



## Chapter 55 School Quality Task Force Meeting Minutes Tuesday, February 22, 2022 11:00 AM – 1:00 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  
Erich Stiefvater  
Tristen Loveridge

#### Region 17 Comp Center Support

Jacob Williams

### Welcome and review

1. Julie Murgel: reviews
  - a. Outcomes
  - b. Meeting agenda
  - c. Public Comment
  - d. Group Norms and Working Agreements
  - e. Consensus Definition
  - f. Purpose
  - g. Key Deliverables
  - h. Accreditation Framework
2. Julie Murgel: Reviews Interview response overview and the TF responses.

### Connecting the meetings (What are your first thoughts? What were some interesting discoveries? What was the most challenging?)

1. Jon Konen:
  - a. First Thoughts: Overall feels good about the work on Chapter 55. Listening to the groups thoughts together in person was powerful and learned a lot. Likes the format to have opinions and be backed up with rationale.
  - b. Interesting: Putting the question, what will schools look like in 10 years, in front of us.

- c. Difficult: It is difficult to decide what we need to be ready for. Our job is to think of how to equip students with the tools they need to get them ready for an environment we don't know about yet.
- 2. McCall Flynn:
  - a. First Thoughts: How large Ch55 is and how much goes into the Accreditation Process. Initially was worried about how we can do this in a hybrid setting. But has found it is going well.
  - b. Interesting: We seem to have the right people at the table. We're having good conversations and different perspectives are brought forward.
  - c. Difficult: Because we are not working in the rules, to see them and have conversations, it is difficult to sit back and watch the process happen before red lining begins.
- 3. Gayle Venturelli:
  - a. First Thoughts: How important it is to have knowledgeable school board members. Often board members are asked to vote on something but may not fully understand.
  - b. Difficult: Feels overwhelmed with the importance of accreditation. How do we educate a school board? She can see creating a list and outline folder for board members. This is the foundation for public education.
- 4. Heather Hoyer:
  - a. First Thoughts: This is a huge job, and it is mind blowing that it is only done every 10 years. 10 years seems like a long time when we look at the changes that happen.
  - b. Interesting: Enjoys hearing the viewpoints from everyone especially with the many different backgrounds the group has.
  - c. Difficult: having conversations to gather input and insight take longer than anticipated because background knowledge is not already known.
- 5. Janelle Beers:
  - a. First Thoughts: This is a monumental task. Ch55 covers a lot and there are many pieces of the puzzle. There can be a domino effect in changing one thing, thinking about what may change because of it.
  - b. Interesting: Came to the conversation knowing she would look at the small school view. She is happy we're all working towards the same goals regardless of school size.
  - c. Difficult: Looking at flexibility vs. accountability, how do we allow schools to be flexible but still hold them accountable to the minimum standard.
- 6. Daniel Lee:
  - a. First Thoughts: How immense and important this work is. Whatever we do will have a lasting impact.
  - b. Interesting: Read the article "[An Analysis of School Quality Accountability Rules in Montana](#)". Raises several important questions and suggestions. Would encourage the group to spend some time with the document.
  - c. Difficult: Difficult to decide what rules to keep, modify, or remove.
- 7. Heather Jarrett:
  - a. First Thoughts: The importance of the task and impact this task has on every school size.
  - b. Interesting: They way in which everyone at the table thinks about Ch55. The in-person meeting was very good because everyone at the table thinks a little differently.

