

Committee to Advance Educator Compensation & Careers

Meeting Minutes

Meeting #9: November 3, 2014

2:30pm – 4:30pm

2nd Floor Cabinet Room

Townsend Building

Dover, DE

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)
- Darryl Scott – Chair, House Education Committee and Representative, District 31
- Brian Pettyjohn – Senator, District 19
- 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 – Project Manager, TNTP

Others present:

- Dr. Kevin Carson (DASA)
- Mike Jackson (OSG)
- Elizabeth Lewis (Office of Management & Budget)
- Kim Siegel (Lt. Governor’s Office)
- Melissa Hopkins (Rodel)

Welcome & Overview of the Agenda

Committee Chair Teri Quinn Gray welcomed Committee members and called the meeting to order at 2:30pm. She stated that the Committee will review the alternative proposal discussed during the October 30th meeting in response to Committee members requests that more time be dedicated to revisiting the details of the revised proposal. Teri also indicated that a focus for the discussion this evening would be clarifying eligibility criteria and selection processes for Teacher Leader roles.

Part I: Discuss key decision points for the proposal

Lindsay O'Mara, Education Policy Advisor to Governor Markell offered a brief update to the Committee on the anticipate timeline and process ahead for the Committee to issue its recommendations. She noted that several Committee members had come forward to recommending an extension to the Committee's November 15th deadline and Lindsay indicated that she and Ryan were working to assess options and would provide the Committee with a proposal to review on Friday.

Part II: Recap and review alternative proposal

Ryan Fennerty reintroduced the alternative proposal discussed at the last Committee meeting and provided a detailed breakdown of the proposed changes and how educators would progress through the various designations of the career pathway and the maximum and minimum earnings achievable at each step. The Committee asked clarifying questions, seeking to understand how a Bachelor's degree and Master's degree educator would see their base salary grow over time, and when opportunities like Teacher Leadership and Senior Teacher Leadership would first become available and how those opportunities could impact lifetime earnings potential certain educators.

The Committee discussed the structure of the Teacher Leader and Senior Teacher Leader stipends, which the proposal suggested pay a uniform salary stipend regardless of the designation. The Committee assessed the pros and cons of providing a single stipend for the role versus setting a given salary level for holding Teacher Leadership and scaling the stipend to meet that salary level (e.g. for junior educators, the stipend would be higher than more experienced educators with a higher base salary). Some Committee members noted that the professional career pathway in other professions would treat moving through the career pathway and into teacher leadership as a new career opportunity which commands a distinct base salary and new responsibilities and obligations, as in the case of moving to a Vice President role where you now have leadership responsibilities over other adults, and that offering a uniform stipend makes that distinction potentially less clear. That said, others felt that by framing Teacher Leadership as a role within a school that is an optional career opportunity that brings a uniform supplement to base salary, then educators might be more open to seeing it as an option for career advancement rather than an imperative as is often the case in other industries.

Moreover, the Committee discussed the rationale behind the proposed \$5,000 - \$7,000 stipend ranges, with Emily Silberstein from TNTP noting that their work in other districts had shown this is a common range for highly substantive Teacher Leadership roles where educators have a significant role in leading instruction, assessment, and curriculum efforts within a school or in partnership with teacher leaders across multiple schools. Moreover, Ryan Fennerty noted that after pulling together EPER information from local district contracts throughout Delaware, the highest EPER stipends are about \$5,000, often for athletic directors, with many instruction-oriented stipends no higher than \$1,000 - \$2,000 per year, and thus recommended at least a \$5,000 stipend to ensure Teacher Leadership roles are competitively compensated within that context.

Some Committee members noted that the reference to “Core Educator Track” might be misconstrued as only referring to educators in math, reading, science and social studies when the “Core Educator Track” should refer to all educators and suggested adjusting the terminology. Others noted that the graphical representations of the alternative proposal were difficult to follow and suggested Committee staff investigate how to simplify the visual information so that a broader audience could easily understand the information.

Part III: Teacher Leadership minimum eligibility criteria

Lindsay O’Mara introduced a revised Teacher Leadership handout which offered a new set of proposals regarding eligibility criteria and selection processes in response to the concerns represented by some Committee members in prior discussions.

The Committee debated the proposed state-wide eligibility criteria that would set the minimum parameters for who could apply for a Teacher Leader role. The Committee reviewed the rules governing the various ratings educators might receive through Delaware’s educator evaluation system (DPAS), including the breakdown in component ratings in measures I through IV that result in an Ineffective, Effective or Highly Effective summative rating. The Committee also discussed the breakdown of current educators who receive unsatisfactory, satisfactory, and exceeds ratings in each of the components of DPAS in addition to the breakdown of summative ratings state-wide.

The revised proposal suggested that in addition to a Highly Effective summative rating, an Effective rating would suffice so long as the educator had also received an “Exceeds” rating on Measure A, or an “Exceeds” rating on Measure B or C AND a “Distinguished” rating in at least half of Components I-IV, or National Board Certification.

