



Nevada State Teacher Recruitment and Retention Advisory Task Force

SATURDAY OCTOBER 24, 2020
9:00 A.M.

Meeting Locations:

Due to the circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Advisory Task Force (Task Force) met via videoconference. In accordance with Governor Sisolak's [Directive 021 \(subsection 37\)](#), there was no physical location designated for this meeting. The meeting was livestreamed on the [Nevada Department of Education Website](#).

DRAFT SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING

MEMBERS PRESENT via videoconference:

Magdaline Wells
Elizabeth Vessels
Tammie Smithburg
William Cox
Kathleen Keene
Dana Boam
Maria Cristy-Fernandez
Laurie Henderson
Eleanor Williams
Meridon Fortune
Elizabeth Rechs
Tamara McCord

DEPARTMENT STAFF PRESENT via videoconference:

Kathleen Galland-Collins
KellyLynn Charles

SENIOR DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL via video conference:

David Gardner

AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE via videoconference:

Andrew Morrill

AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE via Livestream:

The Livestream feed allowed public viewing throughout the meeting.

1. Call to Order; Roll Call: Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting of the Task Force was called to order at 9:07 a.m. by Cristy Fernandez, Task Force Chair. Quorum was established. Chair Fernandez led the Pledge of Allegiance. Members were reminded of the

meeting norms, to use the hand raise feature, to mute the microphone, and to wait until they were called on before speaking.

Chair Fernandez moved to Agenda Item #2.

2. Public Comment #1

In accordance with Governor Sisolak's [State of Emergency Directive 006](#), Section 2, public comment was to be submitted via email and read into the record by Kathleen Galland-Collins, NDE Assistant Director, EDLiFE.

No public comment was submitted.

Chair Fernandez moved to Agenda Item #3.

3. Approval of the June 6, 2020 and June 11, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Chair Fernandez asked members to review the minutes.

Member Smithburg motioned to approve the content of the report with the understanding that mechanical edits may be made. Member McCord seconded. Motion passed.

Chair Fernandez moved to Agenda Item #4

4. Chairperson's Report (*Information/Discussion*)

Chair Fernandez provided the Task Force members with an update on the Task Force presentation of their recommendations to the Legislative Committee on Education (LCE) on August 26th, 2020. She shared that they had 15 minutes to share the recommendations. A few legislators were very concerned about how we are all doing regarding COVID-19 and distance learning. Chair Fernandez stated she informed the LCE the Task Force had not met about distance learning, so she was not able to speak on that on behalf of the members. She informed the members that the legislators were very pleased with everything the Task Force had done. They had few questions on the teacher hotline and the climate survey. One of the conversations they had was about class size and what was posted on districts website. Chair Fernandez then asked member Smithburg if she wanted to share more info. Member Smithburg shared that LCE was very pleased and appreciative of the work the Task Force. It was a very positive experience.

Chair Fernandez asked the members if they had any questions

Member Wells explained that she joined in that meeting and stated member Fernandez and member Smithburg did an excellent job presenting. There were a few questions that were handled very well. Chair Fernandez thanked Andrew Morelli, KellyLynn Charles, and Kathleen Galland-Collins for support them the whole time. Member Smithburg also confirmed that working with Task Force team the presentation had worked out very well. Ms. Galland-Collins added that Task Force did a phenomenal job. She watched the recording to take notes for this work session and she was impressed that in that 15 minutes, they all be able to convey exactly what they wanted to. LCE understood where the Task Force trying to go. Member Smithburg stated LCE were very impressed with how quickly the Task Force was able to put the report together, because they knew we did not have a full school year due to COVID.

Chair Fernandez asked for question and comments. There were no further questions for comments from the members.

Chair Fernandez moved to Agenda Item #5.

5. Task Force Work Session (*Information/Discussion/Possible Action*)

Chair Fernandez explained in this agenda item, members will engage in discussion on feedback provided by Legislative Committee on Education on the June 11th Task Force Report and topics relevant to recruitment and retention.

Kathleen Galland-Collins, Nevada Department of Education, reported the Legislative Committee on Education had issued a summary of their recommendations. She explained that the Department did not include it in today's materials because it is publicly accessible. If members are interested, they can send the link to them or it is available on the Legislative Committee on Education webpage. Ms. Galland-Collins informed the members that LCE is drafting a Bill Draft Request (BDR) to allow this Task Force to work with the Department of Education on the exit survey that was one of the Task Force recommendations. One of the things the Task Force will need to discuss in the next meeting is what the exit survey should look like. Ms. Galland-Collins shared another item to talk about is clarification of the teacher hotline. The recommendation was to have a teacher hotline to provide support regarding best practices. She informed the members that LCE questioned the use of the word "hotline" as it implies an immediate response and has a much larger fiscal impact and implications for staffing than an online networking system where a cadre of educators could sign up as volunteers to give advice. LCE would like the Task Force to decide what they mean about "hotline." For example, does "hotline" mean teachers call in and get help immediately or is the meaning flexible and the Task Force should work with the Department to define what it looks like.

