

Draft Meeting Minutes

Meeting Place: Agency of Education, Room 304

Address: 219 North Main Street, Barre, VT 05641

Date: November 30, 2018

Present:

Peter Amons, VASBO; Ric Reardon, Castleton University; Jay Nichols, VPA; Tammy Kolbe, UVM; Nicole Mace, VSBA; Amy Knight, St. Michael's College (arrived at 9:36 a.m.); Dan French, AOE

Agency Staff: Brad James, Suzanne Sprague

Others: Toby Howe, MMR/St. J./BBA

Check in and review meeting objectives

Chair Kolbe called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m. She said that Marty Strange resigned from the Task Force. He voiced concerns regarding the charge which he thought was ambitious for the time period allowed to accomplish the task. She said she respected his decision. Chair Kolbe reminded the Task Force that the scope of the work was ambitious and that the Task Force agreed that the work it could accomplish it would do well. She added that the report to the Legislature would identify that the Task Force couldn't accomplish everything at the depth and breadth that it would have liked. Chair Kolbe reviewed the agenda for the day. She gave her appreciation to James for the work he put into supplying data to the Task Force. Chair Kolbe said the focus would be on the measures provided and determining if there should be any more or less. She said the Task Force would begin a conversation around guidelines, impact of Staff-to-Student ratios for independent schools and the Task Force's next steps.

Review/approve meeting minutes from November 6, 2018

Reardon made a motion to accept the meeting minutes from the November 6th meeting. Mace seconded. The motion passed unanimously and the minutes were approved.

Review staff-to-student count ratios prepared by AOE

Chair Kolbe invited James to review the data supplied in the spreadsheet, help the Task Force interpret the data, and identify potential issues in terms of data quality.

James reviewed the Task Force's decision regarding what it would like measured. He took the Federal categories and cross walked them to the Agency of Education categories. He broke the data out as agreed on by the Task Force at their previous meeting and explained the groupings in detail.

1. SU/SD Administration
2. School Staff (teachers) – anyone working with students
3. Principals and assistant principals

4. General education teachers, excluding prekindergarten teachers and CTE teachers
5. Special education teachers
6. Student support staff

James further explained how he calculated each grouping. Discussion followed regarding enrollment and how it is calculated, ADM, equalized pupil, calculating a 2-year average and being consistent with federal definitions. Chair Kolbe asked for input from the Task Force regarding the spreadsheet and questioned if there should be any additional calculations to the spreadsheet. Discussion followed regarding evaluating the indicators, population measure and child count ratios.

Chair Kolbe asked if there should be a state specific metric and what would be captured to calculate it. Discussion followed regarding attendance takers, social workers, nurses, psychology supports, nurses' aids and guidance counselors being its own metric called student helper personnel. James will gather the information to create the calculation. Discussion followed regarding national ranking, ranking in the state and contracted employees not being included in any calculations. James explained the poverty subgroup and the definition used. Discussion followed regarding free and reduced lunch (FRL) and creating an index to create reliable comparisons. James explained size and sparsity.

Consider the impact of staff-to student ratios for independent schools

Chair Kolbe reviewed the charge as it pertains to independent schools. She asked the Task Force for input on how to respond to the charge. Discussion followed regarding identifying a subset of SUs that operate schools and have choice at the same grade levels and making comparisons with SU peers. Chair Kolbe asked the AOE to gather the information and present calculations for continued discussion at the next meeting.

Discuss potential barriers to staffing flexibility at local level

Chair Kolbe reviewed the charge. She asked for input. Discussion followed regarding time constraints for focused groups, primary data collection, objective accounting of regulatory requirements and systematic investigations. Secretary French will work with Mace and Francis to create a list of existing regulations in statute.

For the next meeting, the AOE will have a list of regulations, rerun data with two-year average, remove department heads from principal breakout group, create student helpers and clarify the category, add a column with two-year poverty with FRL, and provide a comparison of tuitioning and operating structures in single districts.

Chair Kolbe canceled the December 5th meeting and requested an extension from the General Assembly. The next meeting is December 11th.

Chair Kolbe said she would have a briefing discussion with the Task Force members individually who were not in attendance. Chair Kolbe adjourned the meeting at 10:48 a.m.

Minutes recorded and prepared by Suzanne Sprague.