

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
November 12, 2009
Montana State Capitol - Helena, Montana

The November 12, 2009 meeting of the Montana Board of Education was called to order by Governor Brian Schweitzer.

ROLL CALL

Members present were: Regents Stephen Barrett, Clayton Christian, Lila Taylor, Todd Buchanan, Lynn Morrison-Hamilton, Janine Pease and Board of Public Education members Patty Myers, Angela McLean, Storrs Bishop, Cal Gilbert, Sharon Carroll, John Edwards, Bernard Olson, and Tim Seery. Student Regent, Robert Barnosky was unable to attend. Ex-officio members present were: Governor Brian Schweitzer, Superintendent Denise Juneau, and Commissioner Sheila Stearns.

MINUTES

Upon motion made and seconded, the minutes from the January 9, 2009 Board of Education Meeting were unanimously approved as written.

State Superintendent Denise Juneau welcomed those present at the meeting and introduced OPI staff members that were present: Madalyn Quinlan, Nancy Coopersmith, Linda Peterson and Deb Halliday.

Chair of the Board of Regents, Steve Barrett welcomed those present at the meeting and stated that the Board had made headway over the last year or two, but there were still things to get done.

Chair of the Board of Public Education, Patty Myers welcomed those present at the meeting and stated that it was not a common practice among other states for similar groups to get together. She thanked everyone for the work they have done. Ms. Myers introduced the Board of Public Education's newest board member, John Edwards, from Billings.

Governor Schweitzer introduced Dr. Waded Cruzado-Salas, who was recently appointed as the new President of Montana State University.

Dr. Cruzado thanked the individuals responsible for making the appointment possible. She stated she believes passionately about education and especially land grant institutions. She recognized Montana as a progressive state that was making a huge investment in education and that Montana was building a solid pipeline for kids from when they start to earning doctorates.

Governor Schweitzer welcomed Dr. Cruzado-Salas to Montana.

Governor Schweitzer gave a background history of economic development and school funding in Montana. He pointed out that putting money into early childhood education was the best place

for more education funding. Governor Schweitzer outlined the investment in education made during his term in office. He stated that Montana students were making academic progress, but that we were not just in competition nation wide, but internationally.

Governor Schweitzer pointed out that with increased funding comes increased accountability. He stated that in most states they fund the college students, not just the higher education institutions. The student then takes those dollars to other colleges in their state or for some, even out of state. Education is a competitive market place.

Governor Schweitzer stated that the challenges facing higher education today include distance learning, the transferability initiative, and dual enrollment. We want credits to transfer seamlessly between Montana colleges and elsewhere. We want all high school students, if they are qualified, to take university level courses and get credit at both the university and high school level.

Governor Schweitzer stated he still believes in the two-year higher education programs. Because of our changing workforce, we need an increasingly skilled workforce. Montana has an infinite capacity to produce energy – especially wind and solar. The issue now is storage. Montana is second only to Texas in capacity to produce wind energy. Students are not just going to be in the business of developing energy, but will be developing storage as well. The best paying jobs require increasing skills and knowledge.

OLD BUSINESS

Superintendent Juneau introduced the strategic directions for the Office of Public Instruction.

- Ensure that every child begins school and graduates with knowledge and skills necessary for success in the 21st century global society through the creation and implementation of a comprehensive P-20 education plan.
- Provide current and accurate education information to the state, school districts, and schools to promote data-driven policy decisions and assist in improving teaching and learning.
- Provide systematic training opportunities and focused staff development for OPI staff to support their work and ensure quality customer service.
- Improve school-community relationships and student performance through the development and implementation of a comprehensive communication plan.
- Improve student achievement in struggling schools by providing leadership to school improvement efforts across the state.

She stated that instead of seeing education as a pipeline, she wanted it to be a highway where we are building on-ramps back into the system. Superintendent Juneau has appointed Joyce Silverthorne as her P-20 Policy Advisor. In this position Ms. Silverthorne is working on a comprehensive P-20 education plan.

Superintendent Juneau advised the Board that the OPI, together with the DPHHS, DLI, and the Commissioner of Higher Education, are applying for a federal grant to fund a statewide

longitudinal data system. The system will track students through school and into the workforce. We also will be able to monitor dropouts and whether they come back to the education system.

She said the OPI was working with schools to improve school and community relationships, and they are working to do a better job of communication to move the public education agenda forward.