Some Committee members reiterated their concerns that because this was a question of eligibility, their preference was to broaden the pull of eligibility as broadly as possible to ensure no educators are arbitrarily excluded from applying for a Teacher Leader role, and focus instead on ensuring transparent and robust selection processes in districts so that the right people are selected for the right roles. Another concern was that the message that a Highly Effective requirement sends to a large number of educators with Effective ratings who have also earned an “Exceeds” rating on their Measure A or

Measure B in Component V is that they are still not eligible for Teacher Leadership even though they have met their student growth goals in one measure and exceeded them in the other. There was a suggestion that the eligibility criteria be amended to include a satisfactory rating in 4/4 of Components I-IV and satisfactory on each measure of Component V, OR a satisfactory rating in 3/4 of Components I-IV and one exceeds and one satisfactory rating in the two measures of Component V.

Others expressed their concern that by setting the bar for eligibility to a breakdown within the Effective rating, given the current distribution of summative ratings, where approximately half of Delaware's educators are rated Highly Effective, the perceived rigor for what it takes to be a Teacher Leader would be less compelling and take away from the recognition that comes with the role. Some Committee members pointed out that if Teacher Leaders are expected to be leading other educators in critical areas of instruction, assessments, and curriculum, that it would be difficult for them to fulfill that role with credibility if they did not come from the 50% of the educator population designated as "Highly Effective." Others pointed to their concerns that by tying eligibility to specific roll-up criteria in the current evaluation system, this was moving the Committee into a level of detail inappropriate for state law and policy given the Committee's focus is building a system for the future and the evaluation system will likely evolve over time. Others responded by noting that educator evaluation – and Component V, which is based on student assessments – was too important an issue for the Committee to not resolve and that they could not support deferring clarification to a regulatory process given the importance to DSEA members.

Given the group was unable to reach consensus on the proposal, the Committee staff agreed to rework the proposal in light of the issues raised during the discussion and committed to revisiting the issue for resolution at a future CAECC discussion.

Part IV: Teacher Leadership selection criteria and process

The Committee discussed the current proposal for minimum state standards for district selection processes, which required that "districts hold a competitive application process for Teacher Leadership roles that must meaningfully engage other educators" and that districts may hold their own process for designating Teacher Leaders but "cannot restrict or prioritize the allocation of leadership roles based on years of work experience or attainment of academic credits or advanced degrees." The Committee discussed what in addition to these initial parameters the Committee might recommend to ensure fair, rigorous, and transparent selection processes in Delaware's school districts.

Emily Silberstein from TNTP provided an overview of key themes and components from a national survey of Teacher Leader selection processes and criteria to help provide additional context on best practices. Some Committee members noted that it was difficult to clarify the details of a selection process having not defined a series of Teacher Leadership roles and that reviewing and developing a number of exemplars as a group would be helpful.

Others noted that they felt going into additional criteria and detail beyond what had been indicated in the initial language would be a mistake, given the purpose of the Committee was to set state-level minimum parameters and should provide the school districts with considerable flexibility to develop the processes that make the most sense for them. They noted that Teacher Leadership roles will likely evolve over time as local context and school-based needs change, and thus selection processes will likely change, so it would be challenging for the Committee to design detailed selection processes at the state-level for a series of model roles that may not be relevant years from now. Other Committee members agreed that less detail for the purposes of recommendations that would inform legislation made sense, but that the Committee should recommend the creation of a body or processes to oversee the development of the next layer of detail to ensure state-wide selection processes meet a common standard of transparency and rigor. A number of Committee members noted that some of the most vocal concerns among educators at the town hall discussions and educator workshops had been transparency around selection processes, given current processes in schools for department chair positions and EPER roles are widely perceived as lacking any real transparency or input from school staff.

Committee staff agreed to develop a proposal for how to borrow from existing processes in creating a second phase of the work involving a sub-committee to help advise the CAECC on outstanding issues like selection processes that would be better resolved through clarifying regulation.

Public Comment Period

Dr. Kevin Carson (DASA):

Dr. Carson urged the Committee to have a conversation about the impact of the proposals and the compensation discussed on administrators to ensure we do not disincentivize educators from becoming assistant principals. He also urged the Committee to spend more time defining Teacher Leader roles in order to address anticipated section losses and the financial implications associated with that reality. He noted that for Teacher Leadership positions to have meaningful responsibilities, it would be difficult to pull those off during a normal 8:00am to 3:00pm work day, and so any Teacher Leadership roles eventually “posted” for hire should clearly articulate the responsibilities and time expectations beyond normal classroom duties for successfully carrying out the role. He urged the Committee to not leave those details in a large grey area for school leaders and districts to clarify given the significant implications for local contract negotiations. Dr. Carson noted his agreement with members of the Committee who had expressed concerns about legislating detailed elements of the selection processes, supporting the idea that school leaders and districts should retain ample flexibility to develop the selection processes that work best for their needs. Dr. Carson also provided comments on how best to adjust some of the visuals of the career pathway and compensation levels for ease of understanding.

Next Steps and Closing

Teri Quin Gray closed the discussion, noting that Committee staff were still in the process of determining an appropriate date for the fifth town hall that had to be scheduled as a result of overcrowding at the Bear Public Library on October 29th, and that a final date would be posted to the website and communicated to Committee members. Teri noted that the next Committee discussion is scheduled for 7th in Wilmington in the Carvel building.