



Chapter 55 School Quality Task Force Meeting Minutes Thursday, April 21, 2022 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Meeting Start Time: 11:00 AM

Roll Call

Task Force Members

Billi Taylor
Daniel Lee
David Pafford
Emily Dean
Heather Hoyer
Gayle Venturelli
Heather Jarrett
Janelle Beers
Jon Konen
Tony Warren

BPE Representation

McCall Flynn

Facilitators

Julie Murgel

Executive Support

Tristen Loveridge
Kristie Sears

Region 17 Comp Center Support

Erich Stiefvater
Jacob Williams

Welcome and Review

1. Julie Murgel: Reviews:
 - a. Meeting outcomes
 - b. Meeting agenda
 - c. Group norms and working agreements
 - d. Consensus definition
 - e. Task Force purpose
 - f. Key deliverables
 - g. Task Force timeline
 - i. McCall: Asks if it would be best to come back to this discussion at the end of the day.
 - ii. Jon Konen: Concur with McCall. The activity from last week was a great opportunity to look at what other states are doing that MT could benefit from.
 - iii. Janelle Beers: Asks if whatever the TF does not finished will move to the NRM?
 - iv. Dan Lee: To do what we're talking about will take work to reference rules. To carve out specific broad areas to focus on rather than the entire chapter like accreditation. To focus on the big issues would be good to plan to go forward and to bring in more experts.

- v. Emily Dean: Requests that any additional work done be presented to the TF then voted at an additional meeting to allow for time to get feedback from the public and constituents.

Review of Survey Results

1. School Performance results
 - a. Julie Murgel: reviews the data
 - b. Dan Lee: We're talking about demonstrating student growth or using assessment to improve instruction. We're seeing that people don't believe or don't feel that student assessment is important in their work. It is important that we feel assessment is important. This was an unexpected response.
 - i. Janelle Beers: Is curious if we would have asked this question pre pandemic what the response would have been.
 - c. David Pafford: Is there some form of standardized testing a federal requirement?
 - i. Julie Murgel: yes, it required federally. She describes the assessments that are often used by teachers. When we think of the state accreditation system, the summative scores are used for student performance standards.
 - ii. David Pafford: Would it be an unrealistic recommendation to reduce state testing in MT due to the federal requirements?
 - iii. Jon Konen: Explains that schools use multiple pieces of data are used to evaluate performance. Proficiency scores are not the only item used to make decisions. State assessments are used to meet requirements for grants and state and federal government.
 - iv. David Pafford: Are we about to make a recommendation to removing testing from schools?
 - v. Julie Murgel: we're not making any recommendations at this time but trying to understand the data.
 - d. Dan Lee: We know from the NAPE 4th grade math scores are not much different for MT and the nation. As a state, it helps us to understand as a state if we are satisfied with our current performance. All about what test and the purpose of the test.
2. School staff results
 - a. Julie Murgel: reviews the data
3. School policy/program results
 - a. Julie Murgel: Reviews the data
4. Q1 How important do you think the following items related to School Performance are to determining K-12 school quality?
 - a. Jon Konen and Janelle Beers
 - i. Summary of survey responses
 1. Covid recovery mentality
 2. Variety of classes
 3. Dual credit programs
 4. Post HS tracking
 5. Engagement
 6. School climate
 7. State assessment not being the only measure
 8. Mental health
 9. Access and curriculum
 10. Assessment progress and proficiency
 11. Teacher retention
 12. Professional development
 13. Quality of teachers

