



## Chapter 55 School Quality Task Force Meeting Minutes Wednesday, March 9, 2022 8:00 AM – 2:00 PM

**Meeting Start Time:** 11:00 AM

### Roll Call

#### Task Force Members

Billi Taylor  
Daniel Lee  
Emily Dean  
Heather Hoyer  
Heather Jarrett  
Janelle Beers  
Tony Warren

#### BPE Representation

McCall Flynn

#### Facilitators

Julie Murgel  
Erich Stiefvater  
Tristen Loveridge

#### OPI Representation

Nathan Miller

### Welcome and Overview

1. Julie Murgel: reviews:
  - a. Agenda
  - b. Outcomes
  - c. Task Force Purpose
  - d. Group Norms and Working Agreements
  - e. Consensus
2. Snowfall Activity
  - a. Heather Hoyer:
    - i. How do we measure student? K-6, 7-8, 9-12.
    - ii. We may need more voices at the table. (Counselors, library media specialists, ect.) to weigh in on ARM that impacts them.
    - iii. Need to lower class sizes by 10%. STAR repeat and other research support lower class size.
  - b. Tony Warren:
    - i. Beginning work on individual rules. Baseline for NRM.
    - ii. Can the path to variances (for schools who need something different) be modified in cases where there are no applicants to meet standards?
  - c. Heather Jarrett:
    - i. Public comment from Dennis Parman. Why: stakeholder input and historical reference

- ii. Found our discussions to be very positive. We're clearly all trying to do the right thing to support schools and students.
- d. Dan Lee:
  - i. Should we think of accreditation differently? Districts vs. schools. Why: systemic change vs. school-to-school flexibility.
  - ii. Key areas of concern from this committee. Why: larger look at the process, not just rule.
  - iii. Providing districts with flexibility to demonstrate growth would be helpful.
- e. Julie Murgel:
  - i. It is not necessarily this groups responsibility to solve the teacher recruitment and retention challenge, however, it weights heavy on our mind.
  - ii. Be leery of pipelines that don't meet our standards. MT has a history of strong schools. Lowering bars could weaken them so how do we adjust to keep rigor but meet community needs?
- f. Erich Stiefvater:
  - i. Added restraint and seclusion
  - ii. Restraint and seclusion prohibition. Note who had it's experience with private programs.
- g. McCall Flynn:
  - i. Flexibility
  - ii. Establishing a good product for the NRM will be a challenge, but it needs to address today's learners and the futures positively. We shouldn't "limit" our thinking. Why the time is right but are we all brave enough to jump in.
  - iii. Need systems of support for districts, OPI personnel, ect.
  - iv. To explain Cognia in greater detail.
- h. Nathan Miller:
  - i. Address HS grad standards. Need to begin to make the curriculum more relevant.
  - ii. More data to help us make decisions! I feel like we are developing "good ideas" without need or data
  - iii. Local control is essential
- i. Emily Dean:
  - i. Dual level process. 1. Approval for .. 2. Accreditation to support continuous process. We can drive our finances.
  - ii. Accreditation to support continuous progress
  - iii. I continue to feel like this is a huge undertaking and would benefit for more rationale on why ARMs were changed in the past.
  - iv. We heard this roughly 9 months last time. Should we give this process more time?
  - v. Do we have the necessary research in areas we consider editing? If we do not, could "harm" be a result?
- j. Janelle Beers:
  - i. When we send to the rule making committee
  - ii. Baseline vs aspiration/goal..

- iii. Making recommendation for future schools...
  - iv. Group response from
- 3. Recap of Snowfall Activity
  - a. Dan Lee: there is a fair amount of interest in continuous progress. .
  - b. Heather H: heard the desire for research-based decision making and that we have not delved deeply into what research is proposing.
  - c. Janelle: we heard about if we need more time, this is a huge task, and if we have the data we need. Its concerning that we are sending things off without the survey results. It seems disingenuous to move forward without seeing those results.
  - d. Emily Dean: First do no harm is critical here. There is probably a lot of desire that this is too important to not get right. We need to take the time to understand what decisions we're making, why we're making them, and what implications they can have. That requires well researched information and data to use and make decisions from.
  - e. Julie: There are research articles have been shared with the TF and research has been done on ARM. It is important as we work today, as we begin to look at the rationale and dig in, to look at the data we have and what the research is saying. There is plenty of research out there to be referenced.

