

Task Force to Study the Advisability of Starting the School Year After Labor Day
Wednesday, February 26, 2014 (9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.)
DEDO Large Conference Room
Dover, Delaware
MINUTES

Attendance:

Glenn Byrum, Grotto Pizza Inc.
Mervin Daugherty, Red Clay School District
Karen Field Rogers, Department of Education
Susan Francis, Delaware School Boards Association
Representative Ron Gray
Senator Gerald Hocker
Adele Jones, DSEA
Phyllis Kohel, Milford School District
Allen F. Lathbury, Jr., Ed.D., Sussex Tech District Office
Dorothy Linn, Colonial School District
Linda Parkowski, Delaware Tourism Office
Ronald Pierce, Delaware School Boards Association
G. Scott Reihm, DASA
Eric Ruth, Delaware Tourism Office
Representative Stephen Smyk

The meeting of the Task Force was called to order by Chairperson Linda Parkowski at 9:40 a.m.

Approval of 12/12/13 and 2/6/14 Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes from the last two meeting was made and approved by Senator Hocker, seconded by Karen Field Rogers and approved by all.

Guest Speaker

- Linda Parkowski introduced the guest speaker via conference call, David Reel, to the board. David represents the Maryland Hotel & Lodging Association and attends the Maryland Task Force meetings.
- David Reel provided the group with 2 documents--the Economic Impact of a Post Labor Day Start Date for Maryland Public Schools prepared by the Maryland Comptroller and a press release regarding Worcester County's decision to start school after Labor Day.
- The Maryland Task Force's report is not due until June 30, 2014 and would not be considered by the legislature until next year.
- Work groups in Maryland are strongly divided-tourism industry for after Labor Day start and school superintendents against. School superintendents feel it should be a school decision not the state. Schools are concerned about potential impact on state test scores.
- There was group discussion on Delaware educators concerns about having enough time with students for testing and the potential for a condensed or adjusted school calendar. David Reel mentioned that those in favor of late school start do not want to bring harm to the students. Maryland would keep the same number of attendance days and end later in June. Delaware discussion centered more on not adding additional days in June.
- Maryland's comptroller report was produced independent of the Task Force.

- In reference to Worcester County's decision to start school after Labor Day, David Reel stated that they were not lobbied and made the decision of their own.
- David also mentioned that historically in Virginia there has been no impact on the test scores since late school start was implemented. Also, changing the date will bring more money into the state which has the potential for more school funding.
- Maryland is also working on a survey to see how parents of school children feel about after Labor Day start.
- The Delaware Task Force is charged with studying the following areas:
 - The education system, including the academic calendar, planning, administration and facilities use
 - The economy
 - Summer tourism

Delaware Task Force Discussion

- Senator Hocker reported extension has been filed and report will be due the 1st Tuesday in January 2015.
- Mervin Daugherty to work on inviting a PTA official to a meeting.
- Educators stated adding days to end of calendar is tough to keep attention and attendance of students.
- Delaware Comptroller is unable to provide a study of the economic impact.

Path Forward Discussion

- Ideas to obtain additional information such as a News Journal poll or a state PTA poll.
- How productive are days prior to Labor Day for students? Need baseline testing to check productivity.
- Review Delaware school calendars.

Public Comment

Eleanor La Prada, Delaware State News was in attendance.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m.