



K-12 Education Coordination Full Council Meeting Minutes **CTE Conference Rm, 15th Floor State Capital, Bismarck** **Wednesday November 15, 2023**

K-12 Council Members Present:

Chairman Luke Schaefer, Brandt Dick, Maria Neset, Justin Fryer, Jeremy Mehlhoff, Jennifer Weber, Representative Heinert, Senator Braunberger, Jared Bollom, Senator Schaible, Melissa Vollmer

K-12 Council Members Virtually Present:

Sonia Meehl, Superintendent Kirsten Baesler, Alexis Baxley, Representative Schreiber-Beck,

K-12 Council Members Absent:

Nick Archuleta, Marc Bluestone, Sarah Ricks, Sara Medalen, Beth Slette

Others Present:

Kayla Effertz Kleven - K12 Coordination Council Executive Director, Wayde Sick - NDCTE, Aimee Copas - NDCEL, Shauna Marchus - NDDPI, Kassie Schaff - NDDPI

Others Virtually Present:

Ellie Shockley - NDUS, Dawn Ulmer - NDCTE, Robert LaFavor - NDDPI

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Luke Schaefer at 1:00 p.m.

1 – Approval of Meeting Previous Minutes: September 19, 2023

Jennifer Weber moved to approve the minutes from the September 19, 2023, Full Council meeting. Melissa Vollmer seconded the motion.

Chair Schaefer stated that there was an item in the Operations Guidelines document that was approved in the last meeting regarding the budgetary discretion on page 5, section 4, item C, that will have to be revisited. He explained that according to the advice of the assistant attorney general, the language referring to amending a contract in this manner may need to be changed. Chair Schaefer added that he visited with the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), and DPI is willing to pay expenditures for the contract or fee when appropriate.

No further discussion. The motion carried unanimously.

2 – Special Session Update

Representative Heinert reported that the special session focused on the adjustment of the fourteen bills that were introduced through legislative management, that were kicked back by the Supreme Court. He explained that one of the biggest changes was regarding the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) board, and the bill that gave the Governor authority to remove an appointee of his. The other thing that was passed, outside the Office of Management

and Budget (OMB) budget, was the authority given to BSC to fundraise to update the outdated armory building.

Senator Schaible stated that there was \$1.136 million in additional spending from the special session compared to what it was, and he detailed that some of the dollar amounts went to funding legislative session, wages, and a snow emergency plan for a county.

Representative Heinert added that there was a special one-day meeting where the legislators had multiple bills they were trying to get to the floor, some of which involved education, but none of those bills were accepted.

Chair Schaefer stated there have been questions about when the PERS rollover takes effect. He asked if anyone had an answer that could be provided to business managers. Representative Heinert stated that the last he heard was that it would take effect January of 2025, unless the new board could complete it by July 2024. Alexis Baxley stated that the old board selected January 1, 2025, but she is not sure what the new board will decide. Brandt Dick asked when does the increased rate for the employer take effect. Representative Heinert answered on January 1, 2024.

3 – Interim Education Committee Update

Senator Schaible stated that they have two basic education committees, the General Education Committee and the Educational Funding Task Force. He explained that the General Education Committee is tasked with three studies: ending fund balance, school choice, and replacing storm days with virtual days. He gave a brief description of each study. He then explained that the Educational Funding Tasks Force, which he is chairman of, deals with everything pertaining to school funding, such as: school funding models, payment size, school size, student population, economics for the district, smaller schools, schools that are losing enrollment or stagnant enrollment, negative impacts of current funding, studying funding formulas of other states, determining the benefits of incentives of promotion through school consolidation, transportation costs, high-cost students, distance education, and the effects the CTE center openings has on general K-12 schools. He explained that there are nine members on the Interim Educational Funding Task Force, and they are non-paid, non-voting members but bring expertise to the conversation.

4 – Governor’s Task Force for Teacher Retention and Recruitment Update

Maria Neset gave an update stating that the Governor recently listed the members of the Teacher Retention and Recruitment Task Force (“Task Force”), which includes three teachers and more administrators. She stated there will be plenty of stakeholder conversations to bring in a larger voice for teachers and educators. She reported that the contract has been signed and it was awarded to the Hunt Institute. She stated that the Hunt Institute is currently in other states doing this same work, so they come with a lot of knowledge and expertise around this topic. She stated the goal is for the initial meeting to be in December 2023, then they will meet again in February. She stated that the report and final recommendations must be delivered to Superintendent Baesler and the Governor by September 30th, 2024.

