

Title I Committee of Practitioners Meeting Minutes

**November 1, 2018
9:00-11:00 AM**

Call to Order; Roll Call; Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Valerie Dockery, Chair, called to order, the meeting of the Title I Committee of Practitioners at 9:05 AM on Thursday, November 1, 2018.

Roll Call

Chair Dockery conducted a roll call. **Quorum was established. (17 members present)**

Committee Members present in Carson City: Valerie Dockery, Holli Kiechler, Karen Barreras, Candy Ruf, Mallory Foley, Rich Mares, Sara Jorgensen

Committee Members present in Las Vegas: Teresa Stoddard, Karen Holley, Kelly-Jo Shebeck, Annette Dawson Owens, Somer Rodgers, Gabby Pingue, Melissa Schroeder

Committee Members on Lifesize: Teresa Dastrup, Melinda Gomez, Randi Hunewill

Public Comment #1

None.

Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes for May 31, 2018

No changes or corrections. A motion was made by Chair Dockery to approve minutes; seconded by an unidentified speaker and minutes were approved.

Approval of Flexible Agenda

A motion was made by Valerie Dockery to approve flexible agenda; seconded by Teresa Dastrup. A vote was taken and motion was approved.

Committee representative vacancy (ies) and/or additional members; Election for Vice Chair

Mary Stach was nominated for the role of School District Representative. A motion was made by Karen Holley to approve Mary Stach for the role of School Representative for the Title I Committee of Practitioners. Motion was seconded by an unidentified speaker. A vote was taken and the motion was approved.

Greg Kramer was nominated for the role of School District Representative to the Committee. A motion was made by Melissa Schroeder to approve Greg Kramer; seconded by Karen Holley. A vote was taken and the motion was approved.

Chair Dockery accepted Rhonda Hutchins' resignation of Vice-Chair to the Committee. The Chair asked for nominations for a new Vice-Chair. Gabby Pingue nominated Karen Holley; seconded by an unidentified speaker. A vote was taken and the motion was approved.

Title I, Part A Updates

Gabby Pingue gave some updates:

1. Title I newsletter is coming out monthly, with important updates primarily for LEA leaders working in Title I. They are hoping to establish a list serve in the future with sign ups online.
2. There are now some guidance modules on the Title I page on the NDE website. Gone is the one large document covering everything – now the guidance modules are broken into separate topics.
3. The revised and final Title IA allocations from U.S. Ed for Fiscal 19 will be going out next month.
4. An informational webinar will be online in a month detailing the new requirements under ESSA. The agency wants to be more transparent with their processes.
5. They are planning to have an all-day Title I Directors Meeting in the spring. The agenda will be crafted based on the needs assessment survey from the districts. More details will follow.

Chair Dockery asked for clarification on carryover guidance. Have there been changes and when will that be shared with Title I Directors? Ms. Pingue said there were not many changes, but one is that under ESSA the state does have flexibility for any carryover that is above 15 percent, that they can set their own criteria for the conditions on what those extra funds over the 15 percent can be used for.

Chair Dockery asked if the new guidelines were in place for the FY 18 carryover that they're all still waiting for? Ms. Pingue affirmed. Ms. Dockery asked if the districts that were carrying over had been informed of the change in the carryover requirements? Ms. Pingue affirmed.

Chair Dockery said the carryover topic is important and it might be the first webinar discussion so that people will know that if they're asking for a waiver, there are conditions on that waiver. Ms. Pingue agreed.

Title I, Part A District Set-Aside

Ms. Pingue said her team wanted to get some thoughts from the Committee on their next steps. In their review of district Title I applications, it has become apparent that a considerable amount of funding that the law intends to go to the school level is not getting to the schools. The districts are setting aside money for different initiatives or plans district-wide. So the team is thinking of requiring a limit on the percent of optional set-asides. Should they have a cap on the percent of optional set-asides? Should they craft language that spells out the conditions and expectations on any set-asides? Some of those conditions or expectations could be the ESSA evidence levels, the specific interventions being spelled out, the evaluation and monitoring plan, benchmark settings, and things like that. Ms. Pingue asked if there any districts that wanted to weigh in on this proposal.

Sara Jorgensen, representing SPCSA, said after discussion within the agency and with various schools, it's clear that there is some confusion with ESSA evidence. Could the state provide a list of recommended ESSA approved interventions? Ms. Jorgensen said that would be a good start or guideline to help direct their schools.

Chair Dockery said those ESSA based evidence interventions would be discussed in detail on the next next Agenda item. She agreed it was confusing.

