

School Consolidation Task Force
Teachers and Staff Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
December 6, 2017
5:00pm–7:00pm
The Sentrum at Dover High School

Members present:

Dusty Blakey, Chair
Jeff Taschner, Deputy Chair
Mary Cooke, Director of Human Resources, Capital School District
Christine Smith, Director of Human Resources, Red Clay School District
David Davis, DSEA Administrator
Mike Hoffmann, DSEA
Tammy Croce, Executive Director, Delaware Association of School Administrators
Emily Falcon, Chief Financial Officer, Colonial School District
Nermin Zubaca (in place of Angeline Rivello), Delaware Department of Education

Members absent:

Gerald Allen, Director of Human Resources, New Castle County Vo-Tech
Matthew Meyer, New Castle County Executive

Members of the public present:

Robert Overmiller, Governor’s Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC).

I. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM.

Dr. Blakey, the sub-committee chair, welcomed the members as well as the public attendees and asked them to introduce themselves. Nermin Zubaca, attended on behalf of member Angeline Rivello, started the introductions by informing the sub-committee that he is a data scientist at the Delaware Department of Education for the Educator Support Team. He shared a handout with the sub-committee that contained data points from the Districts and their collective bargaining agreements.

Jeff Taschner, Deputy Chair, asked that the acronym CVA in the September 11th meeting minutes be modified to the appropriate acronym of collective bargaining agreement, CBA.

A motion was made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Taschner to approve the minutes. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

The chair commented that there was a pause between the September sub-committee meeting and this meeting because more direction was needed before moving forward.

II. Discussion of Goals

The chair said the goals have changes somewhat since the last meeting, but in general looking at the various groups that would be impacted by consolidation in terms of staff and teachers as we define the various groups that are involved in the operation of a school. The chair said the path forward is coming up with a plan that gives some feedback. The sub-committee agreed that they will have to work on aligning some definitions across the state and school districts, especially to those pertaining to employee types, such as who is defined as an administrator, teacher, specialist, etc.

The deputy chair shared from the November full task force committee meeting that the state will most likely hire an independent organization that will conduct an analysis as to whether Delaware has too many administrators.

III. Review and Discussion of Consolidation Options Determined by Full Task Force

The deputy chair shared that the structure sub-committee voted down the idea of consolidating vo-tech school districts. The full committee did vote to refer back to the sub-committees for consideration in their subject matter area for the following four options of consolidating:

1. Status quo
2. Consolidation on the county level
3. Consolidation of programs and services at the county level
4. Consolidation of revenue distribution at the county level

The sub-committee considered using unique student groups, e.g. visually impaired, to analyze if they are receiving proper services and if those should be consolidated under state. It was noted that doing so would require a lot of regulatory changes. The chair stated that teacher shortages do not help when it comes to consolidating teachers. The sub-committee agreed that their recommendations should align to other sub-committees (e.g. transportation and finance). The chair stated concern over alignment of proposals and the quality of recommendations. There was discussion regarding districts touching two counties and that they would most likely stay split as they are now. The chair and the deputy chair agreed that the county model is probably the best option that the sub-committee should discuss.

Robert Overmiller, public attendee, brought up a conversation that took place with Secretary Bunting at the Academic and Children's Needs Sub-Committee meeting on December 4, 2017 regarding first three year teachers. Mr. Overmiller also noted that in that meeting, Secretary Bunting said that recruitment and retention may be given to this sub-committee to review and discuss.

The sub-committee spoke of various strategies that the state and districts could do in order to increase retention of early career teachers, such as offering retention bonuses, compensation, help with repaying the education debt, easing the teaching schedule for first several years, etc. The sub-committee wanted to see how many units would be allocated to each county and how many employees would be working in each county, as well as seeing histograms that Mike Jackson used to provide for some employee types. Ms. Croce expressed concern over where the majority of the experienced teachers may be

teaching. The sub-committee talked about how PHRST job codes do not exactly match to district positions, nor do they align to the unit count allocation. The chair stated for the record that the subcommittee does not recommend changes to the unit count system.

IV. Review and Discussion of Common Definitions for All Staff and Teacher Groups for Inclusion

The sub-committee agreed to task the District Human Resources directors to provide district level employee count data, as well as data on which positions go in each category so that districts and the state could align in future reporting of these categories. The sub-committee also agreed the data should be distributed by January 8th so that people have time to review and be prepared to discuss at the next sub-committee meeting. The chair said we have a path forward in terms of common definitions as well as to make some recommendations in terms of status quo. The chair recapped that the collection of data, find out who is where in each of the 19 Districts, and compare that against PHRST will be a topic of discussion at the next meeting.

V. Review and Discussion of Various Available Data Collected

Mr. Zubaca walked the sub-committee through the HR directors' one-pager survey that summarized statewide employee types, their counts, which of those employee types were on collective bargaining agreements, and the length of the administrators' contracts. The deputy chair asked DDOE to provide district-level survey report one-pagers as well. Furthermore, DDOE was asked to provide histogram of different employee types. The deputy chair introduced a collection of teacher contracts from across the state, divided by the counties and each district, showcasing employment regulation, restrictions, and salary information.

VI. Selection of Future Meeting Dates

The next meeting will be held on January 10, 2018 from 5:00pm-7:00pm. The location is to be determined, but Ms. Cooke has been tasked to find a location in Kent County for this meeting.

VII. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

VIII. Adjournment

Mike Hoffmann made a motion to adjourn the meeting and it was seconded by Dusty Blakey. Motion carried. The chair adjourned the meeting at 6:40pm.