Chair Schaefer stated that Superintendent Baesler has heard about appropriate models for how teachers stay motivated, how they stay in the profession, and how they love their job even

amidst all the struggles. He stated that Arizona has done amazing things to shift the model. He stated it is not about finding millions of dollars, so everyone gets a pay raise, it is about how we make it so that education is what teachers sign up for.

Superintendent Baesler commented that she is just getting back from the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) annual fall meeting with fifty-seven colleagues from other states. She stated that North Dakota is not the only state looking at this issue. She mentioned that the one message that the teachers in Missouri wanted everyone to know out of that Blue Ribbon Commission work was that there is a dire, crisis-level problem. She stated that over the course of this next year, and with ND having the Task Force focused on this topic, we will be able to learn from other states because most states are leaning in hard on this topic. She stated that the model that Arizona has been implementing is about not expecting teachers to be experts in everything. She compared the model to a medical clinic with general practitioners who have access to specialists but are not expected to be the specialists. She reported that Arizona State University hosts three convenings per year to share their ideas, and people can visit their schools and see how they are implementing this model in all grade levels. She stated that there is an upcoming meeting after Thanksgiving that she and a group from ND will be attending.

Maria Neset mentioned that Luke Schaefer is an appointed standing member of the Task Force, but to make sure the K12 Council is always looped in, Kayla Effertz Kleven will be included in all the external partner emails as well.

5 – Subcommittee Updates: Progress and Scope of Work

Kayla Effertz Kleven explained that subcommittee reports are normally very outcome-driven, but with the slow start to subcommittee meetings this season, the subcommittee chairs are just going to share the scope of work and what the subcommittee's first steps are. She stated that this is also a chance for the rest of the Council members to comment or discuss what is reported, to make sure the topics and direction of each subcommittee are where the Full Council wants to be going.

Executive Committee

Chair Schaefer stated that the Executive Committee is about the operations of the K12 Council, coordinating meetings, setting agendas, talking through the budget, and making sure the Council is operating appropriately. He discussed the annual report budget and stated that without a full budget with line items from legislation this year, DPI needs to stay up to date on what the Council will be spending.

A. Annual Report:

Chair Schaefer stated that the Council has always had printed copies of the annual report, but the Executive Committee discussed producing a short video instead to help people understand the work the K-12 Council does. He stated the Executive Committee set a budget of \$2,500 for the annual report video, which is the same as in previous years.

B. Executive Director Request For Proposal (RFP)

Chair Schaefer stated that Kayla Effertz Kleven has done a fantastic job, but the contract is out of renewals at the end of this fiscal year, so this Council has to put out a new RFP. He stated that this does not mean that Kayla Effertz Kleven cannot stay on, it just means that we must open it up. He explained that the first time an RFP was done, the Council

put together a contract committee that did all the work, and then brought it to the Full Council for release.

He asked the group if they wanted to send the RFP to the Executive Committee instead of forming a contract committee. He opened it up for discussion. Rep Heinert suggested sending it to the Executive Committee. There was no other discussion. Chair Schaefer stated that the Executive Committee will take charge, try to get the RFP ready for the next meeting, and work with DPI to request funding.

Aspirational Goals Subcommittee

Supt. Baesler shared that there were two aspirational goals this subcommittee was asked to revisit. She stated that information from Ellie Shockley and Stan Schauer was presented at the subcommittee meeting, and after robust discussion, a motion to 'retain the aspirational goals as is' was passed unanimously. She also stated that the members decided to reconvene in February 2024 to get an update on the Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) work of putting something on the Insights dashboard to monitor progress. They will also get an update on the school board governance work, and how the school boards' commitment to implementation is going. It is important for this subcommittee to get an update because each school board who has completed the training have adopted at least three district goals that are aligned to the K12 Council's Aspirational Goals. She reported that about one-third of the school boards are engaged in the Be Legendary School Board Institute and ongoing coaching at this time. She shared that the subcommittee will also meet next summer after the 2024 school accountability scores are released to get an update on the state's progress toward each goal.