### Conceptual Changes

- 1. Library Media specialist staffing ratios
  - a. Heather J: Group reviewed a document of research with 37 states that summarized the state requirements for library media specialists. They found that many states do not have any requirements for library media specialists, or the states were very similar to MT current requirements. With Nathan's help, the group looked at adjusting ARM to a different type of wording and ratio. It seemed to have a positive impact. Nathan ran numbers for three different school size systems. One word change they looked at is to change to "school system" which could give more flexibility to districts.
  - b. Nathan Miller: Looked at it at a 500 to 1 ratio that is broken out for schools that are currently in the 250 to 500 range. He shares examples of real school systems and how it would impact them. It would not only help smaller schools but would also help larger schools with library FTE.
  - c. Erich: Are we able to include the examples in the rationale.
  - d. Nathan: Yes, the information is public, but we can change the school names to school A and School B for example.
- 2. Graduation requirements specifically on High School credits
  - a. Heather H: Group discussed the importance of looking at graduation requirements in terms of mastery of Montana standards that are adopted to include competency-based diplomas. The group looked at states like Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Oregon, Colorado, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts. The group is leaning towards standards mastery rather than a unit mastery for graduation. Allowing for more flexibility for districts to measure student proficiency. Keeping the baseline expectation of what all students in Montana need to achieve to get a diploma.

3. Accreditation
  - a. Heather H: Group discussion turned towards if Montana’s accreditation process is more of an approval and the process for accreditation. They also discussed the two-tiered approach to schools to be approved by ensuring all requirements are met for the law and the accreditation process focusing more on improvement and self-reflection that could be done by a district.
4. Local control
  - a. Janelle: Group began by discussing where the local control process might live. And thought perhaps 10.55.701. Discussion moved to accreditation and continuous improvement plans and how local control would tie into the ARMs we have already been looking at.
  - b. Emily Dean: Group also discussed not adding more burden to districts rather letting them build on what they are already doing. For example, districts applying for advanced opportunity aid, they are already developing a strategic plan to address how to provide opportunities for students. They discussed how we can consolidate some of the requirements so districts can make good decisions rather than them just working to check off the boxes.
5. Staffing Ratios for Library Media Specialists Group Feedback
  - a. Janelle: Has a question about smaller schools with 126 students or less. Has the group talked about them and how to help them in these situations?
    - i. Heather J: Can Janelle clarify? Some of the discussion the group had was to leave some of the services from MSSA. It is a great option for those schools in particular.
    - ii. Janelle: MSSA should be an option. Her concern is that when people jump in and out of the number year to year and become noncompliant but don’t have the resources to hire a librarian. Is there some way to make it an average over three years so the district can plan ahead? The district doesn’t know the variant they will have so they become out of compliance.
  - b. Nathan: When looking at the number of below 126 students for consortium. Is there a number you see schools effectively using to be capped at or a range that would work well for those schools?
    - i. Janelle: doesn’t think there is a number specifically because it will affect some schools no matter what. Most schools range from 5 to 126 students. The top end of the range will always struggle to know to predict. She would be curious to see where 126 came from.
  - c. McCall: Yesterday in public comment there was comment made that there is a robust advocacy group that would be worth reaching out for input.
  - d. Janelle: Has heard loud and clear not to take away the library media specialist requirement.
  - e. Tony: Could you see MSSA successfully accommodating smaller B schools when they get into a staffing crunch in finding Library Media Specialists?
    - i. Janelle: would possibly they would need to hire more based on where the school is at in FTE. They offer training onsite and Professional development with schools now.

- f. Erich: Heather had mentioned research. That data is hyperlinked in the document.
6. Graduation Requirements
- a. Dan: We're talking about substantial changes to High School curriculum. Maybe we don't have comments because people are still processing it.
  - b. Janelle: Are there models out there from states that currently use a proficiency or competency model? When we're reinventing the language is there somewhere we can look/borrow language.
    - i. Julie: there are 6 states that have a competency-based requirements. Three that have partial competency requirements (Rhode Island, Colorado, and Oregon) and three that have only competency requirements (Maine, Vermont, and New Hampshire)
    - ii. Janelle: Coming from Oregon she knows there is a partial model there. It was very controversial with boards and the community in the transition. It is a big area that she is sure will come with many questions.
    - iii. Dan: By doing this it would kick off those discussions. This would act as an accelerant to the conversation.
  - c. Heather J: ARM states a number of seat minutes. Would this be removed? Or was there discussion around seat time?
    - i. Heather H: if it moves to proficiency or competency-based requirements, the seat time is removed, and it is based on acquisition of mastery of standards.
  - d. Heather J: would there be a crosswalk with each of the delivery standards. How would that function when we're talking about this transition?
    - i. Heather H: yes, there would need to be a crosswalk. This is a huge topic and a big shift. It increases flexibly and additional local control with graduation standards.
    - ii. Heather J: For our work, it would be our job to redline and include each of those in the discussion?
    - iii. Julie: yes, this group would need to look at ARMs this would impact as well as program requirements. We would also look at what other chapters this would impact.
    - iv. Dan: There is a parallel conversation with Ch57 with alternative routes to licensure. They're teaching our students so by having a competency-based model there is a prescriptive standard for topics to be covered and students have to master it. So regardless of the licensure requirements, at least Montana students are getting the mastery they need to be successful.
    - v. Heather J: As part of this conversation, should we be able to have EPP representation at the table? This is not how a lot of teacher prep programs are functioning currently. This is a huge philosophical shift for EPPs.
    - vi. Dan: yes, this is a statewide lift. There are a lot of areas in our state would need to come together to get this right.
    - vii. Heather H: Dropped in a link to Maine and how they word their years or equivalency standards.
  - e. Dan: We think because we have credits right now that all of our students have the same experience in High School, but we know that is not true. Schools develop courses to

