



Chapter 55 Meeting Minutes Tuesday, January 25, 2022 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Meeting Start Time: 4:00 PM

Roll Call

Task Force Members

McCall Flynn
Jon Konen
Heather Hoyer
Daniel Lee
Heather Jarrett
Janelle Beers
Billi Taylor
Tony Warren
Emily Dean
David Pafford
Gary Lusin

Facilitators

Julie Murgel
Erich Stiefvater
Tristen Loveridge

OPI Representation

Superintendent Elsie Arntzen
Deputy Superintendent Sharyl Allen

Welcome and Overview

1. Julie Murgel explains the outcomes that are to be expected from today's meeting.
2. Julie Murgel shows the group norms and working agreements. She opens the conversation for the TF to contribute their expectations from this group.
3. Julie Murgel reviews the Task Force purpose and the groups key deliverables
 - a. Conceptual memorandum
 - b. Field Survey
4. Julie Murgel explains the timeline for the TF and the process of the Negotiated Rule Making Committee
 - a. Explains that legislation was passed
5. Task Force Timeline and the possible meeting times
 - a. Group agrees on Tuesdays 11:00 am – 1:00 pm
 - i. Feb 8th
 - ii. Feb 22nd
 - iii. Mar 22nd
 - iv. Apr 5th

Reflection from Orientation

1. What Indicators define a Quality School?
 - a. Julie Murgel reviews the comments made by TF during the Orientation
2. McCall Flynn makes a comment that Ch 57 TF had a lot of discussion around Mentorship and Induction. She thinks this should be kept in mind: where and how it fits into Ch 55
3. Dan Lee comments that curriculum should be considered. Having a coherent curriculum that reflects current practices (k-12 view of mathematics and language arts/English).
4. Jon Konen comments that he is a proponent of understanding of design and looking backwards. How are we going to use quality indicators will be used to communicate out what schools are doing? The articles that were given to the TF reviewed stats from states like CA and FL.
 - a. What are the big themes in schools?
5. Janelle Beers comments that COVID is pretty much totally new for everyone. She is thinking that the way we navigate through COVID will not change how we teach students. Mental health will play a large part in this with both students and staff.

Accreditation Framework

1. Julie Murgel reviews document “An Accreditation Framework”
 - a. Julie reviews key definitions

Superintendent Arntzen Welcome

1. Superintendent Arntzen welcomes the TF and gives some remarks

Debrief Article “K-12 Accreditation’s Next Move”

1. TF members work in groups and independently to review the article and find one quote in the article that stands out to them.
2. Key Topics found in group conversation.
 - a. Accreditation systems that have been used is defeating the purpose of education.
 - b. What system we currently have and why schools go to outside accreditation agency’s
 - c. Value of school admin going into a different school to see that school’s accreditation process
 - d. Disconnect between accreditation and accountability. What each means and how they impact schools
 - e. How accreditation is reported out to the public. Helpful, transparent, and may penalize schools that have some issues that are difficult to resolve. Especially small schools.
 - f. Ch 55 covers all education in MT. Should look at the perspective of private schools and other options for charter provisions. What is the philosophy of MT and how will this look and work with charter schools?
 - g. Be mindful of the tools state has given since CH55 was last open. Take into consideration pieces that were put into place to give flexibility/creativity to schools but have actually created some conflict with accreditation.
 - h. Schools are moving to a more online presence rather than the traditional schoolhouse.
 - i. Perspective of accreditation to universities and post high school institutions. We need to understand what those institutions consider accreditation for admissions.

- j. “Where there is the highest concentration of poverty you will find the lowest-performing districts”
- k. “The first principle for accreditation is transparency”
- l. “Every school is a work in progress – even if they get the highest rating”
 - i. There is always work to do. It is important to meet student where they are and give them the tools necessary to make decisions.
- m. There is a lot of variation state to state. Each state does accreditation differently. Ultimately the TF is charged with doing what is best for MT.