Statewide Projects, Duplication and Replication Subcommittee

Brandt Dick shared that this subcommittee had a great discussion about how to keep the employees we have. He stated that some of the work has the potential to overlap with the Governor's Task Force. He explained that instead of focusing on teachers, this subcommittee will focus on other school employees like bus drivers, janitors, cooks, paraprofessionals, and administrators. He mentioned that they are waiting to get data from Ellie Shockley, and then the focus will be to analyze data on schools with greater retention numbers and look at the roles in the schools, and the role of schools in our communities. Brandt Dick added that they will start thinking about the long-term effects of shortages of paraprofessionals, and the backfill needed as the paraprofessionals become teachers.

Supt. Baesler added that DPI is considering the shortage of paraprofessionals as well. She mentioned that DPI has met with the Education Standards and Practices Board (ESPB) and Career and Technical Education (CTE) to discuss credentialing. She explained that DPI has the authority to issue two types of credentials for paraprofessionals – special education credentials, and the Title 1 paraprofessional credential. She added that they are thinking about adding a third credential that is just a general education paraprofessional credential. Supt. Baesler then discussed identifying a target audience of sixteen to twenty-six-year-olds to become paraprofessionals because benefits do not come with the paraprofessional position, and those ages are usually under their parent's health insurance. She also stated that another target audience on a nationwide level would be retired aged people, because they may have insurance from their previous employer.

Chair Schaefer mentioned that in North Dakota's CTE Program, the lowest-funded profession that we have is teaching. He stated that it is reimbursed at 19%.

Wayde Sick explained that CTE is taking a very close look at how they are funding current technical education, and how we can look at more equity for those occupational family consumer science programs, and how they are at par with welding, auto tech, and engineering. He stated that he has reported to the Workforce Development Council, which he is a member of, that they need to look at the shortage of teachers because those teachers create everybody else, so there is a need to emphasize teaching.

Support and Innovation Subcommittee

Melissa Vollmer reported for Chair Sarah Ricks. Melissa stated that this subcommittee is focusing on cyber technology and cyber protection for all people involved in the schools. She stated that their discussion was mainly about protecting student data, but also educating and informing students about how to be safe, and to be aware of the potentially harmful impacts of technology and AI. She explained that the subcommittee is looking at what protections the schools have now, and what issues are happening across the state to see what areas require more careful attention. She stated that they also discussed Choice Ready and how technology fits into that. She reported that there were concerns about the requirements of technology and the costs involved, so they will look at what schools must do to be able to adapt to changing technology and the cost. She stated that there was also discussion and concerns about the requirements for cyber security classes, so they might look deeper into the curriculum and how to balance it with other electives. She briefly described other topics the group discussed, such as threats to medical record data, the overall perception of protecting students' information so patrons have confidence, cell phone usage and problems, workforce needs in North Dakota, and transferable skills.

Kayla Effertz Kleven asked, with the legislative AI study going is there any crossover with this subcommittee's work. Senator Schaible answered that the legislative study is focused on higher ed, so there should not be duplication. Further discussion about AI was held amongst the group.

Chair Schaefer asked the council members if, after hearing the summary from each subcommittee, are there any thoughts or revisions, and if this is the course of work the Council wants these subcommittees to be focused on. There was no further comments or discussion.

6 – Timely Topics:

Chair Schaefer stated that this Council's charges include staying abreast of innovations, items that are happening, and challenges, so timely topics are to be aware and have conversations to figure out if there is something that this Council is supposed to do about a topic. He added that just because a timely topic shows up in our agenda, it does not mean there is a task set out for the group.

1. Be More Colorful:

Chair Schaefer stated that Be More Colorful has a grant opportunity that is out right now.

Brand Dick stated that ND Small Organized Schools had worked with Be More Colorful a couple of years ago. He explained that it is a way to provide a virtual experience with jobs. He added that it is an ND company out of Fargo, and they have been named semifinalists for the Yass Prize. He added that this is a great opportunity to support one of our own local companies. He stated that the legislation put in money to have it available for all students statewide. Brandt Dick stated the question he wanted this Council to think about is if the K12 Council should support them to try to get enough votes so that they become finalists, and is there a role for the K12 Coordination Council to make sure all educational agencies are aware of this grant and have an opportunity to vote.