Chair Dockery stated from Carson's perspective they try to not have a lot of set-asides. For the most part they try to only go with the mandated set asides and then push the rest out to the schools because then they have less chance of having large carryovers at the end and going over that 15 percent.

Karen Holley from Nye County said she appreciated the part where it was "recommended" that LEA set aside not more than 5 percent. After tests are over and schools are ranked, there's sometimes a shift in the district's focus. So, if it's a district set-aside and it's an initiative for all of their underperforming schools, it's easier to write one contract and shift focus based on needs as long as their needs assessments are strong enough.

Chair Dockery thanked Ms. Holley and said the guidance document for set-asides is really well done. It's concise, but has enough detail in it to help schools guide them through that process. It should be added to the webinar menu.

ESSA Evidence Levels

Chair Dockery said this is a topic begging for clarification. There is confusion about approved partners versus interventions that are ESSA evidence based. The guidance talks about ESSA based actual interventions versus partnerships.

Ms. Pingue stated the interventions part is something that all states are grappling with. Nevada is unique in the sense that they also have state grants, and that's definitely a discussion and a distinction that they need to get clear on.

They need to discuss which part of the intervention do the schools or districts have to implement in order to be implementing it with fidelity.

Chair Dockery stated in the guidance document that was included in their packets, it says non-regulatory guidance for using evidence to strengthen educational investment. On Page 7 it talks specifically about evidence, the guidance on the definition of evidence based, and it talks specifically about the use of evidence-based activities, strategies and interventions, collectively referred to as interventions. The Chair said this is really the important part of that ESSA evidence.

Ms. Holley said she agreed 100%. When they look at their plans and they are trying to support them with ESSA evidence, there's not a lot of evidence there yet. District personnel need to develop more evidence for themselves on how they're trying to improve.

One problem that she really sees with ESSA evidence in the districts is that if they've used vetted vendors, sometimes departments of the state accept the vetted vendor, and sometimes they do not. So if the State Department of Education says these are our vetted vendors, districts should not be required to supply ESSA evidence.

Chair Dockery noted that on Page 3 it outlines the process of selecting an evidence-based strategy or provider. She thinks that part has gotten lost in this process. Districts are running around getting citations for different programs or different strategies to put in a grant so that they get a higher rating.

What this is really supposed to be about is identifying local needs, selecting evidence-based interventions, planning the implementation, implementing, and reflecting.

ESSA Evidence Levels (continued)

Sara Jorgensen echoed the Chair's remarks. She thinks schools are struggling with what is a good intervention, and the question is: are the interventions really effective? Schools are relying on prepackaged intervention. There may be strong evidence that the intervention works, but Ms. Jorgensen thinks there also needs to be some sort of backup by schools if that's the route they want to go, that they're doing some internal sort of measurement and data and being able to provide evidence after the fact if they're going to use something that's not vetted. She would like the state to provide or give guidance to vetted interventions that have proven outcomes; this would help all schools, especially the charters.

Renee Fairless, who works in the charter school system, said it can be difficult to provide ESSA based evidence. If her five-star schools are mentoring her one-star schools, or if they are replicating the 5 star programs, what is ESSA based evidence that she can use to support that? Trying to prove that this should be the model as opposed to taking an outside vetted organization that doesn't know their model, that doesn't know their instructional framework, that's not working with their population. Ms. Fairless said sometimes she feels that she is being cornered into looking for some sort of research-based article or something to support what could be proven after the fact.

Chair Dockery said she thought that was a perfect example of the Level 4, the demonstration of rationale which is explained in that document on Page 9. There needs to be more support for the Level 4 kind of evidence. Helping districts develop that local data would be really helpful from the Department of Education because there are successful interventions going on within the state and we need to be able to duplicate those.

Ms. Pingue commented about the local capacity: yes, yes, yes. They definitely want to build up local capacity. One of their priorities is to fund evaluations, strong, high quality, rigorous evaluations, of any kind of interventions or strategies that a district might have. Then the districts can then show yes, their model or intervention does meet a certain level. They are willing to prioritize those evaluations so that schools can evaluate their programs and then can get to that higher evidence level.

Not everybody can afford to do a randomized trial with a control group so that Level 4 was there to help build a capacity of those interventions that weren't yet at Level 1, 2 or 3, but interventions are not supposed to stay at a Level 4 forever.

Chair Dockery said unless the protocol changes, the Level 4's get completely thrown out. Districts are not going to be able to come into a competition with a Level 4 even with an evaluation design and be competitive because schools are automatically put into another tier if they're not a 1, 2 or 3. Right now you're not in the priority funding if you're not a 1, 2 or 3.

