

Draft Meeting Minutes

Meeting Place: Agency of Education, Room 424

Address: 219 North Main Street, Barre, VT 05641

Date: December 11, 2018

Present:

Peter Amons, VASBO; Ric Reardon, Castleton University; Tammy Kolbe, UVM; Nicole Mace, VSBA; Amy Knight, St. Michael's College; Jeff Fannon, VT NEA; Jeff Francis, VSA; Dan French, AOE

Agency Staff: Brad James, Emily Byrne, Suzanne Sprague

Others: Mill Moore, VISA

Check in and review meeting objectives

Chair Kolbe called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. She reviewed the three objectives of the meeting which were to review updated staff-to-student count ratios, identify potential guidelines/recommendation for how the data can be used in SU/SD decision making as well as identify potential barriers to SU/SD's flexibility in adjusting staffing profiles and determine the next step for preparing the Task Force's final report. Chair Kolbe asked if there were any changes to the agenda. There were none.

Review/approve meeting minutes from November 6, 2018

Reardon made a motion to accept the meeting minutes from the November 30th meeting. Fannon seconded. The motion passed unanimously and the minutes were approved.

Review updated staff-to-student count ratios prepared by AOE

Chair Kolbe thanked James for his work on the prepared spreadsheet. She explained that at the previous meeting, the group asked James to perform additional calculations and recalculate two-year averages on student counts. Chair Kolbe invited James to review the data supplied and identify the updated calculations including summary statistics.

James distributed a summary page. He identified the two-year average columns and explained how the data was calculated. He further explained the spreadsheet with the new data calculations in the groupings the Task Force previously identified. Discussion followed regarding calculating the average of the average verses adding all the groupings and dividing by the number of enrolled students, the weighted averages. The Task Force agreed to use the average of the average in the final report. Chair Kolbe said that the report will need clear footnotes that explain the calculations. She added the average of the average is a better representation of staffing across governance units.

James further explained how he calculated each grouping. Discussion followed regarding the new "support staff" column and its definition, contractual agreements and data not captured by

the AOE. Secretary French said that there are two separate policy level issues. One is the number of staff is not declining at the same pace as students and the second is the counter rationale that the students are more needy and require more staff. James further clarified the groupings. Discussion followed regarding AOE data, further narrowing the sub-group, variability and provoking policy examination.

Chair Kolbe led discussion on how to present and explain the indicators separate from the data. James explained the summary statistics. Discussion followed on the descriptive profile, audience, using state average versus average of the average, using information to provide context to new superintendents, data used as appendix, tutorial on how to use data, variability, state-wide profile and including discussion guide. Chair Kolbe asked the group how to break out the data to describe state-wide trends. Discussion followed regarding a quartile mean, minimum and maximum per grouping, conversation generator, variability, establishing a descriptive profile of what staffing looks like in the state, outcomes tied to ratios, correlation and causation.

Determine next steps for preparing final report

Chair Kolbe transitioned the conversation to determining the steps for the final report. She started the discussion on the final report and what it should do. Further discussion followed on causality and inference, descriptor conversation, and goals of the final report. The Task Force agreed that the goals of the report are to establish a definition for Vermont, to prompt specific questions, explain why all charges were not met, present data information and descriptive profile. Secretary French agreed that he and the AOE will write the draft which he hopes to be completed the first week in January. Secretary French said that the AOE asked the General Assembly for an extension through January 29, 2019. Chair Kolbe said that the next meeting will be a virtual meeting to edit/approve the draft report and will be scheduled in mid-January.

Identifying guidelines/recommendations for using selected indicators in decision making

Chair Kolbe directed the conversation to how to address stakeholders on using the data. Discussion followed regarding a general caveat for internal supervisory union discussion only, useful data but not benchmarks, using education spending per pupil per district, consultations with decision-makers on data and that the final product is not a report on class size. James explained the spreadsheet page on Governance Structures. Chair Kolbe wondered to what extent the data should be included in the report. Discussion followed on whether the data answers the charge, generating discussions and questions. The Task Force agreed to include the data in the report.

Chair Kolbe said that the Task Force charge was ambitious. The Task Force work has made a contribution and will push the conversation forward. She said it has been a pleasure to work with the Task Force.

Kolbe adjourned the meeting at 3:29 p.m.

Minutes recorded and prepared by Suzanne Sprague.