- c. Difficult: the thought of what changes to make or what to cut is so hard. The way things have been stated could be refined.
- 8. Billi Taylor:
  - a. First Thoughts: Such an important piece of our education.
  - b. Interesting: How detailed MT accreditation is and ensuring that a full array of stakeholders is represented in our decisions and recommendations.
  - c. Difficult: Balancing accountability and flexibility. The uniqueness of each school is recognized and encouraged but also ensuring they are held accountable.
- 9. Tony Warren:
  - a. First Thoughts: In rural central MT where it is challenging to recruit and keep teachers and thinking of the needs there will be in the coming 10 years in staffing.
  - b. Interesting: Thinks we need as much flexibility as possible but understands we need to hold everyone accountable.
  - c. Difficult: Has been a steep learning curve. Has learned a lot over the last month and looks forward to working with the group in person next month.
- 10. Emily Dean:
  - a. First Thoughts: Continuing to keep in mind we are developing and updating the baseline. It is important to keep this in mind.
  - b. Interesting: Preserving the flexibilities that currently exist for schools in Montana
  - c. Difficult: Difficult when looking at the question of accreditation and if it means success. The baseline is different than the definition of success. Coming from the classroom it can be difficult because high expectations were a part of the classroom, but this does not mean that if every student was not successful in a classroom it doesn't mean it did not merit accreditation.
- 11. David Pafford:
  - a. First Thoughts: His 26 years in the Marine Core must not have taught him anything because he volunteered for this TF but feels a bit out of his realm. He has learned a lot and looks forward to continuing.
  - b. Interesting: Looking at other states accreditation processes. The processes are different state to state and most utilize third party evaluators.
  - c. Difficult: Stakeholders and community do not understand the importance of accreditation. Difficult to help them understand the importance. He also feels it is difficult to put all these pieces together in a way the public will be able to understand and support.

### **Finalize Field Survey**

- 1. Select the role that best describes your relationship to Montana K-12 schools
  - a. Emily Dean: If we are including constituencies that are not responsible for ensuring schools meet accreditation this should be two different surveys. It makes sense for this survey to go out to teachers, staff, administrators, school board members, and those employed in the districts. It does not make sense to include students, parents, community members, and business leaders. It will skew results as we are not pulling methodology to find examples of what the broader public believes. She urges two separate surveys and have a pulling firm to find what the public believes.

- b. David Pafford: Reviewed the survey as a community member and marked don't know on well over half of the questions. He was unsure the content of the question and what some of the questions meant.
- c. Daniel Lee: This question is trying to identify broadly who is taking this survey. He suggests italicizing "best describes" so the individual understands how to make their option. Does not think that if an individual does not directly work with schools, they do not have an opinion about the accreditation of schools. We cannot just assume those individuals will be unable to complete this survey.
- d. Jacob Williams: Asks Emily for clarification if she is asking for two completely different surveys or if the community survey would be handled in a different manner.
  - i. Emily: Does not mean two different surveys rather administering the surveys differently. We know how to get ahold of every person that works for a school district or an elected leader. We don't know how to contact every community member. We should use a pulling methodology to ensure results that will provide a consistent view about what a community is saying. Combining the two together, the survey results may not show the information the TF needs to act on.
  - ii. Julie: Is hearing what Emily is saying. Is there a way to sort the data the responses by group?
  - iii. Jacob: Once the data is collected, we can disaggregate the data based on the responses.
  - iv. Emily: worries that even when the data is disaggregated the survey will not be showing accurate data about what the communities think because distribution is not large enough. We will not have enough responses unless we pull a sample size, ensuring we're meeting all criteria that meet quality needs and then move from there. Pulling in MT is not that expensive so it should not be unreasonable.
    - 1. Jon Konen: Agrees with Emily
- e. Daniel Lee: Feels these categories are fine for a general idea but does see what Emily is saying. He asks if the purpose of the survey is to get a feel what all people from all categories on the survey.
- f. David Pafford: Are we going to have them mark only one or any of the best?
  - i. Jacob: will have them mark only one. While an individual can fit into multiple categories, we want them to mark based on the lens they will be completing the survey.
- g. Jacob: Julie can you speak to the purpose?
  - i. Julie: A general survey to inform the TF around what to focus on as we move to start red lining rule. The purpose is not to report out on how a group of stakeholders feel on accreditation, rather to guide the TF in the next steps.
- h. Janelle: How are we planning to get this survey out?
  - i. Julie: Was planning to get the link out to the different communication methods the OPI has but based on our conversation will rethink the best method to do this.
- i. Daniel: Thought this item was to get an idea who the general respondents are in this survey. It does not suggest that we can draw an inference if they answer one way.

