

K-12 Education Coordination Council Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 30, 2022 – BSC Student Union Alumni Room, Bismarck, ND

10 a.m. - Tour and Student Showcase at the Career Academy

11 a.m. - Community Partnership Panel

1 p.m. – Staff/Administrator Panel

2 p.m. – K12 Coordination Council Formal Meeting

K12 Council Members Present: Chairman Schaefer, Senator Davison, Nick Archuleta, Dr. Aimee Copas, Wayne Sick, Dr. Jeff Fastnacht, Brandt Dick, Kevin Hoherz, Rep. Pat Heinert, Dr. Jen Weber, Dr. Rupak Gandhi, Maria Neset (designee for Governor Burgum), Melissa Volmer, Michelle Strand, and Superintendent Kirsten Baesler

K12 Council Members Virtually Present: April Foth, Donna Fishbeck, and Rebecca Pollert

Others Present: Kayla Effertz Kleven, Robert LaFavor, Dawn Ulmer, Laura Doll, and Director of DHS Chris Jones

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Luke Schaefer at 2:21 p.m.

Consent Agenda

Chairman Schaefer indicated Jamie Mertz is not present for the budget report, however, a copy has been provided to everyone. Aimee Copas moved to approve the consent agenda's three items, the January 11 meeting minutes, the contractor invoices, and the budget report. Nick Archuleta seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Innovation Waiver Best Practices Share Out Commitment

Chairman Schaefer invited any input or discussion of the next steps going forward in reference to how the successes and challenges can be shared out.

Superintendent Baesler stated Bismarck Public Schools is doing a great job saying to their learners they will get them through the credit portion, making sure they are hitting all the standards to graduate with a diploma. Superintendent Baesler stated the responsibility lies with local school districts to create the continuums, questioning whether there are supports in place to help the school boards with their school leaders to create those local learning continuums. Superintendent Baesler asked what can the K12 Council do to commit to helping the school districts leverage Senate Bill 2186 and Senate Bill 2196 on their own.

Nick asked, what can the council do to incentivize districts to start doing more?

Jeff added that there are different struggles from one district to another. Jeff stated that the districts need to identify their essentials to know what their essentials are, and then re-apply them in a different class and articulate what the outcomes need to be for a student to meet the standards. This takes work and time.

Aimee added that nearly 50 districts have gone through the innovation academy, and they learn the steps to take before they can start to do the work, they have to figure out what their gaps are, and they have to sell this to their board. The innovation academy teaches that if you skip the initial step, you will be unsuccessful at the steps after that.

Rep. Heinert added that you have to get back into the schools and find out where the innovative person is, and get the school board, the superintendent, and the principal on board to get them into those classes so they can determine how to get started.

Kevin Hoherz added that there will be staff members that have been taught a certain way and don't want to make a change.

Nick added that district-wide teachers are not being encouraged to meet with other innovative teachers. There needs to be a way to facilitate these teachers coming together. Once there is an innovative teacher in the classroom, everybody wants to be that innovative teacher because the students want to be going to those classes.

Superintendent Baesler asked how many school districts have adopted standard-based grading? In addition, what can the council do to provide the supports and coverage or whatever is necessary to help school districts?

Chairman Schaefer mentioned what are ways that one-time funding could be used, and how we can incentivize it. Is there a way to incentivize the work by providing summer opportunities for districts to engage in the difficult conversations that are systemic changes?

Michelle Strand agreed from a teacher's perspective, that too often teachers are not allowed to talk to each other in different buildings, so the innovative teachers in the other buildings and big buildings don't get that opportunity. Michelle added there are so many distractions, district administrators see many different new things, and not enough focus is put on what really matters. It's important to focus on one thing and lose all the other distractions.

Aimee added that the districts need to focus on what is most important and make sure going into the next session we don't get distracted. Aimee stated that each district has something different on their plate.

Superintendent Baesler added there are 174 districts, and they are all at different levels. She stated it needs to be clear what is required by the state and what the state is offering a school district to volunteer to do.

Maria explained that the process should be different for every district and school because the community and the needs are different, however, how do you get adults okay with the difference?

Kevin Hoherz added that everyone is going to take a different journey, but you have to have some basic fundamentals in place before you start.

Senator Davison added that one of the foundation pieces is the CTE Director, a high-level administrator must be in every district to make it work. A map of non-negotiables that need to happen and there must be some kind of a road map of how to get there.

