

Chapter 58 Research and Review Task Force Meeting Summary

Thursday, July 8, 2021

8:00 AM – 9:30 AM

The Task Force reviewed the roles and expectations of the group. The Deputy Superintendent of the Office of Public Instruction spoke to the group giving them insight around their roll. She explained that the goal of the task force is to look at the chapter and make changes to transition to fit Montana's current environment and beyond. The Task Force is charged with identifying the challenges within the recruitment, retention, and the workforce. The group will then develop suggestions that may solve those challenges. Using the identification of Big Levers, the Task force can focus on what it means to fulfill the full educational potential of each person per the Montana Constitution.

A document with the chapter 58 lever topics and a crosswalk of associated subchapters was shared with the group. The document is a starting point to look at potential changes related to the Task Force's vision and identified areas they would like to change. Some subchapters have been repealed in entirety, but this does not mean it is not applicable to the group. History around why and when the subchapter was repealed will be found to share with the group. Language within the subchapters can be changed as well as more broad big picture suggestions.

The discussion shifted to the language loss being experienced in tribal communities in Montana. Task Force members would like to see ARM language changed to standardize a language curriculum in rural schools. There would be opportunity to specify in ARM the "other world languages" to directly identify languages like Ojibwe and Neiyoy to improve pedagogy, curriculum, and language. The positive impact teachers have on students when their language is incorporated into the classroom was discussed by the Task Force. Language loss is an urgent emergency. Speaking communities in Montana are growing older and the pandemic has made the situation even more desperate. Teachers are not currently required to incorporate language into their classrooms. The priority to revitalize language needs to be revamped.

Lever topic 1 is focused on Pedagogy and content. There is opportunity for the task force to continue conversation around more robust and diverse field experience for student teachers. Providing practical work, different more rural schools, quality mentorship, a paid experience, and alternate pathways are all subjects that have been brought up in past conversations within the Task Force. Increased pedagogical proficiency focused on the balance of content knowledge and pedagogical skills, differentiated learning, effective classroom management, trauma informed instruction, and social emotional learning are also areas the group has discussed. There is overlap between the subjects of field experience and pedagogical proficiency, but there is an effort to keep the separation of topics clear.

Lever topic 2 focuses on real world experiences. The topic of a year-long residency with focuses around cost, placement challenges in rural communities, financial challenges for candidates have been discussed in the Task Force. There are members of the group that are not ready to give up on this topic as they see it would be a solution for many of the problems. Rather than focusing on the major barriers to creating a year long residency, they would like to focus on what the solution would look like, then address the challenges. Fears of an unfunded mandate were discussed. The Board of Public Education can vote and pass on rules before the Montana legislature has had a chance to appropriate funds to the rule that is passed by the BOPE.