- ii. Inferences
 - 1. There are multiple measures to see a student's progress
 - iii. Review and revisions
 - 1. Accreditation
 - 2. Staffing, recruitment, and retention of teachers
 - iv. Conclusions
 - 1. Accreditation and changing the system
 - 2. Multiple ways to accredited schools
 - 3. Not one measure, providing flexibility, there is power in choice
 - b. David Pafford: One of the unintended consequences of multiple pathways to accreditation may affect the hiring of teachers.
 - i. Julie Murgel: Accreditation process, meaning the number of years you are accredited for or the cycle, or do we allow choice to say they can go to a third party in place of the state process. Is there room to discuss how we accredit schools, what that would look like, and if there could be flexibility and choice.
 - c. Julie Murgel: Hearing from Jon and Janelle that we need to think about the accreditation process
 - i. Janelle Beers: Yes, and we need to think about it thoughtfully with a lot of information or not do anything. We don't want to cause big problems for districts by rushing through the process.
 - ii. Jon Konen: The possible fiscal implication is one of the biggest things to think about. Giving districts the opportunity to chose which pathway they accredit is the best option.
 - iii. Julie Murgel: There is a lot of time and effort that goes into reporting in teams. Is that the right set of data, can we do less, do we need different things answered, is it helping schools to see where they need to emphasize efforts to improve?
5. Q2 How important do you think each of the following items related to School Staff are to K-12 school quality?
- a. Julie Murgel and Heather Jarrett
 - i. Summary of survey responses
 - 1. Having individuals that are properly licensed is important.
 - ii. Inferences
 - 1. Support is needed for teachers and staff (Financial, PD, support to administrators)
 - iii. Review and revisions
 - 1. Administrative staffing levels
 - iv. Conclusions
 - 1. In the evaluation process, do we have enough to determine quality of staff and admin?
 - 2. Should we look at the paraprofessional and substitute areas of the chapter.
 - b. Janelle Beers: The para and sub pieces was something that was important to the County Superintends she had received feedback from.
 - i. Jon Konen: Asks if the Superintendents were looking to have more qualifications for those individuals or to have some more flexibility?
 - ii. Janelle Beers: More flexibility, but not a warm body theory
6. Q3 How important do you think having the following School Policy/Program requirements are to K-12 school quality?
- a. McCall Flynn and Emily Dean
 - i. Summary of survey responses
 - 1. Policy requirements ranked the lowest in importance from survey data
 - 2. Ensuring all students have equal access to an education that meets the needs ranked highest in importance from survey data
 - 3. Class size limits

4. Minimum academic graduation requirements
 5. Most comments are already addressed in rule
 - ii. Inferences
 1. Notes there are a lot of pieces that the public doesn't know is already in ARM
 2. Comprehensive family engagement
 3. Mentorship and Induction
 - iii. Review and revisions
 1. Don't have specific changes because ARM should be the baseline
 - iv. Conclusions
 1. All districts are developing policies that are working for their communities
 2. Look at 10.55.701 to ensure equal access is done at a local level
 3. Worries about touching class size limits due to the risk of an unfunded mandate.
 - b. Julie Murgel: Did you look at 10.55.802 regarding equal access and opportunity?
 - i. Emily Dean: MCA and the Constitution is driving ARM. She isn't sure we need to adjust because it is driven by current law.
 - ii. TF discuss the policies from 803, 802, and 701. Basic requirements and standards and where it could potentially live in rule.
7. Q4 What do you like about the Accreditation Standards?
- a. Gary Lusin
 - i. Summary of survey responses
 1. Range of responses including doesn't understand anything to very specific understanding
 2. Baseline standards to keep accountability
 3. Not watering the standards down but actually increase the standards
 4. Teachers strengthening the standards
 5. Librarians to not lower those standards
 - ii. Inferences
 1. Generally, people think the standards are good
 2. Like the accountability that districts and teachers need to comply with
 - iii. Review and revisions
 1. look at something to keep accreditation standards current to changes in education
 - iv. Conclusions
 1. The standards are necessary and relevant and provide a baseline for everyone.
8. Q5 What do you dislike about the accreditation standards?
- a. David Pafford and Heather Hoyer
 - i. Summary of survey responses
 1. Accreditation is burdensome
 2. Class size
 3. Licensure
 4. World Languages
 - ii. Inferences
 1. Brining in third parties for accreditation and the shared amount of documentation that needs to be collected.
 2. One third party accreditor for the entire state removes local control
 - iii. Conclusions
 1. Maintain high licensure standards but also remove barriers for highly qualified people to become licensed.