2. How important do you think the following items related to SCHOOL PERFORMANCE are to determining K-12 school quality?
- a. Heather Jarrett: On the second option (How much students increase their state test scores from year to year), would prefer to see a growth question because of the discussions the TF has had on growth.
    - i. Erich makes suggested changes.
    - ii. Billi Taylor: This question throws her off. Students are testing toward different degree of standards each year. How is the comparison between grades comparable to ask about growth or increasing their scores?
    - iii. Jacob Williams: this could be changed to schools to see the measurement of a cohort of third graders because we are looking at school performance. But this is a nuance people may not understand.
    - iv. Billi: Assessments such as NWEA/MAP scores offer data that show the growth, but state tests don't necessarily offer that data.
    - v. Julie: We do measure growth on the statewide summative assessments in the federal accountability system. But we do not use individual formative assessments when we measure that growth. We can measure how much a group of third graders grew into fourth grade compared to other schools but not individual students.
    - vi. Jacob: What we want to measure here do respondents think growth is important and not be so concerned with the logistics and calculations of that growth.
  - b. Heather Hoyer: Have we settled on a five-point Likert scale, or should we go to a four point so respondents cannot ride the middle option so easily.
    - i. Julie Murgel: It would be fine to change to a four-point scale although we should describe the options such as extremely important to extremely unimportant and the options in between.
  - c. David Pafford: Is there a question that includes the percentage of students that graduate on time? Do we need to define on time?
    - i. Jacob: It seems like an overlap with High School Graduation rates. Maybe one can be eliminated.
    - ii. David: Would agree with that. His concern is if the respondents know what on time graduation looks like.
    - iii. Heather H: On time graduation, for some districts, it is important that they differentiate to the school board the difference between students that stay to finish their diploma if extra time is needed vs those that finish on time. The completion rate vs the on-time graduation rate.
    - iv. Gayle: Both are important. It is important to know why students are quitting and how to bring them back.
    - v. David: To let the pendulum swing back in the other direction, how can we track the number of students that complete the 12 years early?
      - 1. Jacob: They would be included within 4 years

- vi. Janelle: She is unsure if this is important either way, we are asking if this is a part of a quality school. Respondents may not be considering specifics of these questions and thinks both options can be included.
3. How important do you think each of the following items related to SCHOOL STAFF are to K-12 school quality?
- a. Heather Hoyer: (Average length of time staff stay at school) While we think of this as longevity, respondents may be thinking of the time spent at school in a day. Suggests using “employment” rather than “time”.
  - b. Heather Jarrett: Has a question about the language “properly licensed” vs “certified”.
    - i. Jacob: “certified” would be in the area that you teach. Suggests we can change “certified” to “properly licensed”
    - ii. Heather: Yes, it’s best to have consistency throughout.
4. How important do you think having the following SCHOOL POLICY/PROGRAMS requirements are to K-12 school quality?
- a. Heather Hoyer: (Rules to help create a positive school climate) If we’re thinking of PBIS and MBI they do not use the term “rules” they use the term “expectations”.
    - i. Jacob: Is putting an expectation in a chapter different than a rule?
    - ii. Julie: This is a good point. Rules might also mean disciplinary rules. She doesn’t think that is what the essence of this question is.
    - iii. Jacob: suggests “program requirements”
    - iv. Gayle Venturelli: Suggests “programs”
    - v. Jacob: when we ask these questions it reminds him of the report that David had mentioned earlier. Thinking about the language that is aspirational or mandates for schools. Are we asking for you should or have to have these things in place?
    - vi. Julie: Thinks guidelines will work for the purpose of the question.
  - b. David Pafford: (Board of trustee’s policy requirements) What is this? What are we asking here? Are we saying how important district policies are?
    - i. Julie: These are already included in the 700s.
    - ii. David: We must do certain things anyway whether the public thinks they are important or not.
    - iii. Jacob: The survey is asking if these requirements are essential in Ch55 or if they should be somewhere else.
    - iv. Erich: Suggests “requirements for...”
    - v. David: Suggests “district policies requirements for...”
    - vi. Gayle: These policies are required by law. It would be interesting to see what the public’s knowledge of the board’s requirements. She sees how this would be confusing.
    - vii. Julie: reviews 10.55.701 BOARD OF TRUSTEES.
    - viii. Jacob: The question is whether these policies exist in law. We’re looking if it essential that these policies exist in Ch55 to ensure quality schools.
    - ix. Erich: Suggests “policy requirements for boards of trustees”
    - x. Julie: Asks the TF if we should keep it or take it out.
    - xi. David: Perhaps the don’t know option will take care of the confusion.
  - c. Erich: (Limiting class size) Wants to clarify that the language is clear on this question.