Jeff added that sometimes getting the leaders out of their districts, out of their buildings would allow that team to work on the problems for extended periods of time. The question is how can we use support teams of leaders and educators doing that hard work.

Chairman Schaefer asked everyone to further think about this discussion and come up with possible solutions to take as the council about what domains of these successful programs have, what domains are different from each other and how might they interact. It was asked that everyone think of ways as a council to move this forward and commit to working.

PK-12 Education Strategic Vision Report - Superintendent Baesler

Superintendent Baesler presented the Strategic Vision Report:

- The Superintendent's duties were a section added during the 2019-2021 session stating the Superintendent would convene the PK through 12 Education Strategic Vision Framework and Steering Committee and provide a report and update to the interim committees on all activities that entitles who receives state funding.
- The PK-12 Strategic Vision Framework is comprised of 6 outcomes and 5 strategic themes to achieve those outcomes.
- The 6 outcomes dealt with early learning experiences, increasing students who demonstrate reading proficiency, increasing students who meet expected learning gains, students who engage in learning, students who graduate choice ready, and reducing the disparity in achievement for students and special needs.
- The 5 themes of quality early childhood experiences, support for safe and healthy behaviors, career awareness, exploration and development, quality education personnel, and quality student-centered instruction.
- Efforts to Reduce Disparities in Achievement for Native American and Low-Income Students was added as a Strategic Theme.
- Legislators contributed to the 2021-2023 Biennial Report
- The PK-12 Education Strategic Vision Steering Committee sets the strategic vision and outcomes and determines the themes and changes in the overall framework, where the K-12 Coordination Council measures the progress of the work being done against the strategic vision framework.
- The steering committee will convene this spring to organize members of respective committees to prepare an overview of the reports, write a brief summary of each theme and decide who will present which theme to the legislative interim committee in May or June.

Melissa Vollmer questioned why the term special needs are used rather than with disabilities? Melissa stated that students with disabilities are clearer than students with special needs. She further clarified that students with disabilities are identified as such, and students with special needs is a little gray.

Superintendent Baesler stated she will take this recommendation back to the steering committee for consideration.

Senator Davison added that it would be easier to measure data based on that terminology.

Melissa and Superintendent Baesler agreed.

Chairman Schaefer stated that the K12 Coordination Council is responsible for measuring progress and assisting in the implementation of the strategic vision. It is important for this council to recognize what it can do, what we can't do, and what is suggested with this language. The vision of this council is that we want the best experiences for those students, for as many to be prepared as

possible and for the kindergarten classes to be ready. Chairman Schaefer further added that the Strategic Vision Committee is to set a vision for the state.

Superintendent Baesler explained PK 12 versus her work for the K12 Council, and that she has a duty to lead and convene the PK 12 steering committee. Superintendent stated that there are 120 Pre-K programs out of the 174 districts in the state.

Chairman Schaefer asked if there were any suggestions on the PK 12 Education Strategic Vision Framework presented by Superintendent Baesler.

Dr. Gandhi asked to consider changing the wording from we will make progress towards achieving these long terms to we will assess the progress towards this vision by utilizing the following benchmarks for students. Dr. Gandhi added that they really do count towards achieving the end goal of graduation.

Committee Reports – Executive Operations

Chairman Schaefer stated that action is to be considered on the Operations and Guidelines to identify actual definitions of terms in century code. The Executive Committee has elected to look at a set of definitions that could be used to standardize a term to set expectations of the work that will be done.

Michelle Vollmer moved to approve the updated Operational Guidelines. Brandt Dick seconded the motion. Discussion held. Motion carried unanimously.

Contract Renewal

Chairman Schaefer stated that this is the third year of a three-year option contract with Olson Effertz. The Executive Committee suggests continuing the third-year option which would close out the options of the contract at the end of the next fiscal year. That also means a new RFP would need to be issued for continuance. The recommendation is two-fold. The first is to approve the contract for next year for Olson Effertz and the second is to begin the process of a request for proposals for the following year to be prepared.

(Correction: One additional renewal and one 12 month extension is available for the Olson Effertz contract.)

Nick Archuleta moved to approve the contract for next year for Olson Effertz and to begin the process to request proposals for the following year. Senator Kyle Davison seconded the motion. Senator Davison stated appreciation for Kayla and her staff for all the work they have done, and we are fortunate to have her continue her work. No other discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

Statewide Projects, Duplication & Replication

Brandt Dick presented the document in the absence of Karl Lembke. Brandt stated there were a few meetings held for discussion on this document. There was duplication between CTE virtual centers and the Center for Distance Education (CDE). Brandt mentioned that as CTE centers come on board a lot of them have virtual components in them, so it's going to be an issue if there is duplication if one CTE center offers something and another CTE center offers the exact same thing.