Member McCord recalled conversation regarding the hotline and teachers reaching out for emotional well-being to have someone listen to you in a safe platform. Ms. Galland-Collins clarified the recommendation that went forward and was voted on by the Task Force was not so much about social emotional aspect, but best practices in the classroom. Member McCord added we do have the counseling services available within the districts. Ms. Galland-Collins added that's one reason LCE had an issue with the "hotline" because when we think of "hotline" we think of suicide prevention hotline, homework hotline, etc.. Chair Fernandez added the Task Force included the words "receive support to reduce stress" and stress looks different to each teacher. She added that could be stress regarding culture of your school, how to feel emotionally, or the stress in regard to a lack of information and teaching skills or strategies.

Ms. Galland-Collins stated the Task Force needs to take the feedback from Legislative Committee of Education and take look at the report from last time around and see if there are any revisions or fine tuning needed. The report is due back to the legislators before February 1st. It is just matter of revising the current report that would then be submitted on before February 1st. It would then go to the Legislative Council of Bureau and all legislators. She informed the members that is the work for the next few meetings. She added that since the Task Force knows LCE is putting forth a BDR on an exit survey, we need to clarify what the Task Force would like to see in it. Additionally, we want to rephrase the "hotline" recommendation to make it clearer. She explained, during the meeting with the Legislative of Committee on Education, she was able to let them know that the Department of Education is in the very beginning stages of developing a data base of National Board-Certified teachers, Teachers of the Year, teachers that had been recommended to be part of the statewide talent pool, and those that have been recommended as teacher leaders. She stated there are teachers with expertise to help with this project, for example most do not know Ms. Charles was a mathematics professional development trainer. The Task Force will have to figure out what the teacher support system might look like and what the fiscal impact might be. Ms. Galland-Collins asked the members if they were aware of Digital Learning Collaborative Project and the resources available for distance learning and digital learning components. She explained the Digital Engineers are mostly classroom teachers and building administrators that are receiving a stipend to do their work. The teacher support system could be modeled after their work. Chair Fernandez asked for clarification on how teachers for the support system would be selected. She asked if the Department of Education would reach out to the teacher or if they share with districts and then districts reach out to the teachers. Ms. Galland-Collins answered that would be something that this Task Force to discuss, however the more direct contact with educators, the less miscommunication. This Task Force may want to think about an application or resume review process. She stated this could be an item on the next agenda.

Chair Fernandez stated during the conversation they had in September, one of the two things LCE asked was would compensation for the teachers that were going to be part of the hotline or if the teacher would be volunteering. She stated the second question was if there is any research from other states that shows a hotline has worked in the teacher community. Chair Fernandez stated those items will need to be discussed as well.

Member McCord asked if a hotline or an outside resource is really the solution or is the solution building communities within school where teachers are comfortable talking with their peers. She wondered why teachers should have to go elsewhere for resources or to talk to somebody they do not know for help. She proposed the solution was building a mentor program like Washoe and Humboldt have.

Ms. Galland-Collins agreed with member McCord. Ms. Galland-Collins then stated that was a very good point and that it does not have to be one or the other; a good system addresses all of it. She reminded the members that one of the reasons for having the hotline was if a teacher is the lone teacher in your school or district, especially in their subject area, what resources do they have within that school, who can they reach out to? A statewide support system gives those educators resources they would not have within their own school. A statewide support system helps with the interconnectedness and the alignment of what is happening throughout the state.

Member Cox stated for teachers in rural areas, especially when the teacher is the only science teacher in school, a statewide support system would be an excellent resource.

Chair Fernandez agreed with member Cox. She mentioned the mentoring program in Washoe.

Member Smithburg also agreed with member Cox. She explained that in Elko County there are only two Gifted and Talented teachers. A support system is a chance for them to hear what other gifted and talented teachers across the State do. She also agreed with member McCord on working in PLCs within their own communities and schools.

Member Keene recognized that as a great idea and continued there are a lot of resources online that people can look up on their own, but sometimes they need to interface with other teachers to figure out what that actually looks like and how it works in a classroom. There are Zoom meeting or in person meetings to share and collaborate but adding a statewide platform would be amazing. She shared that she is the only teacher in the subject area in her school and she does PLCs with other schools in her district.

Chair Fernandez thanked members for sharing their opinions and asked if they had any questions or comments. There were none.

Chair Fernandez stated another topic focused on during the LCE presentation was the class-size recommendation. She asked Ms. Charles to share the information about the class-size reporting discussed at the meeting.

