

Minority Teacher Recruitment Task Force

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, November 10, 2016

10:30 AM in Room 1E of the LOB

The meeting was called to order at 10:40 AM by Chairman, Sen. Gary Winfield.

The following committee members were present:

Members: Arias A., Barzee S., Hernandez S., Gloster T.
Legislators: McCrory D. 007, Winfield G. 0010, Porter R. 094

Absent were: Wilson T., Gates J., & Comer A.

Chairman, Sen. Gary Winfield made opening remarks.

Sen. Winfield opened the floor for comments from members on the draft of the final report.

Sen. Winfield quickly summarized the content of the draft of the final report for task force members and reopened the floor for comments from the task force.

Dr. Barzee offered to give an overview of where the Department of Education (SDE) stood in terms of implementation of Public Act No. 16-41, AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MINORITY TEACHER RECRUITMENT TASK FORCE.

Sen. Winfield approved.

Dr. Barzee proceeded: for the Praxis Core the department sent out a 1-page informational sheet on the changes to all the deans and directors of all the state's educator preparation programs. In addition, noted the department is due to release a guidance document for the changes in January 2017 to take to the State Board of Education for review and approval, as required in Public Act No. 16-41; have convened a work group with higher education institutions, traditional and non-traditional, to receive input and receive help with the drafting of the guidance document. Working toward the report based results accountability due on January 1st, working with Connecticut Center of Advanced Technology (CCAT) on the survey development and can bring the final survey to task force before presenting it to the Education Meeting. The Recognition

Agreement is done – where the state of Connecticut will recognize teacher candidates from Puerto Rico and other US territories; since Puerto Rico refused to participate in the NASDEC inner-state agreement, and moving toward implementing the Out-of-State Provisional instead of Out-of-State Initial – candidates coming in with 2 successful years in the last 10 and 2 satisfactory evaluations, bypassing state's initial educator certificate and going straight into the state's provisional, and bypassing induction program team.

Sen. Winfield opened up the floor for comments.

Rep. Doug McCorry asked for clarification regarding the Out-of-State Provisional Program.

Dr. Barzee explained the original process and emphasized how the new Out-of-State Provisional Process allows teacher candidates who have 2 successful years in the last 10 and 2 satisfactory evaluations to bypass the Induction Program Team and go from initial to provisional.

Rep. Doug McCorry asked if the teacher candidate still needs to take Connecticut Assessment, Praxis II.

Dr. Barzee said yes, but that not all teaching areas have a Praxis II, the majority do and teacher candidates will also need to pass their area of expertise assessments, if applicable. She also noted that the new Praxis Core change – making the assessment an educator prep tool upon enrollment instead of a certification requirement – wouldn't prohibit out of state teacher candidates, who did not pass it, from entry. In addition, waiver is available to candidates who score high on Praxis Core.

Ms. Tamara Gloster asked with making Praxis Core not a requirement are institutions still holding candidates accountable for taking the assessment.

Dr. Barzee responded that act doesn't exempt candidates from taking the assessment; the statute states upon entry candidate shall take the assessment so the fundamental highlight is that it will no longer be a barrier to entry. She stated that she will send the 1-page informational document, circulated in July, to the Clerk to circulate to the task force members.

Dr. Arlene Arias asked where the 1-page informational document is located on the department's website.

Dr. Barzee stated that possibly on the certification or guide to assessment in Connecticut section of the webpage, but affirmed it was posted online. In addition, repeated that she will send to the Clerk to distribute to task force members. In addition, mentioned that the department took initiative in adjusting the state's cut score in 11 areas to reflect the multi-state cut scores for the Praxis II – was above cut scores in those areas.

Steven Hernandez asked for clarification on Dr. Barzee's comment of lowering the state's cut score requirement on the Praxis II.