OPI is also working to improve student achievement in struggling schools, identified as turn around schools in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The Montana Constitution states the goal of the state is to develop the full educational potential of all persons and that equality of educational opportunity is guaranteed to each person. Equal educational opportunity is not being met for a portion of the community. OPI's job is not only to praise good schools, but also to confront challenges. US Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan stated education is the civil rights issue of this generation.

Superintendent Juneau stated the overall goals of the "turn-around schools" program are:

- To develop & implement outreach and intervention plans for struggling schools that result in increased student achievement and success
- To work internally at OPI to better coordinate and streamline programs and systems of support as they relate to turnaround schools and districts

Superintendent Juneau gave an overview and presented a slide show of charts and photos from the four community visits she has made. Superintendent Juneau and her staff will be going out on the 5th community visit soon.

There are 14 districts and 33 schools in restructuring under No Child Left Behind (NCLB). This means the schools have failed to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) seven years in a row. These schools also have financial challenges, accreditation problems, high poverty, and data gaps. In Montana, the state currently has no authority to close down these schools. Superintendent Juneau extended invitations to work with these schools to help. The turn-around school effort is imperative. There is no way students from these schools will succeed without help.

We need to find strengths to build on, identify what's not working, and encourage the community to be engaged. The OPI teams have met with the school boards. These are tough discussions. OPI provides the data and works with them to determine how they are going to move forward. A lot of people are coming to these meetings. They want to figure out how to make it work.

Superintendent Juneau said that she sat down with high school seniors at all of the schools she visited to discuss their education. All of them want to go to college. The state has an obligation to ensure they are prepared.

Steve Meloy asked if distance learning was filtering down to these schools. Superintendent Juneau said they are hopeful that the virtual academy could be used for credit recovery. Some of the students are as bright as in any school. Regent Pease stated that dual credit was working for

some students. The discussion statewide has really caught on at the tribal colleges, but they are realizing that the number of students that can attain dual credit is relatively small.

Superintendent Juneau stated at one school the only math course offered was remedial math. We need to raise bar and the students need to be challenged. The future steps the OPI is looking toward are:

- Agency modernization and collaborative work around turnaround schools
- Anticipated legislation or BPE rule changes re: turnaround schools
- Looking at other states for guidance
- School coaches and instructional coaches currently on-site (Title I)
- Potential school board coaches
- Potential community liaisons

Superintendent Juneau reported that Fort Peck has a good model with an on-site clinic to help students. They are extending this to families as well.

We need to work within the context that these students live. They have a lot of challenges to overcome just to get to high school. We need to help them meet these challenges or they are not going to be able to engage. We want to make sure that students leave school ready to do what they need to do. Things work differently on the reservations. They need educated people from their communities to beef up their community. In some communities there is a lot of negative history about public education. These communities do care about their schools. We need to hold adults accountable for the quality of education in their communities, starting from the school boards and administrators to the teachers.

Board of Public Education Chair, Patty Myers introduced the topic of the National Common Core Initiative for developing national standards for common core courses. Ms. Myers stated that she and Nancy Coopersmith from the OPI went to the Common Core Summit in Chicago. Ms. Coopersmith advised the board that 48 states had signed on to the premise of common core standards with only Texas and Alaska not participating. In May, 2009 Governor Schweitzer and Superintendent Juneau signed an agreement to participate in the development of national common core standards, but Montana is not obligated to adopt these standards.

Our students are competing with students all over the world. A global economy is where these students will be competing for jobs. Two products are being developed, college standards and career ready standards. Some of the best educators in Montana were called in to prepare Montana's response. The first draft release of K-12 academic standards in math and English language arts will be out November 13th. The OPI will bring together educators to review the draft standards. We will contract with individuals outside of Montana to do an alignment study of Montana's current content standards with this new document.

If Montana wants to go forward with adopting the national standards, the final step would be the adoption of administrative rules by the Board of Public Education.

Congress will be working on the reauthorization of ESEA and NCLB in the next couple of years. At this point we don't know what the implications may be in connection with the national

common core standards. Adoption of these standards may be a required part of receiving federal funds. Montana would have to agree to adopt the standards word for word and that would be 85% of our state's content and performance standards. One comment made was that culture was not addressed. We will know more when the alignment studies are completed.

Regent Barrett commented that if the national common core is what we eventually expect to have, we need to make our expectations clear and valid. He questioned how common core career and college readiness standards will impact K-12 standards.

Regent McLean thanked Ms. Coopersmith for her presentation. She asked how the national common core standards would fit in with what we have.