KellyLynn Charles from Nevada Department of Education stated the document of the district class-size reports in the posted materials contains the links to the webpages on which class-size reduction reports can be found. Also provided in the document is the path to take from the district's homepage to the report so you can follow along. Ms. Charles provided members a reminder of what AB304 asked of districts. She read from the bill that states "for each school quarter of a school year, the ratio in each school district of pupils per licensed teacher designated to teach, on a full-time basis, in classes where curriculum is taught." She stated the bill goes on to list the numbers and then it says that "in determining this ratio all licensed educational personnel who teach a grade level specified." She shared it is excluding teachers of art, music, physical education, special education or teachers who teach one or two specific subject areas to more than one classroom, as well as counselors, administrators and other teacher specialists. In reporting, the districts are reporting the actual number of teachers on the classroom with the students and then that is the ratio that is to be posted online.

Chair Fernandez gave members five minutes to look at the links provided and then asked for questions. Members asked for assistance from Ms. Charles on locating various documents on district sites. Members shared their findings and noted confusions. Ms. Galland-Collins wondered if the requested assistance she's hearing is that it is not extremely transparent. Chair Fernandez answered it doesn't seem to be. Ms. Galland-Collins explained that is one reason Ms. Charles included the pathway followed to access the data. You can see how many clicks it takes to get to the data. She mentioned as members are thinking about the potential revision to this report, they could think about what might be needed for Recommendation #7.

Member Smithburg and Chair Fernandez wondered about whether the data was student-teacher ratios and the reporting timeline. Ms. Charles reminded the members the requirement is "that for each school quarter of a school year."

Chair Fernandez asked who would monitor that. She wondered if anybody in the state monitors every district's posting the class-size ratio quarterly. Ms. Charles shared that the State Board of Education provides a report on the variance given to the Interim Finance Committee. Member Smithburg wondered what the class-sizes were supposed to be for the grade levels. Ms. Charles answered the bill states

kindergarten and grades 1 and 2 must not exceed 16:1, grade 3 must not exceed 18:1, and if the class-size plan is approved for a variance, it must not exceed the ratio in the variance.

Ms. Galland-Collins stated the law also required The State Board of Education to adopt regulations regarding nonbinding recommendations for class sizes of 25:1 for grades 4 through 6, for Middle School and High School it is 25:1. Those are not part of the class size reductions and are not required.

Chair Fernandez wondered about Title I schools. Ms. Galland-Collins answered that to her knowledge, the regulations do not differentiate between Title I and Non-Title I schools. Member Smithburg wondered if the state automatically gives all districts variances. Ms. Galland-Collins stated she and Ms. Charles will do some research to find more information about how variances are granted. She also shared that NDE was in the process of a class-size and student-teacher ratio study. She hoped to have that data available for the next meeting, along with updated licensed personnel and teacher vacancy data.

Member McCord shared her experience with districts needing to request a variance. She shared that students starting the year in a class above the ratio should continue in that class rather than be moved mid-year to a new teacher. She explained she didn't see an issue with variances being granted for one year due to not having enough teachers. She stated that when she looked at the numbers, she didn't see anybody going super far above the ratio, but there are some that are pretty close.

Member Rechs agreed with Member McCord's experience and noted the conversation about class-sized began with the question of whether districts were averaging class size numbers across school sites.

Ms. Galland Collins stated one of the reasons that NDE wanted to share the ratio information with the Task Force was to ask whether it was getting to the level that the Task Force expected. Chair Fernandez wondered if they could have somebody attend a Task Force meeting and give some more information about what should they look at when looking at the reports. She then asked the Task Force members if they agreed with her statements.

Members engaged in a conversation around the numbers reported and their own experiences.

Chair Fernandez asked the members if they had any thoughts on the hotline and what should be included. Member Boam stated she felt the word hotline should be taken out and there should be a rapid turnaround on assistance. Member Henderson mentioned advertising needs to happen so teachers know the support is there. Chair Fernandez stated the information should be easily accessible to teachers.

Chair Fernandez moved to Agenda Item #6.

6. Future Meeting Dates and Agenda Items *(Information/Discussion/Possible Action)*

Members engaged in a discussion on preferred days and time to have meetings. Members voiced concerns on the lack of substitutes available for weekday meetings and the challenges of traveling on Fridays should meetings resume to in-person. Ms. Charles shared that according to the member survey results, Saturday, December 12, 2020 was the only date that met quorum.

December 12, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. was set as the next meeting date.

Chair Fernandez moved to Agenda Item #7.

7. Public Comment #2

Public comment will be taken during this agenda item on any matter within the Teacher Recruitment & Retention Advisory Task Force's jurisdiction, control, or advisory power. No action may be taken on a matter raised under this item until the matter is included on an agenda as an item on which action may be taken. The Task Force Chair will impose a time limit of three minutes

No public comment was submitted.

Chair Fernandez moved to Agenda Item #8.

8. Adjournment

With no objections the Chair adjourned the meeting at 10:34.