- i. Erich: suggests “class size limits”
- 5. How should Montana collect information from K-12 schools when monitoring necessary components of school quality?
  - a. TF has no discussion for this question
- 6. Which K-12 schools should be monitored for having components of school quality?
  - a. TF has no discussion for this question
- 7. How frequently should Montana check if K-12 schools have all the necessary components for quality in place?
  - a. David Pafford: Should this survey include a hyperlink for the Accreditation info on OPI website?
    - i. Jacob Williams: The survey will include a link to the Ch55 ARM as it is the most current version of the language.
- 8. Jacob Williams: Asks the TF if the two questions on the effectiveness of the process should be taken out or not.
  - a. How effective are the established procedures and schedules for reviewing the accreditation status of each K-12 school at ensuring school quality?
  - b. How effective are the current assurance standards (minimal standards of quality education program) in supporting positive student outcomes?
    - i. Julie Murgel: Recommends that the TF consider taking them out.
    - ii. Billi Taylor: She does not think these questions are needed. They may be difficult for respondents to read and give feedback on.
      - 1. Heather Hoyer: Agrees
- 9. Jacob Williams: Asks the TF if the following open-ended questions should be left in the survey, taken out, or left as optional?
  - a. What do you like most about Montana’s K-12 school accreditation system?
  - b. What do you like least about Montana’s K-12 accreditation system?
  - c. What changes would most improve Montana’s K-12 school accreditation system?
    - i. David Pafford: comments these finals ones are at the max time of interest.
    - ii. Erich: Suggests leaving them in since they are optional.
      - 1. Jacob: suggests if they are left in, we include (optional) to ensure respondents know they are optional.
- 10. Julie Murgel: Asks if the TF have any additional thoughts on distribution?
  - a. TF has no additional comments

### **Build Initial Workplan for Rule Revision**

- 1. Julie Murgel: reviews the timeline and upcoming Negotiated Rule Making committee meeting schedule.
- 2. Julie Murgel: reviews a sample content memorandum – conceptual changes and examples.

### **Next Steps**

- 1. Homework:
  - a. Read and review research compiled by the Region 17 Comp Center
    - i. State Accreditation Scan

- ii. State approached to continuous improvement planning with districts (comprehensive needs assessment, federal accountability)
  - iii. State examples of innovation schools, pilot schools' flexibility in meeting accreditation
- b. Help distribute the survey link – will send out in email and compass.
- 2. Emily Dean: Asks if the Ch55 google site posted on the OPI Ch55 webpage?
  - a. Julie: This was discussed. Is there ability for the working group to keep this space. Is there something that we are not being transparent about that needs to be? What is the purpose of having outside advocates to have access to the Google site?
  - b. Emily: Provides weekly updates to MTSBA. There has been a request to see what the TF is looking at. Having these available in one place would be helpful. There is a lot of interest about what the work is including

### **Public Comment**

- 3. Tristen Loveridge reads emailed public comment from Flo Kiewel in Columbia Falls.
- 4. Dennis Parman: Accreditation standards in Montana have been considered to be minimum standards of quality. He is not convinced that questions such as how to determine if a school is successful aligns this perspective or helps the TF. He is heartened it appears homework may provide the TF to set their direction to filter changes going forward. There is a balance that needs to be considered between the constitutional authority of both the board of public education and locally elected trustees. Concerned about the survey that is put out for public input being compromised by constituency's that can rally like minded individuals and skew the results. The only way to avoid this from happening is to have a third party implement the survey.
- 5. Diane Fladmo, Director of Public Policy for Montana Federation of Public Employees: Having ease of access to the CH55 information. Without this it is difficult to follow the progress of the TF and be a strong participant. While she greatly values the individuals of the TF, it is a small representation of school employees. She would like to do the best work we can. Urges to post so it is available for the public. Agrees with earlier comments that the survey would be best accomplished through a third-party firm. It may not be as useful as it could be with a third party. Comments on Flo Kiewel's email and notes that teachers value and respect parents and understand the challenges that come with being a parent. Thanks, the TF for the work.

**Meeting Adjourned:** 12:57 PM