9. Q6 What would you change?
 - a. David Pafford and Heather Hoyer
 - i. Summary of survey responses
 1. Licensure
 2. World Languages
 3. Class size
 - ii. Inferences
 1. Misunderstanding of how accreditation works
 2. Teacher licensure and things that could be eliminated like mandatory PRAXIS or reciprocity
 - iii. Review and revisions
 1. Class size
 - iv. Conclusions
 1. Class size changes would come with a high price tag
 - b. David Pafford: Notes the graph of frequency for the accreditation process
 - i. Heather Hoyer: Pg. 34 of Survey summary document
10. Strengthening teacher standards (evaluation)
 - a. Emily Dean: Districts are in charge of ensuring they are hiring quality staff. That is why important for ARM to be minimum standard. Districts can decide what they need in addition to the standards.
 - b. Julie Murgel: Comments that getting a license does not mean you get a job. She is trying to think about what happens after a district hires someone.
 - c. TF continue to discuss the minimum standards for a license, what districts do to higher and mentor and provide professional development staff and ensure success in districts.

Conceptual memorandum

1. Julie Murgel: Reviews past TF discussion on conceptual memorandum
2. TF discuss what effects any of these changes could have on funding. Since funding could have a big effect on if any of these proposals are implemented.
3. McCall Flynn: Relays message from Representative Fred Anderson about the idea to include a 10% grey area in the library media specialist ratio calculations.
 - a. TF discusses the options available for a “grey area” and the possible effect on district QEP.
4. Proficiency
 - a. Emily Dean: Reviews discussions around the definitions of proficiency, growth, and learning progression.
 - b. David Pafford: Learning progression has nothing to do with being proficient. Does learning progression have anything to do with proficiency or growth?
 - i. Heather Jarrett: It would be individual to the learner. A student may have growth and they may be progressing, but they could not be proficient.
 - c. Emily Dean: Discussed utilizing the idea of an IEP for every student. We know how much time and resources are required to develop an IEP and reach the goals of an IEP. There are many countries that provide time for prep, data analysis, and student meetings and also time for instruction. That is not how our state functions. Discussed what resources would be needed to move to a system like an IEP for all students.
 - d. Julie Murgel: When we’re looking at 10.55.606. We use two different standards to accredit, the assurance standards and the student performance standards. The student performance standards are the measures we use for the number students that are proficient or advances on the smarter balance for ACT in ELA and Math. Do we keep our student performance standards as they are or add growth?

- i. Emily Dean: She would not include growth in the standards. It is good for districts to have a measure of growth but does not want to dictate the type of measure.
 - e. David Pafford: Do we know if growth was included in the survey that should be addressed?
 - f. Julie Murgel: School accreditation in MT right now is the following equation: assurance standards + student performance standards = overall school rating. We are rating schools, not just on assurance standards, but also how students are doing, and High Schools also use a graduation rate. A lot of states use other indicators to measure (proficiency, growth, ELL, MT college and career readiness, attendance, STEAM,) that students are proficient. Looking at the quality of a school, is teachers that are helping students to grow.
 - g. Gary Lusin: Discussed words that originated from the definition of assessment like growth, proficiency, and learning progression.
 - h. Jon Konen: Adds that it is difficult to measure growth from one point in time to another.
 - i. TF has additional conversation about how growth may be used or defined in rule.
5. Library Media Specialists
- a. Heather Jarrett: Reviews the work completed in this section and their proposals.
 - b. TF discuss school systems and how they function.
 - c. McCall Flynn: What happens to the positions that require less FTE than they currently hire?
 - i. David Pafford: Expresses concern that if a position is not required by the state a district may not keep that position. There could potentially be librarian positions cut.
 - d. Heather Jarrett: Reviews the work completed with Nathan Miller around the 1 to 500 student ratio.
 - e. Erich Stiefvater: Notes that the TF can push this topic to the NRM with recommendations to be further discussed.
 - f. TF discuss other considerations to be included in the rationale for the NRM to review.
 - g. Heather Jarrett: Asks Julie if Library Media Specialists is included in the critical positions at the OPI?
 - i. Julie Murgel: Yes. OPI is waiting for some current data to come out.
 - h. Emily Dean: MTSBA discussed (3) was important but it should also include “or any other cooperating method of satisfying a staffing obligation...”. Proposes to add that language to the end of (3).
 - i. David Pafford: What if a district wanted to move to an entirely digital library?
 - i. TF discuss the possibilities and what would be required in this situation
 - j. Jay Phillips: OPI CFO brings insight into how much fiscal impact there would be with this change.
6. Graduation Requirements
- a. McCall Flynn: Reviews the intent of the proposals
 - b. TF discuss if the requirement should include Civics, Government, or both
 - c. TF discuss the endorsement and misassignment of teachers in civics or history endorsements.
7. Paraprofessional and substitute requirement
- a. Jon Konen: Reviews the discussion and proposal
 - b. David Pafford: Wonders if the original language was tied to any legal advice?
 - i. Heather Jarrett: If a paraprofessional is employed with a school, they have to go through the same background checks as anyone else.
 - c. Gary: Proposes to include “shall be in the direct or indirect supervision of a supervising teacher”
 - d. Jon Konen: Asks if Emily can give any legal opinion here?
 - i. Emily Dean: If we want to give her a couple of questions, she can pass those along to her lawyer colleagues.
 - 1. Is there legal reasoning for the original language? Can we revise it?
 - e. TF discuss the role of a paraprofessional and teacher relationship. Teachers do not just leave paraprofessionals to decide what to do with students on their own. The difference between sub-planting vs supplementing with a paraprofessional

