



K-12 Education Coordination Full Council Meeting Minutes

Location: CTE Conference Room
15th Floor, State Capitol Building
600 E Broadway Ave, Bismarck
& via Microsoft Teams
Tuesday, November 19, 2024

K-12 Council Members Present:

Chairman Luke Schaefer, Brandt Dick, Maria Neset, Jeremy Mehlhoff, Senator Ryan Braunberger, Melissa Vollmer, Sarah Ricks

K-12 Council Members Present Virtually:

Representative Cynthia Schreiber-Beck, Jared Bollom, Sonia Meehl, Sara Medalen, Beth Slette, Nick Archuleta, Justin Fryer, Angel Lindseth, Governor Doug Burgum (left at 1:29 pm)

K-12 Council Members Absent:

Marc Bluestone Sr., Senator Donald Schaible, Representative Pat Heinert, Superintendent Kirsten Baesler, Jennifer Weber, Lucas Greff

Others Present: Mark Vollmer (K12 Council Executive Director), Shauna Marchus (NDDPI Admin), Donna Fishbeck (Designee for Supt. Baesler), Greg Carlson (Designee for Jennifer Weber), Matt Menge (Asst. Attorney General), Wayne Sick (NDCTE)

Others Present Virtually:

Aimee Copas (NDCEL), Ellie Shockley (NDUS), Dawn Ulmer (NDCTE)

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Luke Schaefer at 1:02 p.m.

1. Introduction of New Council Members

Chair Schaefer introduced a new Council member, Angel Lindseth, a representative from the ND School Counselor Association, who will be taking over for Jared Bollom on the Council.

2. Recognition of Member Designees

Chair Schaefer announced that Donna Fishbeck will be the designee for Superintendent Baesler, and Greg Carlson will be the designee for Jennifer Weber during this meeting.

3. Governor Doug Burgum's Address to the Council

Governor Burgum expressed gratitude for the K12 Education Coordination Council's efforts and contributions to ND education. He highlighted various programs in ND, and advocated for the broader adoption of successful innovative programs across the state. He reflected on his time as governor and noted the state's economic growth, increased funding for education, and improvements in state reserves that benefited education. He also discussed his upcoming role as Secretary of the U.S. Department of Interior and

how the role will include working with the Bureau of Indian Education to address challenges in Indian education. Lastly, He expressed gratitude for the Council's work and partnership. He concluded by encouraging Council members to reach out with ideas or suggestions, especially regarding Indian education.

4. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes: September 10, 2024

Jeremy Mehlhoff moved to approve the minutes as amended from the September 10, 2024, Full Council meeting. Brandt Dick seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Update from Attorney General's Office: Matt Menge

a. Executive Director duties during legislative session

Mark Vollmer explained that the previous Executive Director, Kayla Effertz Kleven, could not serve as the spokesperson for the K12 Council due to her role as a lobbyist. He brought to the Council for discussion and approval an amendment to the K12 Council operational guidelines, which would allow the Executive Director to attend and speak at legislative hearings, clarifying that the intent would be to share information about the Council's decisions, not to lobby.

Matt Menge confirmed that since Mark Vollmer is not a lobbyist, Mark can testify before the legislature on the Council's activities. Matt recommended the Council vote to affirm to allow Mark Vollmer and Chair Schaefer to coordinate attendance at hearings as needed.

b. K12 Coordination Council – Allocation of Funds:

Matt Menge explained that the Council currently lacks the statutory authority to enter into contracts or authorize expenditures. He recommended adding statutory language to enable the K12 Council the authority to contract with external entities and allocate funds for Council projects. Mark Vollmer noted that the Council aims to conduct action research and studies in efforts to bring data to the decision-making process quickly and efficiently, which could necessitate external support. It was discussed that in addition to the authority to allocate funds, the Council also needs the financial resources to support its strategic priorities.

Matt Menge offered to draft the appropriate language for these changes and then it can be presented to the legislative council.

Maria Neset moved to amend the K12 Education Coordination Council's by-laws for the Executive Director to coordinate with the Chairperson to provide testimony and other related speaking opportunities. Senator Ryan Braunberger seconded the motion. No further discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

Nick Archuletta moved to approve draft language that would allow the authority of the K12 Education Coordination Council to contract with individuals in order to conduct research, studies, or facilitation for its scope of work. Jeremy Mehlhoff seconded the motion.

Discussion: Matt Menge suggested reviewing the entire K-12 Council statute, as it may require additional modifications to align with current needs and policy objectives. The group discussed the timing of changes to the Council's by-laws, and Matt Menge recommended waiting until after the legislative changes are made, as the final bill may require additional modifications.