Chair Schaefer stated that this company is already providing services to schools, the legislature has vetted them, and it is a quality program.

Wayde Sick mentioned that the prize would give Be More Colorful funding for schools to acquire headsets, which can enhance the experience for students.

Discussion was held about various topics, including how to support Be More Colorful, whether it be a vote from the K12 Council, broadcasting this across each agency to detail the opportunity, a public announcement, news articles, or social media reposting in support of them. They also discussed whether this council wants the K12 Coordination Council's stamp of approval on what goes out.

Maria Neset stated that her office is working to decide on a public announcement regarding this opportunity.

Representative Heinert stated that his preference would be that the announcement come from the Governor's office, not the ND Department of Commerce, because it will grab more attention than if it came from Commerce. He also stated that he would like it to be shared through all the groups we have, in the spirit of coordination to make sure everyone, including teachers, parents, and students, are aware of it.

Chair Schaefer stated he agreed with Representative Heinert, that this is a regional or statewide opportunity worthy of being shared out.

Jared Bollom questioned if this fits the K12 Council's mission, and he stated that if it does, it would be amazing to support it. He mentioned that all students have access to it through RU Ready, but they need to be made aware of how to fully utilize it.

The deadline is November 25th, so the group recognized information must be shared soon and discussed various ways to coordinate to get a suggested email or post together to send out.

Representative Heinert stated that from his perspective, he did not see anything wrong with stating that the K12 Coordination Council vetted this program and deemed it a good program for the state.

Representative Heinert motioned that the K12 Coordination Council support the Be More Colorful in North Dakota. Senator Schaible seconded the motion.

Kayla Effertz Kleven confirmed that this would mean Be More Colorful can put out a post saying K12 Coordination Council supports their program. The group agreed yes, that would be okay.

Senator Schaible commented that his vision of the K12 Coordination Council is that programs would be vetted through this council before legislators see it. He added that sometimes the legislators fund good products, then nobody advertises, promotes or supports them, which is frustrating, so he would like to see the stakeholders flush out details before the legislators make decisions on it.

Maria Neset wondered if supporting this may open this Council up to future requests from other vendors for support, and to consider if that is a good thing or not.

Jennifer Weber asked if we are putting this ahead of procurement. Wayde Sick answered that in this situation, all the procurement process is done, so we are promoting something that legislature funding, the agency selected, and it is already available. He added that this request is to allow this vendor access to a new set of funding which they are not going to spend on their own experiences, but they will spend it for schools to get more headsets available.

Jennifer Weber followed up by saying that she would not want to open up the Council without the procurement already in place, and the contract should be done.

Chair Schaefer suggested the Executive Committee discuss more about how that vetting process could work in the future.

No further discussion. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Construction

Sonia Meehl presented on the history, challenges, and discussions she has been a part of regarding school construction. She explained that the Construction Coalition is made up of seven districts throughout the four corners of the state, including Larimore, Valley City, Dickinson, Williston, Devils Lake Bellfield, and Oakes. She added that this Coalition made a presentation in October at the ND School Board Association, and five additional districts have asked to join the Construction Coalition since that meeting. She mentioned that the Construction Coalition is made up of small and medium-sized districts, as well as stable population districts and fast-growing districts. She added that it also includes districts that have bond referendums that may be one in a generation and other districts that need to go to voters every few years. She reported that the Coalition is gathering information about the extent of challenges, other states' models, construction needs, and financing. She explained the challenges in her own school and detailed the problems in the run-down buildings, discussed school interruptions due to poor building conditions, and explained the financing challenges of remodeling the current school versus building a new building. She

stated that Senator Schaible has invited the coalition to present at the November 28th School Finance Task Force meeting, and she would like to focus on the need for equitable facilities for students in all districts as well as the equitable impact on taxpayers between and within districts. She stated that in her district, the Ag landowners would be overburdened with the debt, and they are not necessarily parents to the students attending the school.

Jared Bollom asked if there is anything that currently exists to identify all the different school buildings that have construction concerns across the state.