Recap of Morning

1. Julie Murgel recaps some of the conversation from the morning

Lunch

Accreditation 101

1. Julie Murgel begins the conversation to gain an understanding of the group’s current knowledge of accreditation.
2. Julie Murgel explains some history, MCA, and ARM around accreditation Ch 55.
3. What is your first thought about what ARM the taskforce MUST address in the revision process?
 - a. McCall Flynn makes comments about the program standards and content standard. She wonders if it would be possible to align the two to avoid bumpy transitions. She makes additional comment about the requirements of implementation of content standards. Should they be required? Should it be an option?
 - i. Julie guides the group to ARM 10.55.501 and discusses the difference between curriculum and the content described.
 - ii. McCall responds that keeping them separately does make sense, but asks if maybe alignment would make sense?
 - iii. Julie poses the question, why does this live in 55? Why are they separate? Where is the alignment?
 - b. Janelle comments that their group talked about why Ch55 isn’t updated when content standards are revised.
 - i. Julie asks where this would live in our “buckets”. How is this used in defining quality schools?
 - c. Heather Hoyer makes comment that there are gaps in the timeline. A lot has changed when program standards were done (like vocabulary).
 - i. Julie responds that the thinking and alignment may not look the same as when it was written. (1989 through 2021)
 - d. David Pafford points the group to .907 for the innovations and remote learning. Does the current Ch 55 language encompass all the innovations we have discovered throughout the last two years?
 - e. Gary Lusin makes comment about his district. Things are changing rapidly. There needs to be a system in the state to keep up with the changes. He is unsure if this is within the role of this TF but having a perspective of the changes happening now and may happen in the future would be important.

- f. Emily Dean makes comment that the current standard is not the exemplar but the starting point. People in the field may limit their creativity or thinking because of ARM. There may be a lot of opportunity in Ch 55 to look into what is preventing creative solutions and exploring ideas.
- g. Billi Taylor keeps coming back to the standards for administrators or library specialists. These positions are responsible for all of what we have talked about. In a class C school where the board has taken FTE abilities for the Superintendent position, there is a lot to accomplish in a short amount of time. In larger districts, there is a larger population to consider, and delegation occurs. The current standards put us at risk of not being proficient because there is not capacity or time to complete. The system is setting small schools up for failure.
 - i. Julie Murgel comments that this is a very important point, and the TF will need to dig into this. No matter the FTE, they are required to accomplish the same amount of work regardless of their capacity.
- h. Dan Lee makes comment agreeing to Billi's comment. In larger districts there may be individuals in which their role is to complete a portion of the requirements. He makes comment that "minimum" has a negative connotation to it but maybe using the term baseline or base standards.

Federal Accountability System Indicators

- 1. Julie Murgel explains the Federal Accountability system.
- 2. Gary Lusin makes comment about language where growth, progress, or proficiency is identified. He feels there is conflict in this language. A student could be growing but not making the standards.
 - a. Julie Murgel responds that in the Federal Accountability System, Growth is part of what Gary mentioned. The state accreditation system does not consider growth but only looks at proficiency (student performance). This is a big conversation in the federal accountability system. Not only do we want students to be proficient, but we want them to grow.

Accreditation Standards

- 1. Julie Murgel explains the "Assurance Standard" and "Student Performance Standard"

Accreditation Process

- 1. Julie Murgel explains the Accreditation Process
- 2. What do you think the TF MUST address in the revision process?
 - a. Equity in school sizes.
 - b. Goes beyond equity in diverse sizes and the availability of resources
 - c. Measures of quality schools in outputs (other than just tests)
 - d. Is MT ready to make a third party provider the accreditor? Follow ND or WY to make Cognia the Statewide accreditor. There are benefits although MT's local control may have a hard time with it.

- e. The current standards, instead of revision of the process maybe we need to re-envision the process. Allow districts to demonstrate they are providing a high-quality education based on the current and future environment.