The motion passed unanimously.

c. K12 Council Funding

The Council discussed the need for additional funding to support its work, particularly for studies and data collection. A proposed allocation of \$250,000 for the biennium was considered. It was noted that this funding would be in addition to the current operational budget and would require full Council approval for any expenditures.

The group discussed the pros and cons of developing a research agenda, creating a framework for when studies should be done internally versus externally, and the importance of clarifying funding expectations.

6. Subcommittee Reports / Recommendations:

a. Executive Committee

Chair Schaefer provided a summary of the Executive Committee's work over the past few months, noting they had many discussions regarding the Council's authorization and funding, as well as the Executive Director's role, which has already been discussed.

He further explained that the Executive Committee had explored the possibility of an appropriation to establish an organization that would act as an intermediary to support and facilitate ongoing innovation. He clarified that no formal recommendation for a vote was being proposed at this time, but he wanted to foster awareness and discussion. The group raised questions about what qualifies as innovation in the state. They discussed whether the initiative should focus on expanding existing innovation programs or introducing new ones, ultimately agreeing that both existing and new programs should receive support and funding. The group also discussed how this new organization could help drive broader innovation, outside of the traditional state agency framework that DPI is confined to, with more flexibility and potential private funding. Questions were raised about the challenges to innovation, such as buy-in, leadership, limited time and resources for implementation, and the importance of evaluating the success of funded initiatives to ensure effective stewardship.

b. Aspirational Goals

Justin Fryer provided an update on the aspirational goals report, highlighting progress and challenges in the various goals. He noted that there have been ongoing discussions about district-level dashboards and the challenges of ensuring data privacy for smaller districts. He added that the Science of Reading is being explored for better statewide implementation, with successful schools showing better ELA performance. He mentioned that there are concerns about the increase in absences, and strategies to address this issue are being developed.

The group further discussed the data outlined, the process for adjusting these goals, upcoming legislation to fund a study on absenteeism, and how to gather data to better understand the causes and remedies of challenges to the goals.

c. Statewide Projects, Duplication and Replication

Brandt Dick reported that there were no recommendations or votes to be made from this subcommittee at this time. It was acknowledged that many of the studies they looked into became too large and complex to complete within the given timeframe. Brandt Dick noted there was once joint meeting with Support and Innovation to discuss the cross over subject matter.

d. Support and Innovation

Sarah Ricks reported on the subcommittee's work to draft a legislative proposal that seeks funding to support school district teams in creating and implementing mastery frameworks. Sarah Ricks explained that the funds would help schools "buy time" for teachers to implement existing innovation frameworks. It was noted that the state has created several guiding frameworks, such as *The Profile of a Graduate*, *Learning Continuum*, *Career Ready Practices*, and *Choice Ready*, all aimed at aligning education with workforce demands; however, the implementation of these frameworks has been hindered by a lack of time for school personnel to do the work, and lack of substitute coverage within schools. As a result, there's no capacity for additional work outside regular duties. To address these challenges, the proposal suggests creating a pool of \$500,000 to support 20 school district teams in developing and implementing mastery-based learning systems. Each district can request up to \$25,000 per team to cover additional days worked outside the regular contract, to work on existing initiatives.

Lastly, Sarah Ricks discussed the joint meeting with Statewide Projects, Duplication, Replication subcommittee, and the research regarding Cybersecurity duplication and non-licensed staff shortages. She noted a lack of sufficient data which has made it difficult to assess and improve these areas, but there are plans to gather more data and explore best practices in the future.

7. Review and Approve Recommendations to Move Forward

- a. Chair Schaefer requested that the members review and vote on the proposal put forward by the Support and Innovation Subcommittee regarding the grant framework as outlined by Sarah Ricks. Nick Archuleta moved to approve the recommendation as amended to provide innovation grants in the amount of \$500,000. Jeremy Mehlhoff seconded. No further discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

Senator Ryan Braunberger offered to coordinate the work among the legislators and report back to the Executive Committee. Cynthia Schreiber-Beck agreed.

- b. Chair Schaefer encouraged members to share any perspectives or input about the proposal by Dr. Cory Steiner which will be requesting \$15 million to work with Two Revolutions for school districts to participate in a personalized learning program. It was clarified that by not recommending the proposal, the committee is neither endorsing nor opposing it. While members showed interest in the idea, they expressed caution, noting that the Council had not yet had time to thoroughly review and vet the proposal.