meet requirements and requirements are not the same district to district. We comfort ourselves with the simplicity of our system, but the system is not very consistent.

- f. Janelle: Have you thought about how this would impact our middle schools or elementary? In Oregon, when a new system was dropped into only the secondary level it was not always successful because it is better to start younger. Should we look at this in elementary and middle even though they don't use credit it is a different way to look at things.
    - i. Dan: what would happen is vertical planning. We know where our students have to be at the end of the pipeline, so we have to do backwards planning so they are ready when it comes to that point. So it would impact the middle and elementary schools.
7. Accreditation Process
- a. Heather J: When looking at a difference for approval and accreditation for schools, would it create some sort of disparity or a competitive system? She appreciates that schools don't have an additional cost burden right now. Many schools use every dime they receive and if they have another expense, it could create disparity. Would like to be mindful of this going forward.
  - b. Janelle wonders if this in addition to something or is replacing something. One more layer isn't something our schools need.
  - c. Billi: A definition of what approval would be vs accreditation would be important to know.
  - d. Julie: In the article K-12 Accreditations Next Move, there is some data that currently in most states' accreditation stands separate from accountability. About 20 states require all schools to be accredited vs 30 that do not. TF can reference this if they're looking for more info about what it means of not all schools are accredited.
8. Local Control
- a. Billi: Their group really talked about the consideration to emphasize local control. Extended time allows for district to monitor, show progress, and to have more consideration for decisions rather than an annual check box. It would require and receive more investment with a more effective return. Using things that are already being used but not as an annual checkmark like the continuous school improvement plans.
  - b. Emily: To ensure we're making informed decisions. Emily will look into the states that have similar levels of local control authority and what those accreditation processes look like.

## Initiate Thinking

1. Library Media Specialist
  - a. Nathan Miller: Explains that his group looked at the ratios and if they should be applied to a school or a system. He walks the NRM through the groups suggested red line changes to 10.55.701.
  - b. Heather Hoyer: Thinks from a large school standpoint, it would increase their FTE if it was changed to a 500 to 1 ratio. Her schools are in the 1000 to 2000 students. It would bump them from 2 to 3 FTE and 2.5 to 4 FTE.

- i. Nathan: He can look at Great falls specifically, but when looking at Billings at the system level the suggested change resulted in less required librarians.
  - ii. Heather: so, some elementary schools could lose librarians.
  - iii. Nathan: yes, and then you can work to decide how to allocate the librarians.
  - iv. Heather: would like to clarify that it is for the district not per school
  - v. Nathan: yes, it is system wide not per school. The thought process behind is that districts could combine to be a K-12.
  - vi. Janelle: would like clarification between system and district especially looking at small schools.
  - vii. Nathan: Smaller school systems would be one or two districts and one system.
- 2. Emily: this conversation exemplifies why this process needs more time. To take the time to look at how changes would impact all schools not just one school and to see what other considerations we are missing. We need the time to fully vet the recommendations we're putting forward. If we're not fully vetting the recommendations, she is unsure what the point of the TF is.
  - a. Tony: asks if we need to come together before April 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> to continue to hash things out?
  - b. Emily: yes. She is not opposed to these conceptual ideas. Having time to look at the impact of these ideas on districts. It may also help prompt other solutions after the group has more information.
- 3. Julie: Explains that traditionally it is just the NRM meeting. She asks the TF what, if anything, the group would like to send forward.
  - a. Emily: what is the agenda set to look at?
  - b. Julie: She is not facilitating it NRM. They will talk about any of the proposals that are brought forward.
  - c. Emily: This is the difficulty to have them run concurrently. It would make more sense for the TF to fully vet what their recommendations are before sending them to the Superintendent. She assumes the Superintendent wouldn't be able to review the changes within a day either.
  - d. Dan Lee: wants to understand the process better. We get through the red line and then the NRM looks at it and holds public hearing on it. He wonders if in that process, there is ample opportunity for other parties to weigh in on changes. The TF is not the end of the line. In his group, he feels they have set the table to begin talking about competency-based diplomas. But they don't have all of the answers because they only had an hour and can only do so much in that time. Somewhere along the line someone has to flesh it out more. He sees the TF role as setting the table then the NRM picks up the ball.
  - e. Emily: respects that Dan's comment. If we're a TF that is asked to provide a recommendation, she wants to ensure that she is providing a recommendation she is comfortable voting on. She does not feel confident voting on what we have. The conceptual ideas we have being discussing is a great starting point, but the TF is being asked to provide recommendations to the Superintendent. A not fully fleshed out, recommendation is not doing ARM justice.
  - f. Janelle: is there a chance for us to meet again before the NRM meets?

