

Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting
Call In: 1-802-828-7667
Conference ID: 453 627 756#
1 National Life Drive, Davis 5, Room 513
Montpelier VT 05620-2501

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Present: Daniel French, Secretary, Agency of Education; Sean Brown, Commissioner, Department for Children and Families; Alyson Eastman, Deputy Secretary, Agency of Agriculture; Rosie Krueger, State Director of Child Nutrition Programs, Agency of Education.

AOE: Maureen Gaidys

Members of the public/others: Calvin Cutler, WCAX; Meg Faust

Call to Order/Introduction of Members/Amendments to Agenda

Secretary French convened the meeting at 1:05 p.m. and asked members to introduce themselves. He said Rosie Krueger, State Director of Child Nutrition Programs, would serve as his designee on this Task Force.

Review Charge(s) of Task Force

Secretary French reviewed the charge of the Task Force: (1) recommend funding sources for universal school lunch; (2) recommend what data should be collected by local education agencies, school districts, and schools to qualify for federal funds based on student poverty, the means by which the data should be collected, the frequency of collection, and how this data should be reported to the Agency of Education and the frequency of this reporting; (3) consider how other states offer and fund universal school meals at no cost to students or their families; and (4) meet with Vermont's federal delegation to discuss what changes could be made to federal law and regulations to more readily facilitate universal school meals. He also said the Task Force needs to collaborate with stakeholder groups and that a report is due on or before January 15, 2022, to the House and Senate Committees on Education and on Appropriations, the House Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, and the Senate Committee on Agriculture with its findings and any recommendations for legislative action.

He explained that the AOE will provide administrative and technical support and that the Task Force would be responsible for minutes; AOE staff would post and warn meetings and minutes. Physical meeting space is required to be provided under Open Meeting Law; AOE will handle that as well.

Election of Task Force Chair and Vice Chair

Commissioner Brown nominated Krueger; she was the only nominee. Secretary French declared Krueger the Task Force Chair. Commissioner Brown nominated Eastman as Vice Chair; Secretary French declared Eastman as Task Force Vice Chair.

Opportunity for Public to be Heard

There were no members of the public to be heard.

Next Steps/Next Meeting

Krueger reviewed the four tasks and who might take the lead and what work was already in progress.

- Recommend what data should be collected by local education agencies, school districts, and schools to qualify for federal funds based on student poverty: already a working group addressing this; Krueger will serve as a liaison with this group.
- Recommend funding sources for universal school lunch: might need specific meeting dedicated to that topic.
- Consider how other states offer and fund universal school meals at no cost to students or their families: Secretary French suggested this being policy analysis and use the Region 1 Comprehensive Center for this – and that it might be useful to have outside policy experts do this work. He will look into this.

There was discussion on universal meals, background on federal regulations, and sharing testimony provided to the Legislature on this topic.

- Meet with Vermont’s federal delegation to discuss what changes could be made to federal law and regulations to more readily facilitate universal school meals: This seems like a final piece. Krueger updated that Congress is looking at changes to the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). It was suggested that it might be beneficial for the Task Force have a discussion on this sooner rather than later.

Krueger suggested setting the next meeting date and addressing the task of “recommend funding sources for universal school lunch.” Subsequent meetings will include hearing back from other states and developing some recommendations for the delegation. The Task Force decided its next meeting will be October 15 at 9:00 a.m. Topics will include overview of universal meals, current estimated funding costs, update on AOE working in partnership with VT Health Access on a pilot project application, update of federal changes, and future agenda topics.

Commissioner Brown offered as a future agenda item an update on a potential longer-term benefit that might come out of the Pandemic-Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) program. He also suggested having collaborators named in statute join upcoming meetings. AOE will reach out and invite collaborators to the next meeting. Collaborators are Hunger Free Vermont, the School Nutrition Association of Vermont, the Vermont Superintendents Association, the Vermont School Boards Association, the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators; the Vermont Principals’ Association and the Vermont-National Education Association.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 1:27 p.m.

Meeting Minutes recorded by: Maureen Gaidys, Agency of Education