



Chapter 55 Meeting Minutes Tuesday, February 8, 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

Facilitators

Julie Murgel
Erich Stiefvater
Tristen Loveridge

Region 17 Comp Center Support

Jacob Williams

BPE Representation

McCall Flynn

Housekeeping and Review

1. Julie Murgel reviews:
 - a. Agenda
 - b. Public comment standards
 - c. Consensus Definition
 - d. Task Force Purpose
 - e. Key Deliverables
 - f. Accreditation Framework

Recap from Jan 25 and 26 Work Sessions

1. Dan Lee: There is tension about the state ensuring a level of quality and equity and giving flexibility to local control.
2. Emily Dean: This TF is charged with establishing the minimum standard.
3. Janelle Beers: Clears up that the County Supt is not an educator but more of a clerk, in those cases, a third party would need to be brought in to do evaluations. These standards are the baseline and reminds the group that we are preparing for the unknowns in 2033. Standards have a big impact on smaller and larger schools in different ways.

4. Heather Jarrett: Idealism of the task but balancing accountability. Flexibilities in regard to school size, resources available to all schools (impacting funding), accountability for state vs local needs.
5. Billi Taylor: Don't generalize the standards too much. Districts need the flexibility to meet community needs.
6. Gayle Venturelli: No change is successful unless there is fidelity with everyone involved. Strong leadership is needed. There needs to be dedication and a reminder of why we are in this business.
7. David Pafford: Discussion what a future school in MT will look like in 2033. Part of a TF that will set standards for a public school system that is in flux and the future is unknown. He reviewed the NWCCU evaluation handbook for MSU. Learned why accreditation is important and why institutions would strive for it. How important accreditation is to taxpayers. Reviewed MTSBA survey results. He learned how complex the standards are. The individuals he spoke with, there was no working idea about MCA standards. They are more pragmatic and concerned about their kids being safe, being able to read and write, and being prepared for the workforce.
8. Jon Konen: Find balance between providing flexibilities and high minimum standards. How are changes in the flexibilities going to affect the budget? What are the themes that are important to think about? He mentions mental health specifically.
9. McCall Flynn: Time spent walking through the ARM which was helpful. Recognizing the need for continuous local control and different flexibilities for schools. Administrative rules are complex, and our work is very important to update and modernize the rules as best we can.

Interview Responses

1. Jacob Williams reviews interview responses and the common themes found in responses
2. Interview Debrief
 - a. What did you see/hear/notice about the themes?
 - b. What does this mean for our work?
3. Q1 How do you determine if a school is successful? (Gayle, Billi, Dan)
 - a. Billi: Growth centered around Academic, SEL, and mindsets. Some graduation and transition success beyond HS and culture in school and mindset. We have talked about how growth can be more of an emphasis in the standards.
 - b. Gayle: Data driven. Most school boards don't understand what the data represents. School boards should be trained to interpret data. All of this should be in the strategic plan.
 - c. Dan: Post-secondary preparation outcome measures: graduation rates, ACT, post-secondary acceptance rates, and employment rates. School climate: safety, support for learning, interpersonal relationships, social support, physical surroundings, administration, leadership, and professional relationships. School districts/schools engage in some sort of reflection. Every school is in a different place and has different areas they would like to focus on but giving the tools to reflect.
4. Q2 What are the essential elements of a successful school? (David, Emily)
 - a. David: focused on non-school board members. Board trustees need to recognize the role of SEL in education. Board trustees must be pragmatic about business in order to ensure tax funds are spent properly. He is beginning to become smarter about the role

