

Committee to Advance Educator Compensation & Careers

Meeting Minutes

Meeting #2: August 6, 2014

5:00 – 7:00pm

2nd Floor Cabinet Room, Townsend Building
Dover, Delaware

Attendance:

Committee members present:

- Teri Quinn Gray (CAECC Chair) – President, State Board of Education
- Lindsay O’Mara – Education Policy Advisor to Governor Markell, Governor’s Office
- Frederika Jenner – President, Delaware State Education Association (DSEA)
- Jeff Taschner – Executive Director, Delaware State Education Association (DSEA)
- Mark Holodick – President, Chief School Officers Association (CSOA); Superintendent, Brandywine School District
- Darryl Scott – Chair, House Education Committee and Representative, District 31
- David Sokola – Chair, Senate Education Committee and Senator, District 8
- Harvey Kenton – Representative, District 36
- Meaghan Brennan – Director, Budget Development, Planning & Administration, Office of Management & Budget

Committee staff present:

- Ryan Fennerty (CAECC Director) – Special Advisor, Governor’s Office
- Donna Johnson (CAECC Stakeholder Engagement Lead) – Executive Director, State Board of Education

Others present:

- Judith Wilson (MCPS, Maryland)
- James Dawson (Delaware Public Media)
- Elizabeth Lewis (OMB)
- Mamie Doyle Mannella (Rodel)
- Kim Siegel (Lieutenant Governor’s Office)
- Kevin Carson (DASA)

Welcome & Overview of the Agenda

Committee Chair Teri Quinn Gray welcomed Committee members as she called the meeting to order at 5:00p.m. She highlighted the goals of the meeting and provided an overview of the agenda. She introduced Ryan Fennerty, CAECC Director, to present an overview of the K-12 landscape to the group.

Current K-12 Landscape

The Committee reviewed the size of the public K-12 educator population with examples of the different groups of educators who fall under the definition of educator for the purposes of the current State compensation system. The Committee discussed the framing for the conversations ahead as primarily focused on the roughly 10,000 educators who comprise Delaware's classroom educators and specialists while also reviewing key characteristics about the educator workforce, including the distribution of educators across years of experience and the percentages of those with higher degrees of education. The Committee also reviewed additional context about the current trajectory of career earnings for educators with Bachelors and Masters degrees and reviewed how educator salaries are funded at the state and local district level. The discussion led to a brief survey of current Delaware-specific workforce recruitment and retention data.

Committee members discussed some of the recruitment and retention challenges in Delaware's schools, with Senator Sokola highlighting his concern about the challenges that schools who serve large high need populations face in particular. Committee members also discussed a data point from the Delaware Supply & Demand Survey of teacher recruitment and attrition trends which indicated that 1,156 applicants had applied for 35 assistant principal positions statewide and what that implied about the need for additional opportunities for educators to earn compensation and recognition without having to leave the classroom.

Objectives and Design Principles

Committee Chair Teri Quinn Gray led the group through a conversation to clarify the objectives and design principles that should guide the work of the Committee. She solicited input on the proposed objectives for undertaking this effort to revisit the educator career pathway and primary incentives in the state's compensation system. The Committee discussed four primary objectives: (1) improve retention – especially among junior educators - by paying them more earlier in their careers and ensuring there are meaningful opportunities for development and career progression; (2) recruitment - attract top talent by valuing effective teachers as highly skilled professionals; (3) equitable distribution - provide high needs schools resources to attract and retain talent, increasing students' access to effective teachers; (4) investment aligned with what we value - ensure limited funding and resources are targeted to where they promise to have the highest impact on improving student learning.

The Committee debated a number of proposed design principles. Representative Daryl Scott raised the inherent tension in creating a system that is both simple and fair, indicating that the Committee should strive for both so that the end result is manageable for everyone to understand and for our districts to implement. Frederika Jenner and Jeff Taschner highlighted the importance of incentives that empower teachers to have a greater impact on their students, with teacher leadership one of a number of significant supports the state should consider in addition to National Board Certification which it had funded in the past. Meaghan Brennan spoke to the need for financial sustainability as a core principle, with predictability in system costs an important component of sustainability so that funding needs can be supported by a steady portion of the budget.

Current Career Ladder Proposal

Ryan Fennerty provided the Committee with a brief overview of some of the key themes from feedback from Delaware educators as well as national surveys of recent graduates as context for a discussion about educator career pathways.

The Committee reviewed examples of systems that had moved from traditional public sector pay scales toward professional “career ladders”, including an overview of a model career ladder developed by the National Education Association which emphasizes differentiating expectations, responsibilities, and pay for teachers on the basis of where they fall on a continuum of development as a professional and whether they elect to take on additional responsibilities beyond their core classroom. The Committee raised three questions for consideration as they evaluated what an educator career pathway might look like in Delaware: (1) what are the critical professional milestones that should inform the structure of the career ladder? (2) What are the professional opportunities that should come with each progression? (3) What factors determine how educators progress through the career ladder?

The Committee reviewed a proposed career ladder framework intended to reflect many of the common themes found in the models and education systems that had moved toward career pathway compensation systems. The Committee discussed a Provisional period, representing the first year in teaching, where the focus would be core instructional duties; an Emerging period, representing the second, third and fourth years of teaching where educators would then have access to local district non-classroom leadership opportunities; a Professional designation beginning in year five, after

demonstrated effectiveness in the first four years, when research indicates experience plays a particular important role in the effectiveness of an educator; and an Established designation beginning in the eighth year of teaching where educators would first access senior non-administrative teacher leadership roles.

Frederika Jenner, Mark Holodick, and Mark Murphy spoke to their experiences as educators and the importance of the initial years in the classroom, and how those are a critical period where mentoring and induction play a crucial role in supporting the development of junior educators. The Committee debated the possibility of a reduced teaching load, as described in the NEA model, and protection for first year educators from non-core classroom duties to ensure their focus is instruction in those critical first years.

Public Comment Period

Dr. Kevin Carson President of the Delaware Association of School Principals & Administrators:

Dr. Carson began by thanking the Committee for convening to discuss educator career pathways and compensation which he supports as an important and overdue conversation.

He expressed his disappointment that the Delaware Association of School Administrators was not represented on the Committee, but stated that he looked forward to contributing to CAECC conversations through public comment in the meetings ahead.

He urged the Committee to consider that the definition of educator in state law encompasses school Administrators and Principals, who also deserve the attention of the Committee as it considers professional career pathways, compensation incentives, and how to better serve our public educators and their students.

He also urged the Committee to consider that despite the large numbers of applications for assistant principal positions, it remains difficult to retain assistant principals given the growing administrative burdens placed on school leaders. He also spoke to the fact that administrators serve in 12mth positions as opposed to 10mth positions for most classroom educators, so comparisons of compensation need to be grounded in that context. He indicated it is currently possible for many educators to earn far more in their classroom roles than some assistant principals, so the conversation about improving career pathways and compensation for educators is directly tied to the pipeline that provides Delaware with its school leaders, and needs to be an important part of the conversation. Dr. Carson indicated he would continue to attend future discussions and looked forward to taking part via public comment.

Next Steps and Closing

Teri Quinn Gray closed the discussion by asking members to continue to reflect on the key questions posed in the meeting and during public comment and to expect to revisit the design principles at the start of the following session.