

STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION WORK GROUP JUNE 3, 2014 MEETING NOTES

Present: Dr. Cori Mantle Bromley, Chair; Senator Roy Lacey, Don Soltman, Bill Brulotte

Others present: Marilyn Whitney, State Board of Education

Marilyn Whitney, Chief Communications and Legislative Officer, State Board of Education (OSBE) reminded the group about the agenda for next week's joint Structure and Governance Meeting. The morning session will be filled with reports from all three work groups, Autonomy & Accountability, High Expectations, and Innovation & Collaboration. Each group will report on their work done thus far, the topics considered, research reviewed, and the basic direction they believe their work is taking them. The purpose is to receive feedback from the other committee members. In the afternoon, each work group will meet separately to continue its work.

Ms. Whitney also reminded the group about the timetable for any new administrative rules or legislation that may be forthcoming from the group. At the June 2014 State Board meeting, legislative ideas need to be suggested, although detailed language is not needed until October.

Dr. Mantle-Bromley directed the group to the Governor's Task Force (Task Force) Recommendation #18 concerning training and development of district leaders and school boards, and invited Representative Wendy Horman to discuss HB 521 which she sponsored in the 2014 Legislative Session.

Representative Horman said that the purpose of HB 521 was to begin incorporation of Task Force Recommendations into legislation. Pulling language from the Task Force #7 and #18 where possible, HB 521 provides the opportunity to offer training to school boards and to provide funding for that training as an incentive. Her intent was to give school boards the opportunity to have conversation around student achievement. A study from Thomas B. Fordham Institute¹ showed that school boards who focus on student achievement impact student outcomes. By providing professional development funding for school boards, Representative Horman hoped to encourage those important conversations.

¹ [Study: Schools benefit when board members focus on academics](#)

Schools are more likely to excel if school boards are focused on academics, according to a recent study by the Thomas B. Fordham Institute. Among other things, the study focused on the effect of school board members' political leanings, education, background and stance on key education topics. "The boost associated with academic focus is the highest of any school board characteristic that we tested," the researchers said. [New Orleans Magazine](#) (6/2014)

Karen Echeverria, Executive Director, Idaho School Boards Association (ISBA) reviewed the ISBA's current efforts to facilitate training. Several school districts have strategic plans in place. The ISBA has developed a workshop that meets the \$2,000 funding requirement. The ISBA envisions a three-step process: First, to look at each district's plan and consider what elements and tools the district has been using in recent years, such as technology plans and the WISE tool², for example. Second, the ISBA would work with the district on site or in regional meetings to discuss how to develop a strategic plan. Finally, the ISBA would follow up to see if the boards are discussing movement toward their goals and whether or not they are receiving the data they need.

ISBA membership dues now include the opportunity to sign up for training so that the ISBA can anticipate the capacity they will need on July 1 when the legislation goes into effect. Under the legislation, school boards are required to post their plans by September 1, so the ISBA will focus on the first of the three-step process. Currently, the ISBA is identifying qualified trainers around the state.

Don Soltman asked Representative Horman and Ms. Echeverria if other work is needed on HB 521. Ms. Echeverria replied that some changes will be needed, such as operational pieces, and evaluations of superintendents, among others. Representative Horman explained that in crafting the legislation, she had met with Idaho Business for Education (IBE) which was very supportive. She also met with superintendents and school board members in her region during the drafting process. Many create plans already, and were feeling burdened by the new legislation. With funding as an incentive, her goal was to put in place some minimal requirements that would deal with the Task Force Recommendations. The bill did not include budgeting or accountability considerations, nor superintendent evaluations which also has met resistance. The goal is to publish strategic plans on the district's website for public review so that the boards and superintendents can be held accountable.

Representative Horman reiterated that the legislation is effective July 1, and the school boards must post their strategic plans by September 1. The time frame is very tight to accomplish training; however, after the initial period and as the planning process becomes an annual event, districts and the ISBA will be able to acquire capacity to accomplish the task. A high quality strategic plan requires considerable coordination. Representative Horman said that she is continuing to monitor boards and superintendents for input.

Dr. Mantle-Bromley suggested that one recommendation from this group might be follow up and tracking of this legislation's impact. Representative Horman enthusiastically agreed. She said that she needs assistance with this task.

² Ways to Improve School Effectiveness. The WISE Tool has many support features built into the tool that provides schools and districts with best practice research at their finger-tips, linked to the areas used for planning. Source: Boise State University Website.

Marilyn Whitney advised that the State Board will be considering administrative rules for setting trainer criteria and reimbursement. One consideration of the Board was whether they would be asked to review and approve these plans since they do not have the resources to do so. Don Soltman said that he wants the plans to be a meaningful exercise with a purpose.

When asked if the legislation requires superintendent evaluations, Representative Horman replied that her vision is that the superintendents would be evaluated on progress toward strategic plan targets, and she hopes that superintendents would engage in new ways. However, that specific conversation has not yet taken place. Instead, superintendents are listed along with those receiving qualified training, and she hopes that they will welcome that training. School boards resist mandatory training since they already volunteer their time and energy, which is why the funding incentive was included to encourage participation.