Aimee Copas stated that a focus group is working on the age of buildings across the state. She explained that Scott Wagner, an attorney who works with bonding with our schools, just released a 2023 version of the history of school construction in North Dakota that contains 126 pages of information. She stated that she had shared that information with Senator Schaible to get the information to the legislature. She mentioned that this information is available to everybody, and she can get the link to Kayla Effertz Kleven to send out. [\[Insert Link\]](#)

Chair Schaefer stated that this Council is not tasked with doing anything, we will just ask for an update in a few months.

3. AI: Policy, Training, Student Guidance

Chair Schaefer summarized what he thought the main focus questions might be:

- What is the practitioner's role in artificial intelligence?
- How do we help the kids use it if it is acceptable?
- How do we keep them from using it if it is not acceptable?
- What kind of training will be out there for teachers so they can get better at it?

Supt. Baesler gave an update on AI. She commented that a number of national organizations joined together with some international entities and created an AI guidance toolkit. She mentioned that the Coalition created a toolkit and guidance, and it was just released last week, so anyone can search [Teach AI Guidance and Toolkit](#). She explained that the AI toolkit gives classroom specifics, teacher-level specifics, and student-level specifics that can be used until we develop our state guidance. She explained that North Dakota is currently drafting its own state guidelines and toolkit and will be leveraging the same people who came together to create our computer science and cyber security standards. She added that this is being led by the partnership of NDIT/EduTech, NDDPI, and the PK20W Workforce. She stated that the hope is to have initial guidelines and toolkits for school districts to use to create policies and best practices by the middle to end of the upcoming semester, and she will continue to update this Council on the development.

Alexis Baxley shared that the High School Activities Association is having a similar discussion regarding how AI is used in speech and debate. She stated that the Fine Arts Committee forwarded some recommendations to the full board that will be discussed in the

November meeting. She suggested continuing to have this discussion at future meetings to connect all this information together.

Wayde Sick stated that he is planning to meet with Scott Meyer, who presented at the NACTE Conference AI Cohort for state government agencies, to discuss how state government can use AI. Wayde Sick added that he will bring the Council an update, and Scott could be a potential expert for later.

4. Book Bans

Chair Schaefer asked: What are libraries, school boards, and administrators supposed to do about book bans?

He stated that he does not know if book bans have become common in North Dakota yet, but it is seen on social media.

Maria Neset asked if school boards have a policy on how to address controversial content or books, and does it fall back on the school board to have a process to evaluate curriculum.

Alexis Baxley stated that yes, school boards have a curriculum approval policy and a policy on if someone complains about the content of material like a book and how to review and evaluate that.

Maria Neset stated that for the public libraries, the Governor signed a bill that mandated public libraries to have a process to evaluate books and to address complaints, similar to what schools do. She explained that the bill was to force public libraries to create a policy, not telling them how to evaluate books.

Chair Schaefer stated that schools can avoid problems if they follow their policy, review material and curriculum, listen to complaints, and address them appropriately.

Maria Neset mentioned that in the past if someone complained about a book, the person was asked to read the book, and then meet to discuss what parts of the book were the issue. She stated that this may hold the individual accountable.

Brandt Dick mentioned that at a board meeting the night before, there was a discussion about this topic regarding the Scholastica book orders. He stated it is not a library or school curriculum, but the concern by the board was if they are promoting a topic by having a company that sells the books, when the board or school may not know what is in the books. He also questioned what part is the parent's responsibility.

Chair Schaefer stated that by looking at other states, we can predict what may happen here with this topic.

No further discussion on timely topics.

Chair Schaefer stated that the language of one section of the Council's Operation Guidelines has to be changed. He added that the Council does not have any expenditures that are anticipated at this time. He stated that the Executive Committee would review that section and come back with the recommendation.

Chair Schaefer mentioned that it is extremely important to try to attend subcommittee meetings and to inform the subcommittee's chairperson or Shauna Marchus if you are not able to make a meeting, so decisions can be made on whether to continue the meeting.

Next Full Council meeting is scheduled for February 27, 2024

The meeting adjourned at 2:39 pm.

Minutes taken and prepared by Shauna Marchus

Respectfully submitted,

ATTEST:

Chairman Luke Schaefer

Date