Teresa Dastrup said the bottom line is that local needs have to be identified. Each local district can determine their needs, and there are guidelines they need to follow, but they know their needs better than anyone at the state level or any other level. When programs are crafted, those local needs must be met. The local schools and the local districts need to have the ability to select what works for them, not just something that someone else has evidence that shows it works for them because every student, every school, and every district is different.

Karen Holley added in her district they look at the DPP's and SPP's and they look at the needs in the district, and try to categorize them by what grants can support what and what kind of ESSA evidence they're going to need inside of that grant application to do the best they can in our district.

Chair Dockery agreed with Ms. Holley. She said it isn't just about grants. It's about selecting quality programs for Title I schools and other schools, and how they are able to select those initiatives and interventions.

Ms. Pingue also agreed. She said the state does not want districts and schools just to be choosing interventions to be choosing interventions. They definitely want them to be aligned to the needs in the schools. The Office of Student Schools Supports is going to be releasing their FY 20 consolidated application, a multi-grant, competitive grant, hopefully by the end of this week. Ms. Pingue said she knows this can be frustrating for the LEA's; and it's frustrating for them as well. She thanked everyone for their feedback and comments and said it was an excellent discussion.

National ESEA Distinguished Schools

Chair Dockery explained the Distinguished Schools program will recognize two high performing schools at the ESEA Conference in January. There are three categories. Category 1, a school that has demonstrated exceptional student performance for two consecutive years, Category 2, a school that has significantly closed the achievement gap between student groups, and Category 3, excellence in serving special populations of students. The Department of Education is looking for some feedback from the committee today on how this process should go forward and what kinds of criteria should be used to select these schools.

Rhonda Hutchins said the Title I ESEA Distinguished Program does not supply criteria for selection or an eligibility process for identifying schools. Last year they identified strictly off of test scores. They need to determine what they should do going forward.

Kelly-Jo Shebeck said she could only speak to the Category 3, the Excellence in Serving Special Populations piece. In their district they are able to see schools that are really doing a fantastic job with wraparound services, and you can't see that just pulling the information at the state level. It's more of the schools that are meeting bi-monthly with all their wraparound services and their coordinating services that is really important at the school level. Ms. Shebeck stated she wasn't sure how to measure that or how you find that information, but it needs to be taken into consideration.

Richard Mares said he agreed 100% with Ms. Shebeck. If you look within the schools, you can see the effect of the wraparound services and the support given to families. These things are overlooked in the criteria.

Sara Jorgensen said there needs to be some way to go in and evaluate those wraparound services, quantify the school's culture, its relationships, and how staff is building support. They can't just be strictly looking at Star ratings, test scores, what have you.

Candy Ruf said it sounds like there's a disconnect. Perhaps what they need is some committee work, some opportunity to really dive a little bit deeper, have some discourse, share some information and then perhaps come back with a recommendation for the future.

National ESEA Distinguished Schools (continued)

Rhonda Hutchins thought it would be “amazing” to have a subcommittee or group that would work on the eligibility criteria and the process for determining the Title I ESEA Distinguished Schools. She would be glad to work with the committee to determine what the next steps are.

Gabby Pingue reminded Members that they only had three weeks to get the job done to make sure they have a timely submission.

Renee Fairless commented that when districts turn in their Title I data, it includes parent engagement, wraparound services and the like. If they just looked at a lot of the Title I requirements for the schools, they might be able to get a much more clear picture than just a star ranking would do. And then also knowing that if you’re looking at data then this year the analysis became much deeper in terms of looking at SGP and AGP for schools and seeing what growth there was. You could use that data and then take the services and the information already provided to Title I, and that would give a clearer picture of the schools that are trying to meet all the needs of the students, the social, emotional learning as well as the academic.

The Chair asked for clarification on using the school performance plan as a measure. Was that data that’s been uploaded in eNote? Or the SCL climate survey? Where should the state be pulling this additional data?

Renee Fairless stated that each year as part of her Title I requirements she has to turn in all sorts of different lists and all sorts of different steps of what she’s doing along the way. So that data would be valuable. Or maybe they should contact those Title I schools and ask them to provide copies of the information they want (i.e. parent engagement, school climate, etc.)

Rhonda Hutchins said time is of the essence. She could ask the assessment team at NDE to list schools based on the national Blue Ribbon school criteria and they can use that list as a jumping off point. She would be looking at those schools that have already been identified, and for this year that would give her a three-week window to narrow it down to those schools, knowing that next year we may open that process up based on more social/emotional, maybe the climate, the information, the other information we can provide.