8. School Counselors
 - a. Janelle Beers: Reviews the proposals. Notes there would be 15 districts this change would impact.
9. Mentorship and induction
 - a. McCall Flynn: Reviews proposals in this section.
 - b. Julie Murgel: Notes the mentorship conversation in the Chapter 57 Task Force. Even though mentorship is already in the ch55, it does not seem that is being done with much fidelity.
 - c. McCall Flynn: Originally was thinking about creating a stand-alone rule but was not sure how to flesh that out.
 - i. Jon Konen: Give options, or another formalized mentorship program that has been developed. We're at a point we need to provide the PD within schools. Even if it is support from other places.
 - d. TF discusses what research-based requirement would entail
 - e. Heather Jarrett:
 - f. Gary Lusin: The proposed language could result in funding issues for a district. If a district has to pay for this, it will cut into general fund. He supports the idea but need to consider the funding impact on districts.
 - g. TF discuss how Bozeman is currently providing mentorship and induction
 - h. Heather Jarrett: Shares how her district conducts mentorship. From a class C standpoint, districts can't provide a mentor in their subject area due to staffing. Even experienced teachers may not have the confidence to become mentors. While mentorship is very important, it needs to be fully thought out to be done well.
 - i. David: Asks if this language includes administrators?

Discussion of Next Steps

1. TF discuss game plan going forward and put together subcommittee groups to complete work and bring it forward to the next meeting. Two additional in person meetings will be scheduled.

Public Comment

1. Dennis Parman, Executive Director, Montana Rural Education Association:
 - a. In regards to Fred Anderson's comments during the variance to standards and that gray area...that conversation came up because Havre High School is having on library and Supt. Craig Mueller mentioned that it's frequent that they start the school year with more than 500 kids but as they move into the school year that number comes down and, in that discussion, one of the members of the variance standards of work said well what happens when it goes back up? And they said our response is to make sure that we are staffed appropriately so that if it is over 500 whatever the point is that we do that. And so, I think that was a real good example for the context of what the gray area means. But in reality, they may start the school year with over 500 and they might still be in the place in October when they report. And in February, they might not be at that point anymore, and in the end of the school year it might even be less. So, you got that timeline and if you apply the accreditation timeline to it there's a deadline to report in TEAMS. And then nobody ever asked so they're using the honor system to do it appropriately. I would suggest you take all of that in mind if you're going to do a gray area. The last thing I'd say about a gray area is where you draw the line, somebody is going to...(UNTRANSCRIBABLE).
 - b. So, everyone that works in schools has a pretty good grasp of the value of growth student growth to the teacher, the student, and the parent. But that's not what we're talking. We're talking about in the accreditation process using student growth and even within that context I understand the tendency to move towards well. Why can't we look at growth? I mean you may not get this we're going to be able to jump over this bar, but that doesn't mean our kids haven't done something and have showed some progress, and we should get some credit for that. And I'm I understand that as well. To use local assessments that get challenged okay. A lot of people use MAPS but what about the people that don't

