



Chapter 55 School Quality Task Force Meeting Summary

Wednesday, April 5, 2022

11:00 AM – 1:00 AM

Facilitators review the meeting agenda, group norms and working agreements, the definition of consensus, and the Task Force (TF) purpose and timeline.

TF members review the work they completed on their topics then allow for group discussion. All topics include student growth, staffing ratios for library media specialists, graduation requirements and high school credits, special education programs, staffing ratios for school counselors, Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and mental health, school climate and family and community engagement, the accreditation process, mentorship and induction, local control, and variance to standards.

There was no TF discussion around Student Growth beyond the review and explanation of the proposal brought forward. Discussion on staffing ratios for library media specialists focused on the opportunity for a school system to partner with a Co-op or public library to help solve staffing problems, when the proposed 1 in 500 ratios would take place, what a school system is, and the concern of a potential decrease in 21 FTE in Montana. TF discussion around graduation requirements and high school credits included comments on the definition of “unit of study”, why statute 20-7-602 was included, the inclusion of a government credit, and the inclusion of the word “mastery”. Discussion on education program requirements included voiced concern in not requiring middle schools to provide visual arts, music, CTE and world languages. Additional discussion included the reiteration of the inclusion of a government credit. The discussion for the staffing ratio for school counselors included clarification of the definition of a school system. The discussion on SEL and mental health focused on community concerns that SEL and Critical Race Theory (CRT) are aligning. School climate and family and community engagement was discussed. TF members discuss if 10.55.701 is sufficient as is or if it needs to be enhanced. The TF decided that they do not have enough people or time to fully review the accreditation process. There was no further discussion on this topic. The work and proposal for mentorship and induction is reviewed. TF members expressed support for the proposals. There was no TF discussion around local control beyond the review and explanation of the proposal brought forward. TF discuss variance to standards. Conversation included if charter schools should be taken out and placed into its own rule and the possibility that an increase in charter school applications is anticipated.

TF come to consensus that the upcoming in person meeting for April 14th and 15th will be split into different weeks to allow for the observance of Good Friday. The April 15th meeting is rescheduled to April 21st, In person in Helena, MT. The location will be shared once finalized.

Public Comment is given, and meeting is adjourned.