- of SEL vs. reading writing and arithmetic. A quality school is not a factor of just reading writing and arithmetic, families, staff, and students expect supportive services and funding
- b. Emily: flexibility relationships and communication delivered through quality staff a positive school culture which is a safe learning environment. A shared vision with all stakeholders.
5. Q3 How should we ensure that the essential elements for a successful school are in place? (Heather J, Janelle, Jon)
- a. Heather J: Level of responsibility that teachers, school leaders, and administrators hold. Retention and longevity of teachers and leaders. All of school stakeholders need to be questioned with school culture surveys. Funding, school culture, accountability standards, and the mental health focus. Are we asking the right questions when talking about accountability? What standards are each school using?
 - b. Janelle: Funding, facilities, how staff is kept, highly qualified staff (teacher and administrators). Everything comes back to flexibility with standards but have highly qualified staff. Hiring and retaining qualified staff with flexibility. Local control and curriculum.
 - c. Jon: Funding, ability to lead, highly qualified staff, ability to have stakeholders take part and how they take part in having a successful school.
6. Q4 Should quality standards be linked to staffing requirements? Why or why not? (Heather H, McCall, Tony)
- a. Heather H: Flexibility, Funding, highly qualified teachers. When a school is struggling to meet goals, they often have to make cuts or cannot hire in strategic places.
 - b. McCall: there was confusion with the question. Stakeholders are interested in staffing requirements. Want to see more flexibility in staffing ratios and variances but don't want to see an unfunded mandate with those changes.
7. David Pafford: Another aspect of staffing in MT schools. Noncitizen teachers place illegal votes into the system. The number of non-US teachers in classrooms may become an issue to community members. Should a quality school have a standard established by the state when they choose/have to hire a non-citizen?
- a. Julie responds that yes there have been an increase in teachers that are holding visas in the state.
 - b. Gayle asks if teachers that are here on a visa are held to the same standard in earning their teaching credentials?
 - i. Julie responds that yes; they have the same requirements as anyone to complete licensure.
8. Jon Konen: During last Western MASS meeting, an education leader sending an email asking for information about these questions. Jon responded that there should be trust in the team and we have started off. Some of these questions made it look like the TF is trying to do away with everything in Ch55.
- a. Julie responds that this is a good group of people, and the work is very important. It is important to be transparent. If anyone has any questions refer them to the OPI website to find some additional information.
 - b. <https://opi.mt.gov/School-Quality-Task-Force-Negotiated-Rulemaking>

Finalize the Field Survey

1. Julie Murgel explains the intention of the survey and reviews the survey questions
 - a. Goal is to complete survey and get it sent out to be collected by March 3rd
2. Part 1: Your Role
 - a. Dan Lee: “Resident in a rural community” he asks why are we focused on this over any other resident of Montana? What about residents in other communities? How do you define rural?
 - i. Julie: comments that we can take that out.
 - ii. Julie asks if “community member” should replace this option.
 1. There is agreement in the TF
 - b. Gayle would like to see “retired district employee”. They may be more willing to take a stand than current employees.
 - c. Heather H suggests including “parent/guardian of school aged child”. People who will not answer the survey without this option available.
 - d. Heather J wants to agree with Dan. That “community member” should be included. Also, would like to see “retired teacher / administrator” as they would have valuable information. “District board of trustees” should read “trustee” since they are not filling it out as the full school board. How do we define a “subject matter expert”?
 - e. Dan Lee: Concerned about “check all that apply”. How will we report that out? How are we using these items? Rather than all that apply use check “what best describes your role”.
 - f. David: What is our definition of “subject matter expert”?
 - i. Julie states this is duplicated and can be removed.
 - g. Janelle: “Education consultant”, who is this and where will the survey be sent to find those people? Other school staff are not represented either like paraprofessionals
 - h. David: Are we curious about if elected officials have to say as well?
 - i. Julie asks if this would be captured under Trustees
 - i. Julie Murgel asks if Education consultant can be removed?
 - i. Heather Hoyer answers that yes, their roles will also be in other categories as well.
3. Q1 Which of the following, do you think, are essential measures of school quality?
 - a. Heather H: “Student Satisfaction” typo. Is the audience of this question going to understand what essential measures are? This should be rewritten to be broader and clearer. She suggests “Which of the following do you think are the most important characteristics of a quality school?”
 - b. Billi: Agrees with Heather. From the surveys, there is commonality on success beyond HS. Not sure if “student performance outcomes” is clear (testing, success after HS). The terms need to be broken down to be more simplistic.
 - c. Dan: if the question is about outputs, staff stability and family satisfaction are not school outputs. The question and the responses don’t line up as is. Dan agrees with Heather H’s suggestion.
 - d. Gayle: suggests language such as “...are essential in measuring school quality?”
 - e. Erich summarizes, simplify the question, add post-secondary success (or equivalent), modify some selection so a general audience can understand.

