

Online Task Force, Meeting #8

Tuesday, December 16, 2014

Link to the meeting recording:

<http://connect.enetcolorado.org/p4l6ljlwy0/>

Meeting Notes

The eighth meeting of the Online Task Force (OTF) was called to order by Ethan Hemming, Task Force chair.

Task force members, staff, and guests introduced themselves.

OTF Members and Staff in Attendance:

Judy Bauernschmidt
Brian Bissell
Scott Campbell
Leanne Emm
Diana Gamboa
Ethan Hemming
Chaille Hymes
Renee Martinez
Dale McCall
Kim McClelland
Gretchen Morgan
Dan Morris
Amy Valentine
Linda VanMatre
John Myers
Melanie Sloan

Guests in Attendance:

Karen Alikhan
Todd Engdahl
Kris Enright
Heather O'Mara
Jessica Knerals
John

Housekeeping

John Myers, facilitator, discussed issues of housekeeping.

Motions

The work of the OTF would use motions for the committee, as a whole, to take action to confirm or not confirm elements of the final draft report. Each section of the agenda will require an OTF member make a motion, be seconded, and receive a majority of the vote of the OTF members to focus discussion. The use of motions is so to use the meeting time wisely.

Roll Call Vote

John reminded the OTF members that they must specifically request for a vote to be a roll call vote.

Approval of OTF Meeting #7 Notes

All members voted to approve the minutes as provided.

Agenda

John reviewed the agenda and sought questions or requested changes.

An OTF member requested clarification for the reasoning behind having the CDE Accountability/Data Analysis presentation at the end of the last meeting of the OTF.

Ethan clarified that the presentation was in response to a data request by an OTF member. John responded that the information would be part of and could be shared through the public record.

Pilot Programs

The OTF members discussed their charge regarding pilot programs. HB 14-1382 was referenced for clarification.

OTF members voted unanimously to recommend that the legislature fund pilot programs and charge the CDE with the establishing of parameters for and duration of pilot programs and methods for their evaluation.

OTF members also reviewed and revised the ranked list of pilot program recommendations. The agreed upon changes are incorporated into the final report and provided as an exhibit in its appendix.

Other Recommendations

The OTF members made a motion, seconded, and voted unanimously in favor of discussing the other recommendations legislative charge.

An OTF member moved to include language regarding drop-in centers. That motion was seconded. The OTF members debated the suggested language, with several members expressing concern on the limits the language could impose on use of office space and/or provision of non-educational services to the student body. The OTF member who made the motion clarified that the intention of the suggested language was to identify and address conflict in existing statute regarding learning and drop-in centers, and to affirm local control.

The work on other recommendations was interrupted to accommodate public comment.

Public Comment

Heather O'Mara

Heather O'Mara, with Hope Online Learning Academy, spoke to Hope's experience and use of learning centers. Learning centers became defined due to Hope's utilization of them across district boundaries. Today, Hope has approximately 15 learning centers. The initial year of establishing learning centers was difficult, but the establishing of relationships with districts has decreased this difficulty over time. Heather also acknowledged the existence of an appeals process if the district denies a Hope learning center within their boundaries (Hope has three appeals currently in process).

An OTF member asked Heather to speak to the time and administrative requirements of creating a learning center MOU with a district. Heather responded stating there are 12 attachments to be assembled and submitted to the superintendent's office, which then has 45 days to respond. All districts require a public meeting with public notice requirements. The district decision to approve or deny the learning center follows the public meeting. Additionally, appeals are a lengthy process. Initially, Hope used an attorney to develop the MOUs but now handles these in-house.

Kris Enright

Kris Enright, with Goal Academy, expressed concern for the suggested language's impact on non-educational activities of multi-district online schools, such as testing, staffing, meetings, and testing. Kris stressed that drop-in centers are used for service provision and not for education.

Other Recommendations

The OTF resumed discussion on Other Recommendations and returned to the previous conversation on drop-in centers.

The original motion was tabled so that alternative language could be identified.

A second motion using modified language (reflected in the final report and presented as an exhibit in its appendix) was made, seconded, and a roll call vote was held. The motion passed with eight in favor and five opposing the modified language. Those in favor: Judy Bauernschmidt, Scott Campbell, Diana Gamboa, Renee Martinez, Dale McCall, Dan Morris, Linda Van Matre, and Ethan Hemming; those opposed: Brian Bissell, Joe Dinnetz, Chaille Hymes, Kim McClelland, and Amy Valentine.

Accountability Presentation

The OTF suspended its work on other recommendations for a presentation from Marie Huchton, with the Accountability/Data Analysis department of CDE. Marie presented the 2014 accountability data for multi- and single- district online schools, and AECs.

OTF members asked about the closure of schools. Gretchen Morgan clarified that the CDE has not closed an online school. Marie confirmed that all online school closures had been the result of proactive school districts or from smaller and/or rural district online school consolidations.

Minority Report

The OTF members discussed the likelihood and focus of minority reports to the final report.

John stated that minority reports are usually brief, and specific to substantive matters. An OTF member asked if multiple reports were received on a single topic if these could be consolidated into one. This could require communication between a sub-set of OTF members, which may conflict with Sunshine Laws. Gretchen will provide clarification from CDE on this to the OTF members by December 18th.

The OTF member who mentioned a minority report was asked what the topic could be. That member responded that all other recommendations had not been determined yet and so they could not state the content of a minority report. That member offered that a minority vote could potentially be avoided if the vote on non-consensus decisions were noted, including the tally of votes.

Extended Meeting

The OTF members voted unanimously to continue to work beyond the scheduled close of the meeting to complete the work on the final report.

Recommendation Five

An OTF member moved to add language to recommendation five requiring re-certification of authorizers every five years, or every three years if the school performance rating was priority improvement or turnaround. The motion was seconded.

The OTF did not reach consensus on this issue. Several members expressed concern over the use of a school performance rating, not the district performance rating; over the prescriptive nature of the suggested language; and over the perceived duplication of existing processes the language held. Conversely, several members expressed support for the suggested language, with modifications to require re-certification every five years, regardless of performance rating of school or district. The supporting members stated the language provides reviews and opportunity for support for under-performing authorizers; provides protections against non-performing authorizers; and diminishes the ability for poorly performing authorizers to continually open new schools.

Amended language requiring re-certification for all authorizers every five years was made through a second motion. That motion was seconded, and a roll call vote was requested.

The OTF did not reach consensus on this second motion.

The final vote was nine in favor (Judy Bauernschmidt, Scott Campbell, Joe Dinnetz, Diana Gamboa, Renee Martinez, Dale McCall, Kim McClelland, Dan Morris, and Linda Van Matre), three opposing (Brian Bissell, Chaille Hymes, and Amy Valentine), and one abstaining (Ethan Hemming).

Wrap-Up

John reviewed the remaining timeline for the OTF and its members:

- Non-substantive grammatical and structural changes from OTF members for the final report are due to Melanie at APA by Thursday, December 18th

- APA will provide the OTF members a revised report to the OTF members by end-of-day Thursday, December 18th
- Final comments must be received by APA by Tuesday, December 23rd
- Minority reports should be submitted to APA as soon as Thursday, December 18, and no later than Tuesday, December 23rd
- The final report is due from APA to the CDE by December 29th

Closing

Gretchen thanked the participation of all OTF members and expressed appreciation for their commitment of time to improving education for the students of Colorado.