \$1 Million – Approve the Release and Award of the Request for Sealed Proposals (RFSP) for Student Information System Contractual Team**

Mr. Damodaran discussed this item.

Chair Benson asked to confirm that this was a request for services in general, and Mr. Damodaran confirmed that this was the case.

**B. Contracts and Grants Over \$1 Million – Approval of Sole Source Grant to After School Matters**

Ms. Barnes-Cummins discussed this item. There were no questions.

**C. Contracts and Grants Over \$1 Million – Approval of FY 2024 Continuation School Improvement Grants**

Dr. Christine Paxson discussed this item.

Chair Benson wanted to make sure that these grants were reaching schools in need across the state and remarked on the importance of this type of assistance in her own experience as superintendent. Mr. Eddy brought up the schools that had received funding under this program for the past five years but no longer required it moving forward. He said

that this was a testament to the effectiveness of the program and the accountability present in school districts, leading to successful outcomes. He praised the program. Chair Benson agreed, stating that these districts had not had an easy job.

D. Contracts and Grants Over \$1 Million – Approval of Sole Source Grant to Illinois State University for its National Board Resource Center for National Board Certified Teachers

Dr. Kirmes discussed this item.

Chair Benson asked if all subject matters were covered under National Board certification, and Dr. Kirmes confirmed that this was the case.

Mr. Eddy said that this was a wonderful program, making Illinois a top-performing state with regard to the number of Board Certified teachers.

E. Contracts and Grants Over \$1 Million – Approval of Sole Source Grant to Teach for America

Dr. Kirmes discussed this item and the next. There were no questions.

F. Contracts and Grants Over \$1 Million – Approval of Sole Source Grant to the Southwest Organizing Project Parent Mentor Program

Mr. Eddy asked if the number of schools and students served would be expected to increase in the coming year, given the sizable jump in funding from \$8 million to \$14 million. Dr. Kirmes offered to provide projections on increased numbers of students served and said that ISBE would follow along as this expansion developed. Mr. Eddy expressed interest in this information, emphasizing the importance of accountability.

Dr. Kirmes mentioned that the program was taking on a rural expansion pilot to improve access in smaller schools and rural contexts. Chair Benson said she appreciated this element of the program.

G. Contracts and Grants Over \$1 Million – Approval of Illinois Autism Learning and Supports Upward Amendment for FY 2024 and Extension through FY 2026

Ms. Moore discussed this item. Chair Benson said that this program provides essential training.

H. Contracts and Grants Over \$1 Million – Approval of FY 2024 Assistive Technology Device Loan and Evaluation Project Upward Amendment

Ms. Moore also discussed the next two items. There were no questions.

I. Contracts and Grants Over \$1 Million – Approval of FY 2024 Philip J. Rock Center and School Upward Amendment

J. Contracts and Grants Over \$1 Million – Approval to Release and Award an RFSP for ISBE to enter a Competitive Bid for the Administration of the Illinois High School Accountability Assessments

Dr. Clayton discussed this item. There were no questions.

K. Contracts and Grants Over \$1 Million – Approval to Request for Proposals IDEA, Part B Preschool Discretionary Grant Project-STAR NET

Ms. Hurley Davis discussed this item. There were no questions.

L. Contracts and Grants Over \$1 Million - Approval of Request for Sealed Proposals - Early Childhood Block Grant Regional Community Systems Development

Ms. Hurley Davis also discussed this item.

Chair Benson asked to confirm that this system provides a voice for caregiver needs. Ms. Hurley Davis said that this was the case, in addition to speaking to community needs.

Mr. Eddy asked if this funding would solely be used to conduct research and support the needs of the Birth to Five Action and Family Councils rather than for the provision of educational services. Ms. Hurley Davis said that this grant was for community systems development to identify community needs and bring people and resources together to address them. She said that a needs assessment for each of the 39 regions had just been completed, and she offered to send the assessments to the Board. Mr. Eddy said that he had recently looked at his region's report, sharing that the results were not new or surprising, but that hopefully this research process would add credibility to regional needs and lead to increased collaboration and action.

Ms. Hurley Davis said that any suggestions that Board members might have could be added to the RFSP.

## **VI. Internal Audit Updates**

### **A. Current Audits and Forthcoming Reports**

- i. Acceptance Item – State of Illinois Single Audit Report for the Year Ended June 30, 2022

Ms. Maton noted that this report had not yet been released and said that she expected to receive it before the September Board meeting is held.

- ii. FY 2023 Financial Audit
- iii. FY 2023 Statewide Single Audit

Ms. Maton stated that both the FY 2023 Financial Audit and the FY 2023 Statewide Single Audit were underway and that ISBE was working actively with the audit firms.

### **B. FY 2021/22 Compliance Examination Finding Process**

Ms. Maton explained that this item involved an information-finding process and frequent check-ins with ISBE staff to promote corrective action. She stated that it had been very productive in past years and said that she would provide the Board with quarterly updates. Chair Benson said that if anything urgent arose, it should be brought to the Board's attention.

## **VII. Discussion Items**

### **A. FY 2025 Budget Discussion**

Dr. Seaton discussed this item.

He introduced Mallory Morton, a new ISBE senior budget analyst who will be involved in the budget process for FY 2025. He then discussed the budget hearings that were held last year for FY 2024 and said that they had been well-attended, particularly online. He proposed the same format, which included three hearings -- one in Springfield and two online. He said this format could be altered by the Board, if needed, and he mentioned October 3, October 5, and October 30, 2023, as possible dates for the hearings.

Chair Benson said that the structure of these hearings could be allowed to vary based on subject matter and presenters. Chair Benson remarked that the current format, including the use of technology, seemed to be working well and facilitating access to the meetings. She also stated that written testimony should be given equal weight to in-person or virtual testimony.

Dr. Seaton discussed feedback on the budget hearing format from previous years, noting that one common area of concern was that the sign-up form was too long. He stated that ISBE had condensed the form as a result of the feedback. Another area of concern was that signing up requires a two-step process to submit the sign-up form and register for the virtual meeting. He mentioned that addressing this concern would be technologically difficult, but perhaps in the future it would be possible. Mr. Eddy agreed that these concerns should be addressed.

Mr. Eddy added that the lack of Board members in attendance had been another point of concern, and he encouraged Board members to attend. He also mentioned that the audience should be able to see that Board members are on the call. Chair Benson agreed, explaining that she introduced members of the Board at the beginning of the meetings but noting that audience members and Board members might sign into the meeting at different times.

**VIII. New Business: Items for the Next Agenda**

There were no items discussed.

**IX. Next Meeting: September 7, 2023**

**X. Adjourn**

Dr. Anderson moved to adjourn. Mr. Eddy seconded the motion, and it passed by a unanimous roll call vote. Chair Benson adjourned the committee at 10:27 a.m.