4. Q2 Rank order the essential measures of school quality?
 - a. Dan: suggests that instead of having 8 choices, we use a Likert scale like Extremely important, important, not important.
 - i. McCall and Heather J agree
 - b. Gayle: 1=most important and 6=less important in question instructions
 - c. Billi: Wonders if the top two “standardized student assessment scores” and “standardized student assessment growth rates” should be separated to get a better idea of what individuals think of scores vs growth.
 - i. Julie: should this be a separate question then?
 - ii. Billi: yes, will help us decide to focus on scores or growth.
5. Q3 List any “other essential measures of school quality not listed above.
 - a. Gayle: how well does a parent/guardian understand scores?
 - i. Julie: what do we mean by “scores” and “growth”
 - b. Dan: could ask the importance of an achievement test vs student growth
 - c. David: It is my experience that community members struggle to find and understand ESSA Report Cards that show growth and achievements.
6. Q4 Rank order the essential staffing components (inputs) that ensure school quality?
 - a. Dan: again, should structure as a Likert scale.
 - b. Heather H: has there been a diagnostic on how long the survey will be? If it takes longer than 5min they won’t complete it. Maybe separate it for professionals and public.
 - c. Billi: including food service and full education staff.
7. Q5 What essential program components (inputs) must be in place to ensure school quality?
 - a. Julie: This is kind of the same as the previous. Possibly could condense to reduce the number of questions.
 - b. Dan: we are using essential too often. Suggests essential is deleted in the language. School safety is not included but was a theme in the interviews.
8. Q6 What process should MT use to measure essential components (inputs) of school quality? Check all that apply for each school category.
 - a. Heather H: Need to include elementary as well or take High Schools off. HS are not the only quality schools we have.
 - b. Gayle: Doesn’t see anything addressing alternative education. Not sure if it needs to be included but, in her district, she feels it is an important need.
 - c. Dan: Not sure if it is necessary to have five categories. We are trying to check school quality and ARM compliance. Why are we interested in ARM compliance for HS only or targeted schools? General public may not be able to discern the difference.
9. Q7 How frequently should essential components for school success be monitored?
 - a. Dan: This is an important question. If we are going to do site visits, we cannot visit every school every year. Having a sense how necessary it is to check in. Possibly three years.
 - b. Heather H: Monitoring and accreditation are synonymous in this case. We need to be mindful of the audience.
 - c. Gayle: Suggests “formal evaluation”.
 - d. Jon: would be ok with a five-year period because schools often plan on a five-year cycle.
10. Q8 To what degree are the established procedures and schedules for reviewing the accreditation status of each school effectively certifying school quality?

- a. Heather H: These are good questions for those that understand this but there will be people that do not know what this is about.
 - i. Janelle and David agree.

Public Comment

- 1. Dennis Parman
 - a. Dan has brought good perspective to the process in asking questions to the field and vocabulary. It would be wise to be sensitive.
 - b. Dennis agrees on the removal of rural schools but feels that school size should be included. May need to add independent elementary districts. Without this element, there is a presumption that one size fits all. When the data is collected, TF may want to separate by school size.
 - c. The BPE has the authority to withhold funding if the school does not comply. Anything under the HS level is not accredited. There is an opportunity to get out of the structure based on school funding.

Next Steps

- 1. Next meeting: February 22, 11:00-1:00
 - a. March 8 & 9 in Helena
- 2. Homework
 - a. Evaluation of Current Rules: Which of the assurance and student performance standards are essential for measuring the quality of Montana schools?
 - i. Complete the guided question document. Input responses into google doc.
 - b. Which rules do we need to keep that are essential for measuring school quality? Why?
 - c. Which rules do we need to remove that are not essential for measuring school quality? Why?
 - d. Which rules do we need to modify? Why?
 - e. Which rules should we add and start using to measure school quality? Why?
 - f. Help distribute the survey link – will send out in email and compass. Due March 2nd.
 - i. Help review the survey and test

Meeting Adjourned: 1:02 PM