Ms. Coopersmith said that there were a lot of unanswered questions. We won't be able to update the 85% - that will have to be updated on a national level. We have not had a lot of input in drafting the standards. We need to make sure they reflect Montana values on what students should learn.

Commissioner Sterns addressed Regent Barrett's concerns stating that work needed to be done to avoid a chasm between K-12 content standards and college readiness standards. She stated that they would be happy to be at the table working on this issue and had assigned several people within higher education to look at the standards quickly to get Montana's input sent in.

Regent Pease questioned whether career readiness and college readiness were the same. Ms. Coopersmith replied that they see a lot of college readiness but not career readiness.

Regent Pease stated that there was increasing information that they are same and shouldn't be differentiated. There is a tremendous disparity in students who have career direction and college. She is concerned about the disparity. Ms. Coopersmith said they would be following this issue. What was presented at the summit as career readiness looked more like training for unskilled labor.

Ms. Myers stated that at end of the common core summit, they had time for questions, and that these are the very questions that came up at the summit. She stated that they did not get an answer at the summit and are waiting for the responses.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Myers introduced Tim Seery, the student BPE member from Great Falls and stated that he was involved in many projects including the Montana Meth project.

Mr. Seery stated that he was honored to be placed in this position. He has learned a lot and goes back and tells his home community what goes on at the state education level. Most people don't understand the complexity and facts behind education that he is learning now. He was inspired by the recent trip to Browning where the BPE held it's last meeting.

Regent Barrent stated that the Board of Regents had a new student regent, Robert Barnosky who had asked to be excused from this meeting.

Jamie Palagi presented a power point about Early Learning Opportunities. Ms. Palagi manages the Early Childhood Services Bureau for the Department of Public Health and Human Services.

Early childhood is considered to be age 0-8 and includes prebirth as well. The first three years are the most critical for brain development. Parts of the brain not used by age two start to deteriorate. New research shows that by age five a child has learned half of all the words he will learn in his lifetime.

Different agencies are addressing some of the early childhood education pieces side by side. The agencies are having conversations simultaneously that could be happening together.

The new federal focus is on early childhood education. We can no longer think of early childhood education as just full time kindergarten. The focus now is on what happens before age five.

DPHHS commissioned an impact study on early childhood education. Recommendations from that impact study are to have school readiness teams in each community, find ways to strengthen them, raising awareness and building connections.

Ms. Palagi reported that they are working with OPI and other agencies on a Longitudinal Data Grant to track trends.

Early parenting education is in demand and they need additional resources as parent fees cannot pay for the cost alone. Quality child care for working families is a serious concern. There is a low barrier for entering staff which impacts the quality of care. Child care is expensive nearly equal to housing. There are programs to help low income families afford child care. There needs to be some type of accountability for people caring for children.

There may be opportunities where agencies are duplicating services. Montana needs to blend services and coordinate our efforts. There are a lot of quality programs, but they needed to evaluate effectiveness. DPHHS brought in a national expert to determine what was working and what wasn't.

If we raise the level of quality experiences for young children, more kids will be ready for school and be successful. There are all kinds of experiences for children to have, whether at home with family or day care, they should have a quality experience no matter where they are.

DPHHS has instituted a Quality Rating Improvement System, an overarching system around early childhood. The program is voluntary and is directed at improving early childhood services. It is a 5-star system that tells them what the highest standard is. Some components have to do with staff qualifications. They are not intending to force day care providers out of business. They want to provide technical support and incentives to encourage higher quality programs.

The essentials of the STARS program are:

- 5 Star System
- Research based criteria
- Workforce support to encourage professional development along a continuum of training
- Maintaining quality over time
- Annual renewals based on validation of level and program improvement plans
- Monetary incentives based on level achieved
- Program assessment tools

Criteria for the STARS program are:

- Education, qualifications and training of staff/caregivers
- Staff/Caregivers to child ratio and group sizes
- Family and community partnerships
- Leadership and program management
- Environments for care and learning

Madalyn Quinlan presented a power point on Montana P-20 Linkages: Building the Capacity to Communicate. The US Department of Education, using American Recovery and Reinvestment Act money, has invited states to apply for grants to develop P-20 longitudinal data systems to capture student data from preschool to high school, college and career. Eighteen people from DPHHS, OPI, DLI and OCHE have been involved in putting together a grant application from Montana. In order to be considered for funding the state longitudinal data system (SLDS) must have the following capabilities:

- Enable the state to examine student progress and outcomes over time, including student's preparation to meet the demands of postsecondary education, the 21st century workforce, and the Armed Forces;
- Facilitate and enable the exchange of data among agencies so that data may be used to form policy and practice;
- Enable the matching of students and teachers;
- Enable the matching of teachers with information about their certification and teacher preparation programs;
- Enable data to be easily generated for continuous improvement and decision-making, including timely reporting to parents, teachers and school leaders on achievement of their students;
- Ensure the quality and integrity of the data in the system; and
- Provide the state with the ability to meet the reporting requirements for the USDE especially for the State Fiscal Stabilization Funds and EDFacts.

