

Chapter 57 Research and Review Task Force Meeting Summary

Thursday, August 5, 2021

1:30 PM – 3:00 PM

The Task Force (TF) began the meeting by continuing their discussion around the PRAXIS exam, tiered licensure, and endorsements. Facilitators put together a small list of possible recommendations the TF could discuss based on previous discussions.

The PRAXIS exam was discussed, largely focusing on in state versus out of state and initial versus experienced licenses. The TF discussed why there are potentially two different pathways for in state versus out of state. There is the opinion that the requirements to become licensed should be identified, then whatever pathway an applicant takes to achieve those requirements should be allowed. This route would create less red tape and less friction for teachers or individuals wanting to become teachers in Montana. The opposite opinion also exists in the TF. The concern of too many individuals may not be truly qualified to teach if there is not a difference between in state and out of state. The TF also discussed that by having more flexibility in licensure will allow local control to take care of the rest of ensuring quality teachers receive jobs. It was pointed out, that while local control seems like a perfect solution, there are times it does not work and that is the reason MT has a state licensure division to help with the vetting process.

A tiered licensure system was a big topic during the meeting. The thought that if a tiered licensure system could be implemented in MT, maybe more support could be given in rural areas of the state. The concern with promising more supports, is that the rural areas are on the back burner again. The TF felt that by coming up with realistic supports and utilizing resources could be a good way to accomplish something like a tiered licensure system in MT. It was brought up, that MT does already have some tiered system currently. An applicant must apply for their initial license, keep their license active, then can enhance their license. In each of these tiers, the applicant must show why they are competent and qualified for their license. The TF is interested in looking into if there could be an even more detailed tiered system.

The TF discussed the difference between how broad endorsement categories are in Montana compared to many other states. Middle school endorsements were specifically discussed as middle schools tend to like the broad ability to place teachers where they are needed. Discussion around testing to gain endorsements led to concerns that teachers would be assigned to teach in subjects they are endorsed in but may not have the desire to teach. It was explained that while that would be something that could happen, that situation would be the outlying case and not common.