Variance to Standard

1. Julie Murgel explains the Variance to standards data

Intensive Assistance

1. Julie Murgel explains the Intensive Assistance data

Continuous Improvement

1. Julie Murgel reviews continuous improvement plans

Accreditation Data

1. Julie Murgel reviews data around
 - a. Advice Status
 - b. Deficiency Status
 - c. Deviation Trends

Data Talk

1. Heather Hoyer explains overload status and the ratio in which you would need to employ paraprofessionals.
 - a. Jon Konen explains the elementary ratios and how overload status works.
2. Gary Lusin asks what schools are included in this data?
 - a. Julie answers all accredited schools. All public and some private.
3. Full reports can be found on the OPI website for each school's data.

What is the relationship between current ARM and school quality?

1. Julie Murgel shares example. 10.55.701 Board of Trustees
 - a. Janelle comments about how well does this get done, to what degree, and how is the evaluation of teachers or staff helping them to grow to better support the classroom and students?
 - b. Julie Murgel shares the quality of a teacher is what determines student performance is the number one variable in a quality school.
 - c. Jon Konen asks the question: How much are evaluations really moving the dial? First, we need to understand how to evaluate to be on the same page, then feedback needs to be used to help improve instruction.
 - i. Julie Murgel responds that one of the best things we can do is observe teachers in action then give feedback. How are we using evaluation tools? Once every few years or more continual in bite size pieces.
 - d. Julie Murgel shares that having quality teachers is the number one way to a quality school. This ARM only states that the board of trustees is to have a policy. It does not explain how the policy should be done or what the policy is.

- e. Emily Dean shares a reminder that with the word “quality” we are striving for more for our students. She mentions this is a guidepost not what we are striving for. ARM is the baseline.
2. Heather Jarrett: ARM 10.55.710 Assignment of School Counseling Staff
- a. Heather’s thoughts:
 - i. What about the schools with 127 to 399? This is not mentioned.
 - ii. Do school counselors provide quality for schools? Sure
 - 1. But if it’s just a body... then no
 - iii. Are talking about counseling in the career counseling arena? Is it within the mental health arena?
 - 1. This is a very important role!
 - iv. Is this minimum standard to having a quality school?
 - 1. In the utopian idealistic society, yes.
 - 2. With more clarity, yes.
 - b. Jon Konen asks what themes are in our educational environment now vs 10 years ago. Mental health is a large theme. What is most important in our schools and how can we look into changing the standard?
 - i. Julie Murgel expands on Jon’s comment. Let’s think about 2033. What will quality schools entail?
 - c. Dan Lee comments that licensed school counselors have always been coveted. What about a licensed social worker or LCPC? We need to think about what is best for our children, and if we broaden the standard, we may be able to serve students better in 2033 than we are now.
 - d. Heather Hoyer responds to Dan’s comment that we need to look into the definition of a counselor as well. This ARM is based on the definition of a school academic guidance counselor. Is one school academic guidance counselor enough? This does not address our needs.
 - e. Heather Jarrett responds holistically we are talking about SEL. Schools have been doing a good job of bringing these issues to the forefront. What exactly are we trying to accomplish with this ARM?
3. Heather Hoyer: ARM 10.55.712 Elementary Class size
- a. Heather’s thoughts:
 - i. Is this adequate for baseline? Yes
 - 1. Accounts for consistency across
 - ii. Does not account for highly qualified teachers
 - iii. Does not account for the physical size of classrooms
 - iv. Is this minimum standard to having a quality school?
 - 1. Yes, modified
 - b. There is a movement to jumpstart kindergarten programs. She wonders if there needs to be a maximum number in those classes as ARM begins with kindergarten.
 - c. ARM does not account for one teacher schools and the wide range of content areas makes for too many kids to reach mastery.
 - d. 30 students are not the optimal number for a classroom. It is too many students to reach quality.