now we're going to be forced to use MAP or feel like they need to use MAP and they'll be something that we refuse to use it and so. You you'll be challenged on that. To use a statewide assessment you already know, the restrictions in terms of what grade levels so not only grade levels, but if you're going to compare the results of this year's third graders at Roiseer's elementary school to next year's fourth graders at Roiseer's Elementary School and then an ideal world. kids the Left in that interim between those two testing periods so off and any kids who've been do not go on because they've not been impacted and influenced by two years of instruction, by the same people. And I did a longitudinal study, when I was in Havre of how many kids took the standardized assessment in Havre at the timing of the earliest how many of them walked across the stage. When that class graduates who are you present. So, where I'm going with using growth in the accreditation process is a slippery slope. And I personally always ended up with the intent of accreditation standards is to hit the minimum set the minimum standard of quality and having a single proficiency score measurements multiply because you're not trying to identify schools that are doing almost okay to well. You're trying to identify schools that aren't. So, the single proficiency mark on a standardized state assessment tends to make sense, if nothing about. For those schools that are high performing. How are you going to take into account the well documented fact that they have shown no growth? But there are the highest.

- c. Librarians. One to 500 ratio, I can tell you for the many years that I was responsible for setting staffing's was over a decade in Havre. When it came to setting minimum staffing levels for Librarians and counselors, I always had my own personal moment of tension of personal conflict. As I apply this ratio to counselors by this band structure to librarians, and never set well. It just didn't seem, and I hate to use this work, but doesn't seem fair. It would have felt fairer if there was a ratio. In terms of the comments about well if a ratio is just from a quarterly variance in the moment, you have a 1.0 requirement and the ratio of changes to .85, trustees may not be inclined to keep the 1.0. I would suggest that's probably not the case, because if you if you look at it and just their value and premium, and put paper and pencil numbers and, but when you look at it's not very big pool to choose from to begin with, that if it's a .15 FTE issue, you're not going to want to turn to a librarian and say we're going to cut you back because they might be likely to move on, because they know how widely needed they are and who are you going to get to walk in behind them? So, if it's a .15 issue, I think that you're likely to stay at that higher level, so it'll help you recruit more.
- d. Last two things I want to speak very quickly about, and you can tell me if my time is up. So that discussion on civics and government, I think the question was asked very appropriately. Who has civics and/or government, because the standards talk about civics and governments synonymously? And grades nine through 12 in the standards it uses the two terms twice "civic virtues". And that word virtues can be thought of in different ways by different people. If you go to the work by the Education Council of State ECS. And, and they talked about civics they talk about civics dispositions. And so, if we keep in mind the political environment that schools are in right now, just think about what these words would possibly trigger: Civic dispositions, tolerance and respect, appreciation of difference, rejection of violence, concerns and rates of welfare for all, commitment to balance and personal liberties and social responsibility of others personal life as activists' ethics, readiness to compromise personal interest to achieve sure events. I can also tell you that there is a political group within the state that are looking at legislating civics as part of a large-scale education package for the state of Montana and will have their own definitions about civics.
- e. Mentorship.... I've heard some discussion about looking at mentorship plans. I'm not aware that, through the accreditation process the OPI has ever reviewed, judged, maybe better word is measured, adequacy of policies or program (UNTRANSCRIBABLE). And I've heard some not in any of the chapter five discussions, actually at the Capitol, check the box, rather than (UNTRANSCRIBABLE). Again, if we have people check the box, because you're saying on your words are you doing these things? And without check the box, who's asking? I can, I can tell you, people won't. (UNTRANSCRIBABLE).
- f. Just some just some thoughts about process...What if what if the kind of feels like you're kind of a point where the task force and negotiating republican committee are established and things that they do. And

if you define what you're doing they're not and they're doing you're not promised each other month duplicate it to share. That might save some time and then doing some of that. But I know that there's some overlap there. When my old friend Jay came into the room I didn't realize, I met him out front and talk about something else, that he was coming in to answer a question. You know I've noticed on several occasions that if you had access to Jay by phone , Nathan by phone, or Paul Taylor by phone, Rob Stutz by phone, you can get some questions answered and moving on and help with the pace of your work, rather than to come back with this answer those get those answered question. I appreciate your time and I really appreciate it.

2. Shelly Weight, Forsyth High School, 7-12 Principal
 - a. [Written Public Comment Submitted](#)
3. Members of Cognia, the parent company for the northwest Accreditation Commission, the Southern Association for colleges and Schools, and North Central Association for Colleges and Schools (Robert Moore, Casey Bertram, Brenda Koch, Marilyn King, Laurie Barron)
 - a. [Written Public Comment Submitted](#)

Meeting Adjourned: 5: