

Minority Teacher Recruitment Task Force

MEETING MINUTES

Monday, November 16, 2015

4:00 PM in Room 1E of the LOB

The meeting was called to order at 4:10 PM by Chairman, Sen. Gary Winfield.

The following committee members were present:

Members: Arias A, Comer A, Barzee S, Gates J, Rodriguez O, Hernandez S,
Wilson T, Gloster T,
Legislatures: McCrory D. 007, Winfield G. 0010

Absent were: Porter R. 094

OPENING STATEMENTS

Chairman, Sen. Gary Winfield welcomed everyone to the meeting and opened up the floor for member introduction.

The Task Force members introduced themselves starting with members at the far right (WCSU Vice President for Academic Affairs Jane Gates) ending at the left (Director of Public Policy and Research Steven Hernandez).

Sen. Winfield shared the charge of the taskforce and explained the evolution of the taskforce – SB 1098 sec. 5. Task Force is charged with studying and developing strategies to increase and improve the recruitment, preparation and retention of minority teachers, as defined in section 10-155l of the general statutes, in public schools in the state.

Afterward, Sen. Winfield reviewed the timeline of the final report, Feb. 1, 2016, and potential schedule meeting arrangements with the task force members.

TASK FORCE GOALS

Sen. Winfield then spoke on his expectations with regards to the task force's charge and asked members to share their input and goals on what they would like to see happen during the task force's duration.

Members shared inputs and goals:

Steve Hernandez emphasized on continuing to work with leadership to ensure equality and to maintain a high level standard for teachers of Connecticut, so young students of color may continue to make gains in reading and numeracy as they have over the past several years.

Jane Gates expressed a desire for actionable steps leading to redesigning the paradigm to reverse undesirable trending data within the state.

With that, Ms. Gates would like the task force to further evaluate the provided data and establish plans to correct actions that appear outdated; bringing an example with her: recent cut in the minority teacher incentive scholarship program – 20 students were recruited for teacher preparation and were recently informed that only 6 students would receive scholarships.

Tamara Gloster would like to see strategic ways to organize communication and task force support.

Andrea Comer would like to clear the efforts coming out of the task force, whatever they maybe, to the grassroots and communities as to see the benefits of teaching.

Arlene Arias would like the task force's recommendations to include strategies which have either not been attempted before or have been implemented in other states.

Sarah Barzee mentioned the initiatives SDE has been taking to increase minority teachers' presence in classrooms, including working closely with districts – placing an emphasis on them to draw out plans and carry them out – while funding qualified district MTR plans. Ms. Barzee agreed that the task force must look at what other states are doing, but must make sure that the task force contextualizes it: what may work for other states, might not work for the state.

Orlando Rodriguez would like to proceed on creating a paraprofessional educator program that would provide training and internships for high school student when they graduate; Under Mr. Rodriguez's proposal, students would graduate with their paraprofessional education certification. Mr. Rodriguez stated that this program is partially in place, and would merely expand on existing programs.

Rep. McCorry would like to see more teachers of color in the classroom and has some ideas, which were not discussed at that time.

CALL FOR ACTION

Sen. Winfield reinstated that this evening's meeting is an organizational meeting, therefor the task force will not be diving in that matter in this meeting, but suggested that in the next two meetings the task force holds presentations and meets afterwards to discuss what was presented. He welcomed the public to sign up and present, if they have ideas on the subject matter. Then, he asked the members for input on his suggestions.

Jane Gates agreed with the Senator, adding that if doesn't work out as intended that the Task Force can always revise.

The task force agreed to carry out Sen. Winfield's proposal.

CLOSING REMARKS

Sen. Winfield added that the "homework" for the members and the individuals in the room is to prepare those presentations and noted time constraints on future meetings due to the holiday season.

Sen. Winfield announced the next meeting on Nov. 30th. The clerk was placed in charge of sign ups and disseminating presentation information to interested parties and task force members.

A motion was duly made and seconded to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:26 PM.

Leslie Navarrete
Committee Clerk