4. Tony Warren: ARM 10.55.704 Administrative Personnel assignment of Superintendents
 - a. Tony's thoughts:
 - i. Some county Supts in MT perform both the County Supt and Treasurer position. Many of those that are fulfilling both roles are doing the minimum accounting requirements. May not want these individuals to complete teacher evaluations
 - ii. Individuals fulfilling the roles for (b) and (c) may only be completing the paperwork side of the job and not physically going to a classroom.
 - iii. Given the challenges to fill all positions, do we need to consider having schools with more than 100 FTE staff to join a curriculum consortium if and when a curriculum director position cannot be filled.
 - iv. Is this minimum standard to having a quality school?
 1. Yes, modified
5. Gary Lusin: ARM 10.55.705 Administrative Personnel assignment of Principals
 - a. Gary's Thoughts:
 - i. Does not address schools with 9-124 students
 - ii. Does this assignment, based on FTE ratios, fit within the educational environment today.
 - iii. Looking at the potential for limited staffing with superintendents and principals, what can we do in this language to help give schools the flexibility to still provide quality education.
 - iv. Is this minimum standard to having a quality school?
 1. Yes
 - b. This topic was discussed at the Western MASS meeting. We can either change the flexibility to allow more people to take part or we figure out how to pay teachers, staff, and admin more.
 - c. Dan Lee feels that you need to be trained to be a principal. You need to understand teaching. There is a thought out there that anyone can do the job. Schools are a business and have their own practices and nuances to be aware of.
6. McCall Flynn: ARM 10.55.708 Teaching Assignments
 - a. McCall's Thoughts:
 - i. ARM requires that teachers be appropriately assigned based on licenses and endorsements.
 - ii. Is this minimum standard to having a quality school?
 1. Yes
 - b. Should be explored that K-8 certification allows for library to be taught by a K-8 teacher.
 - i. Jon Konen agrees and states that this was brought up in Western MASS meeting
 - ii. Heather Hoyer agrees and comments that this plays a roll in Secondary schools as well.
7. Janelle Beers: ARM 10.55.714 Professional Development
 - a. Janelle's thoughts:
 - i. Is this minimum standard to having a quality school?
 1. Yes
 - b. There is a minimum number of hours to be in session throughout the year. When students are let out early for PIR time, is this deducted for the number of contact hours?

- i. This information is entered with PIR time separated from total contact hours with students.
 - ii. Lots of PIR time is used for Professional Development Units. It is important to leave it as is.
 - iii. Montana is still at the bare minimum with what is required for Teachers to complete. Unsure how to modify this at this time.
 - c. Law passed to allow embedded job shadowing as PIR hours. Does this need to be referenced when looking for updates?
 - i. HB 246 was codifying what the BPE already had in rule.
 - ii. MTSBA has already done training on HB246. These materials could be shared.
- 8. David Pafford: ARM 10.55.905 Graduation Requirements
 - a. David's thoughts:
 - i. Yes, the school should have a known, accepted graduation requirement to transition from K-12 to post-education/career. ESSA monies are tied to this standard. In 2033, I suggest this assurance standard will be outdated and antique. No units, no grade level learning progression, and 4 years of High School will be a thing of the past. Mastery of learning objectives, work-based and proficiency-based learning will be the norm. Student age and aggregate hours in class will not be mandated. The quality school of the future will focus on creating a learning environment based on individual learning plans that will not need these random requirements. At some point, the relationship between the public-school student and the taxpayer will look completely different!

Wrap up

- 1. Julie Murgel wraps up the meeting and shares the homework and what to expect for tomorrow's meeting.
- 2. Homework:
 - a. Review the data packet
 - b. <https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/School%20Accreditation/Standards%20of%20Accreditation/Annual%20Reports/FY2020%20Annual%20Accreditation%20Report%20-%20Finalized%205.8.20.pdf?ver=2020-06-19-111529-573>

Meeting Adjourned: 4:40 PM