Currently Montana has the AIM system which provides student-level enrollment, demographic, and program participation information. We can track which K-12 students have graduated, transferred, or dropped out. Demographic and program participation data can be linked with CRT assessment data. The OPI is currently working on a school staffing module which will include a teacher identifier system with the ability to match teachers with students. ID's will be assigned to education students in college and the system will provide a link between college data, licensure, and school data.

The OPI plans to include implementation of the NCES Secondary School Course Classification System which will include consistency of course descriptions and course codings. This system will reach into middle school.

The new grant is intended to address:

- The capacity to communicate with higher education data systems;
- A state data audit system assessing data quality, validity, and reliability;
- Student-level transcript information, including information on courses completed and grades earned;
- Student-level college readiness test scores;
- Information regarding the extent to which students transition successfully from secondary school to post secondary education, including whether students enroll in remedial coursework; and
- Other information determined necessary to address alignment and adequate preparation for success in postsecondary education.

Five objectives for the grant are to:

- Establish data linkages among state agency partners to connect from early childhood to K-12 to postsecondary and the workforce;
- Create an electronic student transcript repository for K-12 education;
- Create a data governance structure for P-20;
- Implement business intelligence tools and a web portal for users of the P-20 data; and
- Develop a system of P-20 performance measurement and reporting.

Steve Meloy, executive secretary to the Board of Public Education asked if the system will track why our college education students leave Montana and why they get a degree and don't teach.

Ms. Quinlan responded that the system may have some of that data. We will know more about students prepared in the Montana University System and where/if they teach in Montana.

Angela McLean thanked those working on writing the grant. She asked about moving forward on the common course classification and coding.

Ms. Quinlan responded that classification and coding will happen in the school staffing module not as a result of this grant. We will start with math and science because we already have new standards in those areas, then expand to all courses.

Mr. Meloy stated he assumed dialog was going on with OCHE on the grant application. Ms. Quinlan replied that Tyler Trevor was at the table with us and provided good information. She stated that all of the agencies involved have been wonderful to work with as they push toward the December 4th deadline.

Bernie Olson asked Jamie Palagi if DPHHS was working with the OPI.

Ms. Palagi replied that the two agencies have been working together on some projects and they are working together more all the time.

Regent Pease commented on the ability to access data. She stated that the ability to communicate data useful for communities was a big challenge and wanted to know if the OPI was concerned about how data can be accessed by parents, board members, educators, etc. She said when Superintendent Juneau came to Fort Peck it was the first time she had seen their education data. She questioned whether students have any idea how their school/grade is doing and whether or not we should keep it away from them or involve them in the process. She feels we need to make more data accessible and not remote from those whom we serve.

Ms. Quinlan stated that all of the agencies have realized that this is less about technology and more about relationships and people. They are working to build systems where the data is useful and understandable.

Superintendent Juneau acknowledged that these are difficult issues for communities when you talk about their education system. Communities are getting fired up and holding school boards accountable to provide quality education for their children.

Governor Schweitzer introduced the Next Steps and Commitments. He stated that when US Secretary of Education Arne Duncan came to Montana he knew that they were preparing for the competitive grants. His mission is to improve the achievement level of students and get a static education system dynamic. He stated that we still have a job to do and he won't rest until Montana students are completely competitive. He acknowledged that we have challenges to face because of distance and cultural diversity, but that every child should have an equal opportunity to go to college. Governor Schweitzer encouraged a strong working relationship between K-12 and postsecondary education.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Robert Brown read a letter to the board from the Montana Indian Education Association sharing MIEA's recommendations and comments on the implementation of Indian Education for All.

Norma Bixby, Director of Northern Cheyenne Tribal Education department reviewed information from the US Chamber of Commerce report card and asked the board to take a closer look at this information.

Upon motion made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned.

/s/ Denise Juneau
Denise Juneau, Superintendent of Public Instruction
Secretary to the Board of Education