Dr. Barzee explained the standard setting process for the state's cut score, which is conducted by ETS, state practitioners, Assessment Coordinator Dr. Amanda Turner, other catenary practitioners, and Praxis – they look at past scores and in the past, they looked at supply and demand aspect of the assessment – functioned if everyone was passing the assessment, if we had an over subscription that could be taken into consideration with raising the cut score. She believed that perhaps during the time the group decided to raise the cut scores as many candidates were passing the assessment at such a high rate that they had to raise the cut scores for Connecticut. However, due to conversations that transpired within the task force along with the department, the department took an internal decision to adjust the cut scores to reflect the multi-state cut scores with the reasoning being if the cut scores are appropriate for multiple states then the state should give the same opportunity, She further commented that it seemed right at the time to have high cut scores and now with shortage areas and conversations within this committee it made sense to relook at that policy decision.

Steven Hernandez asked if this type of decision making to right size cut scores was in the capacity of the department.

Dr. Barzee replied yes it is.

Rep. Porter asked for the areas of where the cut scores were adjusted and the total number of content areas.

Dr. Barzee agreed to get the task force that information.

Ms. Tamara Gloster asked how all these changes impact the task force and how the task force can continue to stay informed in such changes.

Sen. Winfield agreed with her question and provided an example of gap in communication with the state's process and implementation of RELAY.

Dr. Barzee gave explanation of the state department's reasoning, process and implementation of RELAY.

Sen. Winfield commented that he felt that the process moved faster than it should have and the state needs to be sensitive with such issues.

Rep. McCorry expressed his discontent in the gap in communication with the state's process and implementation of RELAY.

Dr. Arias agreed with the task force members' comments regarding RELAY and expressed concerns with impact on higher education institutions' recruitment efforts.

Ms. Gloster asked what will be RELAY's fiscal and minority teacher recruitment impact with the state in a fiscal deficit and expressed concerns with possible effects on retention.

Dr. Barzee stated that she will relay the comments and concerns back to the department. She also responded that RELAY was portrayed to the state department as a grow your own program and the candidates in the program have demonstrated both ties to the community they are teaching at, cultural competency, which is one of the value proposition of the program, and that they believe this is a quality program. In

addition, the department is working with higher education institutions and are holding them accountable to their minority teacher recruitment, and this additional program is not an either/or program – goal is to robust efforts on increasing minority teacher recruitment. She gave a brief note that RELAY started as a professional development program and cannot commence as a prep program until the board approves it.

Rep. McCorry asked for clarification on whom RELAY operated as a professional development program for.

Dr. Barzee responded the teachers who took part in the program; however, they will not be given credit as prep program once the program is approved by the board. She used Waterbury as an example, as they are participating in RELAY as a professional development program at this point.

Rep. McCorry clarified that he is not against diversifying classroom, but the department's means of transparency. He also added that he thought that currently RELAY was providing professional development to certificated teachers, but it seems to be providing professional development to non-certified teachers. He also asked how other alternative programs such as RELAY can be approved and established to help in the state's recruitment efforts.

Dr. Barzee responded that the state board plan contains three pillars on being great teachers and leaders and in that pillar the goal areas being – increasing diversity in workforce, addressing work shortage areas, and recertification. The state is actively seeking ways to meet goal areas; gave example of an educator proposing ARC program for Special Education and has asked for the educator to present proposal. Also explained how the department's moratorium did not affect the development of programs that addressed the department's goals and shortage areas, hence minority teacher recruitment efforts, such as the conversation of the RELAY Program. In addition, confirmed she is hearing the concerns of program development process in the department and offered to give an overview of the process, but confirmed that the proliferation of alternate routes for minority teacher recruitment and shortage areas was a priority of the department.

Rep. Porter asked Dr. Barzee to speak on the qualifications of the administrators and educators in the RELAY Program.

Dr. Barzee agreed to forward that information to the members via the Clerk and gave explanation of accreditation of the RELAY Program.

Sen. Winfield gave instruction on how to circulate information or requests to the task force and meeting notifications.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 11:27 AM