There are four areas of recommendation:

- Establish a central registration for all CTE virtual classes to be supervised by the CTE Agency.

- CTE courses that do not meet the MIS03 applied course code requirements will not be allowed to use the CTE MIS03 code for courses.
- Monitor enrollment shifts between in-person CTE Centers and CTE Virtual Centers to establish a baseline and create enrollment goals that support workforce needs.
- Utilize the newly funded CTE centers to support equity, supply hands-on experiences, as well as meet standards and requirements across the state reaching more students.

Chairman Schaefer stated the subcommittee reviewed the duplication and these are the recommendations being brought forward. In order to actualize these, we need to decide what are the action steps or approve them on a fundamental basis.

Dr. Fastnacht suggested the next step should be for someone from the committee to present these recommendations to the larger CTE board, as the change will come from the CTE Board.

Dr. Fastnacht moved to approve the recommendations and ask the subcommittee to present them at a future CTE meeting. Senator Davison seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Strategic Vision

Superintendent Baesler and Rep. Heinert worked together on the language to present to the Council for the 6th goal of “Increase students who enter kindergarten prepared to learn.”

Superintendent Baesler first presented the adjusted language made by the PK12 Strategic Vision Steering Committee to add “Students with Special Needs.” K12 CC members suggested using “Students with Disabilities” to be specific in the subgroup of students intended to be included. Superintendent Baesler stated she will also bring the suggestion made by Dr. Gandhi to the advisory committee that instead of calling the goals Outcomes, that they instead be called benchmarks. Superintendent Baesler stated the first outcome initially was to identify what an aspirational goal would be, and the other benchmarks are being called outcomes.

Chairman Schaefer explained that the task for Superintendent Baesler and Rep. Heinert’s subcommittees was to talk through the recommendation and decide how it could work. It was then evident that it was not going to work the way it was written, and new language will be proposed today.

Superintendent Baesler clarified the first recommendation was approved at the last council meeting, and an option today is to take a vote to rescind or replace what was previously adopted. The language that passed was: *The ND K12 Coordination Council will make recommendations to the 68th Legislative Assembly to build a system of reliable, and valid measures to assess programs and services in addition to student assessments to determine students entering kindergarten are prepared to learn.*

Superintendent Baesler stated this language was much more assertive in the approach other than saying we’ll support DHS when they go to the 68th Legislative session to do this.

Director Jones (DHS) stated what he is learning is how do we put these systems together to create strong children, families, and workforce. How do all these things fit together and all the work that has been done with schools to try to figure out how to get behavioral support in schools. Director Jones stated that behavioral health is being put in schools way too late. Director Jones stated this should be done a lot sooner and asked how do we support kindergarten teachers specifically? The

kindergarten teachers need to have an understanding of the students who are coming in and that those students, regardless of who they are, are prepared to learn.

Superintendent Baesler shared thoughts in regard to the benchmark study outcomes and kindergarten readiness.

Superintendent Baesler shared the proposed recommendation for the aspirational goal: *At this time, a measurable goal cannot be recommended for this long-term outcome due to the lack of a system of reliable, and valid statewide measures to assess students who enter kindergarten prepared to learn as well as a system to monitor early childhood experiences in the state. The ND K12 Education Coordination Council encourages the ND Department of Human Services Early Learning Division to build a system of reliable, and valid measures to aid kindergarten teachers in meeting the needs of any learner.*

Superintendent Baesler stated that as a Council we would work with DHS to establish a statewide system of measurement on how to create the baseline and then any system of measuring the quality of the programs that exist for the 0 to 5-year-olds, which is now governed and administered through DHS.

Chairman Schaefer clarified the new recommendation is with the former recommendation basically asking the legislature to build this reliable and valid measure system that will access programs and services, and the new language is saying let's work together to figure out what needs to happen. DHS is recognized to be responsible for 0 to 5 year-olds. DHS has that work and they want to work with the schools. The Council is encouraging this and wants them to work together, the council won't work with them directly, but the agencies recognized will work with them in ways that make sense for us to work with them.