Dr. Mantle-Bromley questioned if the standards for superintendents and principals included strategic planning, and whether training is required. Don Soltman agreed that strategic planning and training should be required. Dr. Mantle-Bromley will investigate.

Representative Horman suggested that follow up with school boards needs to identify those items that might create barriers to quality strategic planning. For example, she had been provided with a list of 12 different planning tools that boards were required to submit to the State. In a large district, the process is labor intensive, but they have staff. Small districts face different challenges when the superintendent might also be the principal and the federal program director, and only has one staff member to complete the work. She hoped that the Accountability and Autonomy group was reviewing reporting requirements with an eye toward eliminating or consolidating in order to free up time for community/student based planning.

Marilyn Whitney advised that the Accountability and Autonomy group has been looking at the reporting requirements within that context. Many are part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) waiver. That group may recommend a different kind of accountability system that may require a new waiver.

Marilyn Whitney reported that the High Expectations Work Group had taken a field trip to Idaho Falls to tour a proficiency based school, Compass Magnet School. Those presentations included discussion of technology in the classroom. Compass Magnet School uses a variety of methods including Bring Your Own Device (BYOD). BYOD requires cloud based applications, but did not find any barriers for their use. The Snake River School District (Snake River) purchased Chrome books for middle school students and planned the same for their high school students. Snake River was hardest hit during the recession, but still found ways to implement technology throughout their schools. They do have wireless and stressed its importance. They are considering iPads for elementary schools. Compass Magnet School uses Apple products because they create an abundance of graphic design.

Don Soltman asked about the districts who cannot afford to upgrade their SchoolNet software now that the contract with Pearson Education will not be renewed.

Senator Roy Lacey said that the Senate Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee (JFAC) had heard so many complaints about SchoolNet that they did not fund it; however, the money is still available for districts to accomplish the upgrade. Bill Brulotte suggested that the group consider why SchoolNet worked so well in Colorado, but not in Idaho.

Dr. Mantle-Bromley said that one emerging recommendation from this group might be a single system that the state supports.

Marilyn Whitney said that for small districts, the big issue with ISEE³ and SchoolNet is that they do not have the expertise to manage the uploads. Dr. Mantle-Bromley said that having a technical expert and someone with pedagogical skills in all districts might be another of the group's recommendations.

Carson Howell, Director of Research, OSBE reported on the decision of the J.A. and Kathryn Albertson Foundation (Albertsons) to no longer support or fund the State Department of Education (SDE) for SchoolNet. Of the total Albertsons grant of \$21 million, \$1.2 million remains. Due to the on-going issues, Albertsons has decided not to release those funds to SDE because they did not feel that more funds would solve the issues. They will continue to work with the districts to ensure that districts would be whole, but the SDE will not receive those funds.

On July 1, the contract ends; Pearson has fulfilled its obligation. Idaho now owns SchoolNet in its present form. The state can still make modifications, but Albertsons will not fund them.

Mr. Howell said that the biggest implications will be in the SDE budget for staffing and infrastructure. The legislature did appropriate some money for SchoolNet, and they were hoping it would supplement Albertsons. The system is not working as it should be, and without Albertsons' funding stream, it will be difficult to accomplish what is needed. Districts will have the option for individual contracts. SchoolNet pulls data out ISEE which is designed to be in usable format for decision-making. That has been the problem: what is coming out is not what is going in. The data is not usable. Improving the SchoolNet portion is only half the issue. The other is in the accuracy of data going into ISEE.

Mr. Howell described the role of the Data Management Council (Council). Until now, it has been focused on "nuts and bolts", but with encouragement from Mike Rush, Andy Mehl and himself, the Council is looking toward a policy role. This role would include ISEE issues, assisting the SDE with matching data, and identifying gaps. The Council may ultimately recommend just one output software, but that recommendation would come with

³ Idaho System for Educational Excellence, Idaho's Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS)

substantial costs. Since districts are importing from a number of different systems, the council may recommend approaching the legislature for uniform software.

Mr. Howell said that the guiding principle is trying to make it easier for the districts to get information to the state level and receive back information that is useful and manageable.

Mr. Howell said his request for this group would be a recommendation that the Data Management Council review the entire process – how data comes in, who is collecting it and why it is needed. It is a new direction for the Council, and they have some hesitancy, but it is needed. The Council reports to the whole State Board, not through a subcommittee.⁴ Formalizing the Council’s reporting structure would be useful.

Dr. Mantle-Bromley summarized next steps:

- She will prepare a two-page memo of preliminary recommendations and send it to the group for review and comment.
- The group will invite users of SchoolNet and Mileposts for their input;
- Dr. Mantle-Bromley will also have information from Linda Hamilton regarding technology for the 21st century classroom.

⁴ Clarification after the meeting revealed that the Council reports to the State Board through the Planning, Policy and Government Affairs Committee.