

Committee to Advance Educator Compensation & Careers

Meeting Minutes

Meeting #13: January 16, 2015

10:00am – 1:00pm

12th Floor Conference Room, Governor's Office
Carvel State Office Building
820 N French Street
Wilmington, 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
- Mark Murphy – Secretary of Education, Delaware Department of Education (DDOE)
- 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 – (Former) Chair, House Education Committee and Representative, District 31 (via conference line)
- Harvey Kenton – Representative, District 36
- Kim Williams – House Education Committee member, Representative, District 19
- David Sokola – Chair, Senate Education Committee and Senator, District 8 (via conference line)
- Brian Pettyjohn – Senator, District 19 (via conference line)
- Meaghan Brennan – Director, Budget Development, Planning & Administration, Office of Management & Budget (via conference line)

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
- Alex Spurrier – Analyst, TNTP

Others present:

- Melissa Hopkins (Rodel Foundation)

Welcome & Overview of the Agenda

Committee Chair Teri Quinn Gray welcomed Committee members as she called the meeting to order at 10:15am. She reviewed the goals of the meeting and provided an overview of the agenda. Teri then turned the floor over to Lindsay O'Mara, Education Policy Advisor to Governor Markell, to provide an overview of process milestones over the next few months.

Lindsay stated that the goal for the meeting is to review a set of compromise proposals based on the critical unresolved questions the CAECC indicated it must resolve prior to entering an extended design phase that will emphasize input from educator-led working groups. While no action would be taken at this meeting, the goal would be for the group to propose immediate reactions to help shape a revised proposal so that the Committee would be prepared to take action and issue its initial recommendations in subsequent meetings through the end of February.

Part I: Recap and Review Committee Charges & Debates

Emily Silberstein (TNTP) opened the discussion with a review of the focus of the meeting:

- Revisit and recap where the Committee left off in the last round of discussions before the holidays
- Clarify the unresolved questions this Committee sought to address prior to the Educator Work Group phase
- Introduce a series of proposals addressing those issues for initial reactions and discussion
- Ask that the Committee reflect on these proposals over the next week and come prepared to take action on these and other recommendations in subsequent discussions

The Committee then revisited each of its primary charges laid out in Senate Bill 254, pausing on each to recap the most recent debates, clarify areas of consensus and areas for resolution.

Reviewing charge 1, “create a career pathway with few and meaningful steps”, the Committee noted that the educator working groups would work to develop the next level of detail around placement rules – in particular, those educators with prior experience, those educators joining from outside Delaware’s school system, and those who have pursued alternative routes to certification.

Reviewing charge 2, “Establish a number of leadership roles through which educators will receive additional pay for assuming leadership responsibilities” the Committee agreed that it would resolve minimum eligibility requirements governing whether an educator can apply for a Teacher Leader role, but noted that the educator working group would help clarify the next level of detail regarding selection processes, roles and responsibilities, and how the roles might be structured at the school and district level in an extended design phase.

Reviewing charge 3, “Establish senior leadership positions for a small sub-set of experienced educators”, the Committee agreed that it would also resolve minimum eligibility requirements governing whether an educator can apply for Senior Teacher Leader roles, but that the educator working groups would help recommend the next level of detail regarding roles, responsibilities, and selection processes as they would for Teacher Leadership roles.

Reviewing charge 4, “Allocate leadership roles across school districts”, the Committee noted that it had defined a series of principles to guide efforts to clarify specific allocation rules (1: ensure every school has a fair minimum number of roles, 2: ensure high need schools receive a higher proportion of roles so they are better able to attract and retain great educators, 3: retain some district flexibility to adjust the location and types of roles based on local needs), but agreed that the proposed technical advisory group comprised of district and state-level practitioners among other critical stakeholders would be best placed to recommend specific rules to the CAECC during an extended design phase.

Reviewing charge 5, “specify the applicability of the new system [and] provide a mechanism and timeline for current educators to opt-in to the new system”, the Committee recognized that it had not yet discussed a comprehensive proposal addressing this question but had noted that the alternative system should offer multiple opt-in windows over a time-frame of approximately five years to provide current educators with ample opportunity to make an informed decision about whether to join the new system while also allowing budget officials time to effectively plan. Committee staff noted that a specific proposal on opt-in provisions would be introduced in the second part of the meeting for Committee review and discussion.

Reviewing charge 6, “determine levels of base pay for educators at all steps in the career pathway”, Committee members reiterated their concerns from prior meetings that the alternative proposals presented so far, while responsive to educator feedback that prompted a reintroduction of the distinction in pay between Master’s and Bachelor’s degrees for experienced educators, did not comprehensively address some of the key goals of the CAECC’s charge. Some members expressed concerns that the alternative proposals do not go far enough in reorienting the current compensation system which they felt over-emphasized investments in credentials like a Master’s degrees which research suggests correlates weakly with an educator’s impact on student learning when measured through assessments. Others felt that while a significant improvement over the current system for the first five to eight years of the profession, the alternative proposals did not offer Bachelor degree-holding-educators sufficient opportunities to progress in terms of pay relative to Master’s degree holders who continue to receive increases in pay after their tenth year of teaching. Still others were concerned that the state has invested significantly in other credentials such as National Board Certification and Skills & Knowledge Clusters, and that the Committee would benefit from a discussion about how these investments might be incorporated in some form into the alternative system. It was also noted by Committee members that the current system, which places an enormous administrative burden on a handful of principals relative to a large number of educators “is broken”, and that Teacher Leadership offers the best hope for the state to invest resources and capacity in better addressing how support and evaluation for educators is administered throughout our school system.