Chair Dockery said for this year, using the Blue Ribbon criteria might be the way to go. Next year they can include some of the other pieces including site visits. Gabby Pingue agreed.

The Chair asked if there were any volunteers to be on the subcommittee and there were many. Volunteers were: Candy Ruf, Somer Rodgers, Greg Kramer, Karen Holley, Richard Mares, Teresa Stoddard, Mary Stach, Melissa Schroeder, and Annette Dawson Owens.

Chair Dockery asked Gabby and Rhonda if it would be possible to do site visits in the three-week timeframe? They both thought it would not be possible, given already scheduled program reviews and so forth. But they did think they could arrange phone conferences.

National ESEA Distinguished Schools (continued)

Rhonda Hutchins said she would send an email to the committee volunteers for suggestions or recommendations for questions they could ask in video interviews. She said it would be important to standardize the questions and perhaps develop a rubric.

Chair Dockery said she was concerned about trying to literally put something together at the last minute and have it be objective. She recommended that they stick with the Blue Ribbon criteria for this year because of the short timeline. She would hate to put a process forward that's not vetted well and isn't quality when they're talking about interviews and questions and they don't have time to do it well.

Karen Holley said she agreed with the Chair 100%. They should go with the Blue Ribbon process for this year and then let the committee meet and come up with a criteria for next year.

Gabby Pingue and Rhonda Hutchins both said that made sense to them.

Greg Kramer agreed that that plan made total sense total to him to make sure it's fair and appropriate. The new subcommittee could work on questions so they're all using the criteria for next year where it's standard throughout.

Rhonda Hutchins said the subcommittee could work on: what's the criteria and the process for Category 1 schools, Category 2 and Category 3, and then next year since they can only nominate two from Nevada, one category will not have a nomination. But they as a committee could determine which categories they were applying or notifying and nominating the schools for.

Gabby Pingue clarified that they're thinking the schools are going to be Category 1 next year.

Rhonda Hutchins said on the Blue Ribbon School data they've run, there are two schools that are clearly above the rest in all categories. She'll have the list for the closing the achievement gap to see if there are any Title I schools that meet all the National Blue Ribbon School criteria. Obviously one of those Title I schools will be a National Blue Ribbon School because one of the three National Blue Ribbon Schools is required to be a Title 1 school. At the end of the day there will be several schools nominated - two different Title I distinguished or ESEA distinguished and one for the National Blue Ribbon School. So, three Title 1 schools will be nominated but for two different programs.

Chair Dockery said she understands that they want to recognize special services to special populations and to closing the achievement gap, but at the end of the day the schools still need to have demonstrated exceptional student achievement. Student achievement should always be kept at the forefront

Karen Holley agreed and added she would like the state to put that on the agenda for the Title 1 Directors meeting to go over the criteria for next year with the Title 1 Directors in the spring.

Greg Kramer agreed that keeping student achievement the high priority for this year would make sense, given the timeframe. He's on board with that plan.

Melissa Schroeder also agreed with the student achievement plan for this year, but wanted to make mention that private schools are also eligible for Blue Ribbon. It's important for the subcommittee to keep that in mind as they're developing their processes for selection.

Future Meeting Date and Agenda Items

There was a discussion about possible dates for the next meeting and it was determined that it would be May 9th.

A motion was made by Chair Dockery that the next meeting of the Title I Committee of Practitioners will be held on Thursday, May 9th from 9:00 to 11:00. Melissa Schroeder seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The Chair requested that any and all Agenda items be submitted 60 days in advance so they can do all the work and be prepared for those Agenda items. She then asked if there were any suggestions for Agenda items for their next meeting.

Renee Fairless said she would like for there to be some discussion on the next Agenda about Title I and the Department of Agriculture being able to speak to each other and work with each other so that FRL reporting makes sense in the state of Nevada. The Chair asked if Ms. Fairless could lead that discussion. Ms. Fairless said she could and would also reach out to the Department of Agriculture to see if they could send a representative.

Chair Dockery stated she would like to invite Ms. Schroeder to speak at the next meeting to give them an update on the topic of equitable services for private schools. Ms. Schroeder said she would be happy to do that.

Gabby Pingue said the subcommittee on the distinguished schools would be able to have an update on their work for the next meeting.

Public Comments #2

None.

Adjournment

Chair Dockery made a motion to adjourn the meeting of the Title I Committee of Practitioners. Karen Holley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting of the Title I Committee of Practitioners was adjourned at 10:27 AM.