Questions Presented:

- Should there be a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), outlining specific commitments before receiving funds?
- Should districts be required to match funds to show their commitment to the innovation program?
- What specific metrics will define the success of personalized learning? How will these metrics be measured?
- What role should third-party agencies play in implementing the program?
- Should they be pre-vetted by the K12 Council or a state agency before receiving state funding?

Chair Schaefer suggested that rather than a recommendation from the Council, they would present these questions and comments about the proposal to legislators, and potentially use the approved infographic created by the Council.

- c. The members revisited the proposal for K12 Council funding. They discussed appropriating \$250,000 for the K12 Coordination Council to hire outside resources for research studies. There was clarification that no individual or subcommittee has the authority to allocate money; it would be a full Council decision.

Senator Braunberger moved to request appropriations of \$250,000 to be used to hire outside resources for research studies that are fully approved by the Council. Sarah Ricks seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

8. K12 Coordination Council for 2025

Council Membership:

The discussion revolved around reevaluating the composition of members and consideration of whether the current representation is sufficient or if expanding the Council would improve or reduce its productivity.

Suggestions for new representatives to join the Council included:

- **A Student:** Maria Neset highlighted that students are the main beneficiaries of the Council's work and proposed involving a student from the Superintendent's Student Cabinet. She suggested either inviting a student to join the Council as a member or meeting with the Student Cabinet regularly to ensure student perspectives are considered. Discussion was held among members, and some noted that current Council members already bring student voices, and if only one student was a member, that limits input to that student's perspectives. Others advocated for a more structured way to gather student input, such as through subcommittees meeting with students regularly and report back to the full

Council. Chair Schaefer noted that this can be an internal process, instead of seeking a legislative change to the membership of the Council.

- **Department of Corrections / Juveniles:**

It was mentioned that Superintendent Basler has previously reached out to the Department of Corrections about their potential role in the Council. Maria Neset highlighted the Children's Cabinet, which includes key stakeholders from education, and health, and oversees the Commission on Juvenile Justice. She noted that Chair Schaefer is part of the Juvenile Justice Advisory Group and can bring that voice to the Council which reduces the need for additional representation on the Council.

- **Teacher Colleges:**

Sonia Meehl proposed including a representative from teacher education colleges, such as the president of the North Dakota Association of Colleges & Teacher Education (NDACTE), to ensure teacher preparation aligns with modern educational needs and innovation.

A suggestion was made to bring in subject matter experts on specific topics through subcommittees rather than adding permanent members to the Council allowing flexibility to include expertise as needed without increasing the size of the Council membership. It was noted that any formal changes to the Council's membership structure would require waiting until the next legislative session.

No motions were made to add new voices for representation. The group agreed to use the current structure for the next year, inviting subject matter experts to subcommittees as needed, then reevaluate next legislative session.

Subcommittee Structure:

Chair Schaefer discussed plans for subcommittee changes and assignments for 2025. He mentioned the Executive Committee will focus on setting priorities after the legislative session to determine the subcommittee structure for the next 18 months and present it at the next full Council meeting. He encouraged members to consider and submit their preferences for subcommittees, but final assignments will depend on balance and legislative changes, with the aim to ensure effective representation across all subcommittees.

Chair Schaefer also asked the members to submit any feedback about changes and recommendations about the subcommittee structure, to help Mark Vollmer and him plan for any changes as they plan new assignments. Shauna Marchus will send out a survey for Council member feedback opportunities.

9. Upcoming Meeting Schedules

It was noted the Full Council will not meet again until after the legislative session. Shauna Marchus will send out scheduling polls to find dates for 2025 Full Council meetings.

The Support and Innovation subcommittee is scheduled to meet in May and June 2025.

The Executive Committee will continue to meet monthly. Mark Vollmer asked members to read the Executive Committee minutes for updates concerning legislative issues that may occur during session.

10. Other Business

The group discussed developing a research action plan to support legislative requests. Ellie Shockley suggested that the research agenda should align with strategic vision goals and explicitly connect how research topics support these goals, such as staff continuity and its impact on children's outcomes. Concerns were raised about setting an agenda before having authority and funding, which will be decided in the upcoming legislative session.

There was a consensus to form an Ad Hoc committee consisting of the current subcommittee chairpersons to discuss ideas and refine plans regarding this idea further, then Mark Vollmer would share an update of a plan with all members.

Next Full Council Meeting: June 2025

The meeting was adjourned at 4:03 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

ATTEST:

Chairman Luke Schaefer

Date

Minutes taken and prepared by Shauna Marchus