- g. Daniel: Is interested in what Emily is saying. Not only is she saying that we need more time but that we need to talk to constituencies about it as well?
  - h. Emily: She would feel more comfortable because while we might have Great Falls here, we are missing areas. An opportunity to get feedback because her lens is not the full spectrum. These are significant decisions that impact kids across the state. These decisions take generally 9-12 months because of how important it is.
  - i. Heather H: should we be forwarding red line recommendations or should we just send the conceptual ideas and notes. When we talk about setting the table, would we be better to provide them the reasonings vs redlines or both? She is not sure how that committee functions.
  - j. Julie: Normally the process includes the NRM alone, not the TF. The TF is an extra layer this time. There were a few months of an internal group doing work, but because it wasn't enough, we have this group doing work. We are under timeline, the NRM must be done by July because so they can get an economic impact done before September. That group is set on its timeline to be complete by July. We have to decide if we have something to take forward to them or do we send nothing. It is up for the TF to decide. Would the TF like to send forward the conceptual ideas?
  - k. Dan: Can we offer conceptual changes. We're not altering rule at this point. Does think that we should be respectful and ensure we are doing everything would be very hard, but if we pick a few consequential items we could get that done. He hesitates in reaching out because it could cause discontent. He is comfortable advancing what we have.
  - l. Tony: could a potential compromise be to bring some conceptual ideas to the Superintendent but say that the TF needs to discuss with additional resources in the meantime?
  - m. Julie: is there anything the group would like to bring forward?
  - n. Emily: sending our notes to the NRM would be fine. Having a couple of weeks to gather information that needs to be found would be helpful. Giving the NRM the notes to start on would be fine.
  - o. Heather H: there is validity in sending the notes to both the NRM and the Superintendent. What she would like them to do is look into the ideas deeper, give clarity, and give ideas for the TF. The TF may be a bit of a workhorse for the NRM as needed.
4. Dan Lee: Makes a motion to move the notes from the working copy of the conceptual memorandum move forward to the NRM and Superintendent.
- a. Heather H: Seconds the motion
5. Vote on the motion to move the notes from the working copy of the conceptual memorandum move forward to the NRM and Superintendent.
- a. Billi Taylor yes
  - b. Daniel Lee Yes
  - c. Emily Dean Yes
  - d. Heather Hoyer yes
  - e. Heather Jarrett yes
  - f. Janelle Beers yes
  - g. Tony Warren yes
  - i. Vote passes unanimously



6. Heather H: At our next meeting, we will continue what we are working on this time but also take calls for further information and analysis from the Superintendent.

**Public Comment**

7. Diane Fladmo, Director of Policy, Montana Federation for Public Employees: Thank you to the TF that has been doing the work. The decision to move forward concepts makes sense. As she thinks about librarians and the discussion on their issue alone, she hopes they have the opportunity to have them provide input. She hopes that they have more time to understand the timeline review the information and asks for questions. Any of us in the room she realizes how little she knows when she joins a conversation with experts. There is no possible way for them to get the information they need to provide meaningful comments. This is an important concept effecting hundreds of thousands of students. The magnitude of the work cannot be overstated. Have the meetings at a time when strong public information can be provided. A clear delineation of timelines and the meetings held when parents, school personnel, or trustees are able to attend. She knows there is too much to do and too little time. People are feeling the same time constraints as we do every day.

**Meeting Adjourned: 2:00 PM**