Nick Archuleta moved to rescind the previous recommendation and replace it with the new recommendation. Melissa Vollmer seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Website Committee Replacement for Senator Oban

Chairman Schaefer stated that a replacement is needed for the website committee.

Kayla shared that the other people on the committee are public information officers from the associations. The work has not started yet, as time has not allowed. One council member is needed.

Chairman Schaefer asked for a council member to volunteer. Schaefer stated that it was agreed that when committees were formed and members were short and if there were no volunteers, the executive director, and Schaefer would assign someone to the position.

Timely Topics – ND United Survey Results

Chairman Schaefer shared that there have been lots of discussions about teacher retention, educator retention, and motivation, teacher burnout, and behavioral health in schools.

Nick Archuleta shared the results of the survey. There were 1149 surveys completed. The key takeaway is that teachers are burned out. Two years ago, when surveyed 90% of educators believed they would retire as a teacher, that number has now shrunk to 41%. The demographic group aged 30 – 39 went from 91% who thought they would retire as a teacher when they first

presented as a profession is now at 26%. The most identified issue was teacher burnout. Teachers have more to do than they have ever had to do, some teachers have more to do than others. There are students coming to school with more trauma and behavioral issues and that can lead to burnout. Teachers do not feel respected. Teachers signed up to be teachers because they have a desire to do what's best for the students, making every educational opportunity available to them, and preparing them for the world outside the school.

Michelle Strand added that this year is the first year she has not felt valued as a professional educator. Michelle stated that teachers are not being asked for their professional opinions, teachers don't matter. There are some districts making the decisions and not looking to the teachers when they are the ones sitting with the students every day.

Superintendent Baesler asked Nick if his organization could highlight the results of the survey for the areas of success.

Dr. Gandhi asked the question, what is the one area to focus on? Expectations for teachers and how to access them were discussed. You cannot measure the success of an institution by comparing two school districts in their achievement scores to one another. The true measure of the efficacy of an institution is to look at the budgets and ask how much is spent on academic instruction as compared to student experiences, and then normalize your data and see how students are succeeding because of this. Dr. Gandhi added that expectations need to be set clearly in what is being measured and allow people to get there.

Chairman Schaefer asked Nick if his team would look at this and come back to the council with information as to what are some of these pieces. He further asked that everyone share with Kayla their ideas as to what are some of the things they are hearing about our schools, from the teachers, and the educators that are positive. Chairman Schaefer encouraged everyone to come up with some talking points to raise the level of discussion and revisit them at the next meeting with the Timely Topics.

Chairman Schaefer stated a consensus needs to be decided to promote the best practices such as the Learning Academy.

Maria asked for a definition of share out.

Kayla added for each organization, what does that mean, what can you contribute, similar to the Strategic Vision.

Chairman Schaefer continued that each organization needs to figure out how to share out what was learned today and submit to Kayla what was shared out. Chairman Schaefer stated that one item needs to be identified to move forward on the PK12 Strategic Vision Report topic for joint discussion. Teacher burnout and teacher retention might be a good opportunity for joint discussions as far as the strategic vision.

Superintendent Baesler addressed a press release going out about establishing and adopting those goals discussed today.

Chairman Schaefer stated Kayla and her office are not allowed to do press releases, media advisories, or speak to the legislature. Discussion held.

Superintendent Baesler moved to allow Kayla and her staff to send out media releases on behalf of the K12 Council as approved by the executive committee via the chairman. Dr. Fastnacht seconded the motion.

Chairman Schaefer will work with Kayla on a press release.

Dr. Gandhi asked Superintendent Baesler if the PK12 Strategic Vision Steering Committee would be open to identifying a couple of broad goals or areas that would be important that all school districts could apply. A benchmark that all could incorporate as suggested elements to incorporate into their strategic plan versus having too many loose guidelines or too many tight guidelines because both may get resistance.

Superintendent Baesler stated she is reluctant to do that because school districts use their own data.

Further discussion was held regarding the statewide goal for 174 districts.

Chairman Schaefer stated the next meeting will be at the end of April or the beginning of May in Stanley. Schaefer asked that everyone have their mindset around drafting some legislative ideas. The Governor's Education Summit is on June 9th, and he would like as many council members there as possible. It was suggested to have an additional Council meeting at the Governor's Education Summit in Dickinson.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

ATTEST:

Luke Schaefer, Chairperson

There are no upcoming meetings scheduled at this time.

Minutes taken and prepared by Laura Doll