The Committee agreed that it would dedicate part of its next discussion to reviewing the level of current and past state investment in credentials like advanced degrees, National Board Certification, and Skills & Knowledge Clusters, while also surveying the body of research addressing each credential for its impact on students, in addition to reviewing the national policy context for National Board Certification specifically (e.g. what our neighboring states provide in terms of compensation and other incentives for achieving the credential).

Part 2: Draft Compromise Proposals

The Committee reviewed a handout detailing proposals intended to address the unresolved questions presented in bold on each slide of the presentation. Lindsay O’Mara reminded the Committee that the

purpose of these proposals was to reach a compromise on specific state-level parameters that the Committee felt it was critical that it define and clarify prior to turning the next phase of the discussion to educators and district-level practitioners through the Educator Working Group and Technical Advisory Group in the next phase of the design process. Ryan Fennerty noted that no action would be taken at this meeting, but that Committee members would be asked to share their reactions so that a revised proposal could be brought forward at the next meeting.

The Committee discussed Proposal #1, which concerned state-level minimums regarding Teacher Leader eligibility criteria. The revised proposal suggested that an “Effective” rating on DPAS, with at least one sub-rating in Component V reflecting an “Exceeds” rating, be the minimum eligibility requirement for Teacher Leadership. Committee staff indicated that this proposal was intended to address the specific concerns that some members had expressed on multiple occasions, namely that the prior proposal implied that educators who achieve a “Satisfactory” rating on one measure of Component V (i.e. meeting expectations for student growth goals) and “Exceeds” on the other (e.g. exceeding expectations for student growth goals), would still be regarded as ineligible to apply for Teacher Leadership. Some Committee members noted that approximately 75% of current educators based on existing distributions of ratings on DPAS would be “eligible” based on the proposed definition, while others expressed concerns that the current definition created an artificial eligibility bar that is neither rigorous nor fair. Some members proposed broadening eligibility as far as possible and focusing instead on rigorous selection processes at the district and school-level. Others expressed concerns that the absence of a “meaningful” eligibility bar for a role intended for “Teacher Leaders” could make some members of the public and legislators hesitant to agree to the proposed large new investments in educator salaries since there is already a perception that public sector employees face less accountability for performance than private sector employees. Committee staff resolved to work with Committee members to identify a compromise on this issue and present a revised proposal for review at the next Committee discussion.

The Committee discussed Proposal #2, which concerned Senior Teacher Leader roles, with members asking how success and/or performance as a Teacher Leader will be measured and by whom. It was proposed that the educator work group offer the CAECC recommendations on how this should be resolved, with multiple members indicating their preference for district and/or school-level discretion in order to avoid the creation of a new state-wide teacher leader evaluation system with additional administrative burdens on schools and districts.

The Committee discussed Proposal #3, which addressed opt-in opportunities. The Committee noted that the Technical Advisory Group would be best placed to resolve the specific details around definition of “current employee” so that they are consistent with existing rules governing licensure, certification, and other details dictated by current definitions, policies, and precedent at the state and district level.

The Committee discussed Proposal #4, which presented an alternative path for educators with a Bachelor’s degree to increase their base salary over time to the level of pay associated with a Master’s degree by successfully completing multiple terms of Teacher Leadership. A number of Committee members voiced their support, appreciating that this proposal offered more options for Bachelor degree-holding-educators with ten years of experience or more to increase their earnings through

leadership. However, others expressed concerns that paying one set of educators (e.g. those with a Bachelor degree) an additional stipend for consecutive leadership terms, while not offering the same stipend to others (e.g. Master's degree holders, who would earn more than the BA holder in all scenarios), broke with the Committee's paradigm of "paying only for what we value." Committee staff clarified that the purpose of the proposal had been to provide additional opportunities to earn pay for increased responsibility for the subset of experienced Bachelor degree-holding educators in a cost-sustainable manner, but recognized that this alternative would require careful consideration of appropriate messaging when presented to current educators for discussion.

The Committee discussed Proposal #5, which proposed that National Board Certification count toward one of the two terms of Teacher Leadership required for eligibility for Senior Teacher Leadership. While a number of members approved of the proposal for recognizing the fact that many National Board Certified teachers are recognized as senior leaders in their schools, others felt that it did not sufficiently address the concerns expressed by a number of current educators that National Board Certification and Skills & Knowledge Clusters had not been recognized in the proposals discussed so far. Other Committee members reiterated their concerns that dictating specific levels of pay associated with specific credentials can narrow the field of high quality professional development that educators would then choose to pursue, and that the goal should be to create a system that incentivizes educators to pursue credentials and professional development that best prepare them for their roles in the classroom or as teacher leaders, with the needs of districts and schools playing a larger role in shaping the credentials that educators pursue rather than what the state payscale has chosen to compensate. It was proposed that the educator work groups would tackle this question in more detail, but that the Committee would also revisit this issue at its next discussion and explore how other states had incentivized similar credentials and how those might be adapted to meet the objectives of SB 254 while also incorporating them in a future system.

Public Comment Period

No public comment.

Next Steps and Closing

Teri Quin Gray closed the discussion, turning the floor to Lindsay O'Mara, who clarified that a revised compromise proposal would be sent to the group based on the discussion today for review and discussion at the next Committee meeting. Emily Silberstein announced that TNTP's current engagement with Delaware in supporting the CAECC process had reached the end of the contractually agreed upon time limit, and wished the group success in its future discussions and deliberations. The Committee set the next meeting date for Friday, January 30th from 1:00pm – 3:30pm in the 12th Floor Conference Room of the Governor's Office (820 N French Street, Wilmington, DE).