

Committee to Advance Educator Compensation & Careers

Meeting Minutes

Meeting #6: October 9, 2014

5:30 – 7:30pm

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)
- 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
- Mike Morton – Controller General, Office of the Controller General

Committee staff present:

- Ryan Fennerty (CAECC Director) – Special Advisor, Governor’s Office
- Donna Johnson (CAECC Stakeholder Engagement Lead) – Executive Director, State Board of Education
- Emily Silberstein – Partner, TNTP
- Stephanie Corona Leblond – Project Director, TNTP
- Alex Spurrier – Analyst, TNTP

Others present:

- Kevin Carson (DASA)
- Mike Jackson (Office of the Controller General)

Welcome & Overview of the Agenda

Committee Chair Teri Quinn Gray welcomed Committee members as she called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. She reviewed the goals of the meeting and provided an overview of the agenda. Teri then turned it over to Donna Johnson, Executive Director for the State Board of Education, to review a summary of key feedback obtained during the first round of Educator Working Groups.

Part I: Educator Working Group feedback summary

Donna provided an overview of the topics that were discussed during the first round of Educator Working Groups. These discussion topics were informed by feedback from the CAECC members during the last Committee meeting. Key discussion topics included the background and context for this work, information regarding the proposed career ladder framework, the successes and challenges of existing teacher leadership roles, and the significant milestones of a teacher's career that should be recognized through the framework's design.

Donna then reviewed the key feedback obtained from 130 educators (representing 12 LEAs and including classroom educators, VoTech and charter school teachers, specialists, early learning educators, DSEA representatives, and all grade-levels) throughout the course of the Educator Working Group sessions. Key pieces of feedback included:

- Educators were overwhelmingly supportive of leadership roles that allow teacher leaders to keep "a foot in the classroom".
- While many educators understand the need to protect novice teachers from additional responsibilities during their first year in the classroom, ultimately, they felt that this should be a local decision.
- Educators cited the need for clear selection criteria and a selection process to ensure there is increased transparency around the application and selection process, that the candidate is the best fit for the role, and that educator voices be included so that teacher leaders have credibility with their peers.
- While many teachers are in favor of term limits for teacher leadership, others had concerns about the potential volatility that would result in educators' base salaries if the stipend could not be retained once the individual left the role.
- There was significant concern about how the new system will recognize and reward excellent educators who choose to stay in the classroom and are not interested in filling a leadership role.

During the Educator Working Group sessions, it was also clear that there was a lot of concern stemming from misinformation about the new system, its design, and who would be impacted. CAECC members who attended the Educator Working Group sessions also shared their reflections (including Daryl Scott, Teri Quinn Gray, and Frederika Jenner). During this part of the meeting, the Committee spent time reviewing the key takeaways from members who attended the sessions.

Part 2: Guiding design principles and the educator compensation landscape

Committee staff provided an overview of the current steps and lanes system and contextual information regarding what compensation looks like for educators today. This contextual information included educators' peak career earnings on the Bachelor's and Master's lane, the distribution of educators

across the Bachelor's and Master's lanes, the competitiveness of starting salaries, and the primary challenges the Committee might address in the design of an alternative system.

Part 3: The career ladder approach in practice

Committee Director Ryan Fennerty proposed five key guiding design principles to inform the the development of the proposed compensation approach. These five guiding design principles included:

- **Principle 1** – raise starting salaries
- **Principle 2** – provide opportunities to reach peak earnings faster
- **Principle 3** – teacher leader positions should pay more than what vast majority of educators earn today
- **Principle 4** – senior teacher leader positions that offer salaries broadly commensurate with assistant principals
- **Principle 5** – fair professional salary for those who do not take on teacher leadership roles

The Committee discussed how these priorities may come into tension with one another given the need to ensure the system is financially sustainable. The Committee reviewed the primary cost drivers including the magnitude of increases to starting salaries, how quickly an educator's compensation could grow by taking on Teacher Leadership, the size of the supplements to base pay provided to Teacher Leaders and Senior Teacher Leaders, the number of roles available, and the level of base pay for those who do not choose to pursue a teacher leadership role.

With this framing in mind, Ryan introduced a first draft of the compensation structure with proposed salary levels aligned with the guiding design principles, including an overview of the potential career earnings an educator would stand to see if this new structure was put in place and they opted into the system. The Committee asked clarifying questions regarding the proposed approach, including the proposed starting salary level, the salary levels for the Core Educator track, and key milestones in an educator's career. Ryan indicated that the current proposal was above the Committee's likely comfort zone in terms of the additional investment in salaries required, and asked that it provide feedback on trade-offs and priorities so that the model could be reworked for future discussions. The Committee also began to discuss the opt-in mechanisms for current educators and how the transition might look based on the experiences of other state and district systems who have made similar transitions. The Committee also discussed the potential for having staggered opt-in windows whether for districts or individual educators to facilitate the planning and budgeting process. Lastly, the Committee asked that Committee staff conduct additional modeling on the potential impact of any proposals on the local share of salaries to ensure no unintended financial burdens are placed on local districts.

Public Comment Period

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

To begin, Dr. Carson invited the Committee to attend spring recruitment events in order to better understand the competitive landscape for educator talent in Delaware. He also discussed the salaries of Assistant Principals and whether this system's design will deter current educators from pursuing the administrative track, causing unintended issues for the administrator pipeline. He also urged the Committee to think about the "fully loaded" cost of an educator, which goes beyond an educator's salary and includes a 30% OEC (benefits) cost. He reminded the Committee of the Pika Commission, which also looked into tuition reimbursements and required that educators' degrees align with their role and area of focus within their district. Dr. Carson also had some follow-up questions regarding the number of Teacher Leader and Senior Teacher Leader positions and urged the Committee to consider the implementation challenges associated with developing a selection process that is collaborative and considers educator input but also preserves administrative discretion when selecting a building-level team of "Teacher Leaders".

Next Steps and Closing

Teri Quinn Gray closed the discussion by highlighting a number of upcoming engagement activities – including the in-person town hall sessions later in October and Educator Working Group sessions in early November – and asked the Committee members to continue to reflect on the key questions posed during the meeting given that during the next meeting the Committee would continue to discuss the specific salary levels and system costs.