

MINUTES
Basic Education Program (BEP) Review Committee
Conference Call Meeting
December 2, 2015

Members Present: Lyle Ailshie, Rep. Harry Brooks, David Connor, Michael Maren (for Sen. Dolores Gresham), Ben Torres, Chris Henson, Sara Heyburn, Karen King, Wayne Miller, Mitchell Moore, Rick Nicholson, Don Odom, Stephen Smith (for Comm. Candice McQueen), Larry Ridings, designee for Lynnisse Roehrick-Patrick, Mary Ann Sparks, Linda Wesson (for Comp. Justin Wilson), and Hunter Zanardi.

Others Present: Laura Encalade, Ari Goldstein, Nathan James, Spenser Gwozdzik, and McKenzie Manning.

Dr. Sara Heyburn welcomed the group and thanked the members for joining the call. She asked Ms. McKenzie Manning to take the roll.

After the roll, Dr. Heyburn asked for a discussion of minutes from prior meetings, specifically any corrections, additions, or deletions if needed.

Mr. Stephen Smith said that on the October 28th meeting minutes, during the discussion about increasing the technology formula, it was incorrect to say he agreed to increase the technology formula but had said that it would be appropriate to have a discussion about increasing technology funding within the formula.

Ms. Karen King wanted to clarify that in the minutes on October 21st, she asked a question about the average cost. The word average was missing from the minutes.

Mr. Nathan James explained that next year the meetings would be recorded.

Mr. Larry Riding asked for an update about the extra recommendations that were taken out of the report this year because he missed the last meeting.

Dr. Heyburn asked for any final corrections to the minutes then answered Mr. Riding. She said that at this year's first BEP meeting, it was discussed that the 2015 report would be more targeted this year with the hope that the committee's recommendations are functionally possible. She explained that other funding needs do exist in the operation of K-12 schools but it is the committee's primary responsibility to recommend the most important funding priorities from year to year.

Dr. Riding asked what happened to the extended priorities because in previous years, there had been a lot of time that went into those recommendations. Dr. Heyburn answered that they were not included because they were not part of the committee's conversation. She added that if they are important to the committee, they will discuss including them in future reports.

Mr. James said that the state board staff read through the process and looked at the statute and conversations from previous years. At the first 2015 meeting, the committee discussed the priorities and that they would set out to make a focused report that could be more useful.

Rep. Brooks added that the four priorities that the committee laid out are doable. The committee needs to complete a number of these items so they are removed from the list. He thinks the legislature would take these ideas more seriously because they are specifically focused. He said that as the committee accomplishes these tasks, they can look at other items that the BEP Review Committee has looked at for years to add to the priorities.

Mr. Wayne Miller said that during conversations he has had the whole list had become cumbersome so it became harder for the legislature to look at the actual priorities. He added that he doesn't think anyone wanted to do away with the other priorities, but it is much easier to get a focused list of priorities funded than the entire list.

Mr. Riding responded by saying he doesn't think there will be a year when teachers' salaries won't be at the top of the list.

Dr. Heyburn added that there is an important distinction to note, that this is a funding plan not a spending plan.

Mr. Rick Nicholson said he was fine with adding the priorities in the future. He added that in the four to five years he has been on the committee, the extended priorities have not been discussed and just added at the bottom of the list. If they are going to be added in future reports, there needs to be discussion and updating to the ratios.

Mr. Michael Marin said that most of the members of the legislature he has spoken with appreciate the smaller report.

Dr. Heyburn asked for further comments before to discussing today's meeting objective. She said that there are two objectives- 1) to gather additional input on topics of interest to the committee for next year, and 2) discuss an altered timeline for 2016 that would allow for an earlier start to the committee's work and a potential preliminary paper released before the full report.

Dr. Heyburn started with the first objective. She did a brief recap of the previous meeting regarding hearing from Department of Education representatives to examine special education funding.

Mr. Chris Henson said that some of the same components were included back in 1992 and need to be further examined. He also added that he thinks when discussing funding for technology, the committee needs to try to determine what is needed as administrative technology and educational/instructional technology in the school districts. He also agreed that the committee hasn't spent much time discussing the extended priorities but that a lot of time and effort went into those priorities and it would be worth it to examine those priorities in the future.

Mr. Ben Torres said he wanted to second what Mr. Henson had added. He believes there are some technology increases that need funding and the committee also needs to look into those extended priorities and update some of the numbers.

Mr. David Connor echoed what Mr. Henson and Mr. Torres said. He added that the committee needs to look at specific positions in the funding formula, such as technology coordinators.

Mr. Miller said that he thinks it is important to go back and look at the other priorities. He said the committee needs to look at what are current best practices at every grade band to prevent creating academic gaps that we don't mean to when smaller districts can't afford positions such as reading specialists.

Mr. James said that it would seem appropriate for some of the committee member's offices to work alongside the state board staff in producing this research for next year's priorities.

Ms. King said that one idea would be to create a survey that would tell the committee exactly what instruction and classroom components are being used statewide. She said there has been a big shift in the economy and it would help to get a look at what the school districts actually need.

Mr. Riding added that there has been a lot of discussion about the cost of RTII and the committee might want to look into that as one of the components.

Dr. Heyburn asked the committee what they're thoughts were about producing a preliminary report before the Nov. 1 deadline.

Rep. Brooks said he thought it was a brilliant idea and it was important to get the committee's recommendations to the Governor's office as early as possible.

Mr. Torres agreed with Chairman Brooks that it would be beneficial to all involved in the budget process.

Mr. James added that it was important to note that a lot of the calculations would not be available to the state board staff until the middle of October. The full report wouldn't be out much earlier than it is, but they could create a preliminary report based on the information the staff would have.

Dr. Heyburn asked if there were any additional thoughts or feedback on the timeline? She added that the state board staff can propose a timeline and send that to the committee to see if that agreeable.

Dr. Heyburn thanked all the committee members for their time and thoughts.

Dr. Heyburn adjourned the meeting.