

Session: Working Group Share-out and Closing Session

Teacher Vacancy Task Force Chair Josue Tamarez Torres welcomed the Task Force members back from their Working Group sessions. He reviewed the framework for developing recommendations, session objectives, roles and the protocol for sharing out. He stressed the importance of hearing all voices.

Improving Educator Preparation

The Improving Educator Preparation working group shared an update on their working group session. The working group brainstormed the following initial ideas:

- Increase clinical experiences including quality mentorships and partnerships with EPPs.
- Increase the pipeline of teacher candidates through working with EPP partners to create incentives and grants. The working group acknowledged that it was helpful having EPP partners in their group.
- Norm on expectations between LEAs and EPPs.
- Increase support for aspiring educators.

Task Force Chair Josue Tamarez Torres asked if any Task Force member had any questions or feedback.

A Task Force member reiterated the importance of mentorship being responsive to teacher need. Another task force member stated that there should be training and certification for mentors. In closing, a Task Force member shared that it is important to increase the pipeline of teachers of color and ensure we have mechanisms of support for teachers of color.

Mr. Tamarez Torres thanked the presenter and asked the Talent Pipelines working group to share an update.

Talent Pipelines

The Talent Pipelines working group shared that they had a great discussion. The group shared three buckets they had discussed and the initial ideas under each bucket:

- Strengthen recruitment and training through establishing strong human resources recruitment systems, creating strong pathways for high school education and training courses, create incentives and reduce barriers for current staff and community members to become teachers, and strengthening partnerships between LEAs and EPPs.
- Re-recruit teachers into the profession through implementing targeted marketing and recruitment strategies for returners, removing barriers for re-entry, and providing differentiated training and supports.
- Retain strong teachers through teacher leadership and mentorship.

The working group shared that they had discussed many ideas and had quite a few next steps. They asked if there were any questions or feedback from the Task Force.

A Task Force member asked what additional data would be needed to re-recruit teachers. Another Task Force member expressed that surveys on why teachers are leaving the profession would be helpful. A Task Force member chimed in that we need to ask why teachers stay, what makes them stay, and how we can champion that. A Task Force member shared that it might be helpful to explore other industries to see how they are tackling shortages through marketing and recruitment strategies. An additional Task Force member mentioned that teachers want to feel appreciated and want incentives. A Task Force member added that money will bring people, but that is not what makes people stay.

The working group closed out by taking about the connections across groups.

The Task Force chair asked the Compensation working group to share their progress.

Compensation

The working group shared that they discussed both direct and indirect compensation. They talked about how they had 23 ideas, did a survey, and would share the 3 things that stood out the most:

- Consideration to health and retirement benefits
- Increase base pay for all educators, possibly re-visiting the state minimum to consider cost of living
- State covering retire/rehire

The working group shared the following next steps:

- Determine the cost and participation rate of teachers in the district health care program, determine statute or administrative code that this applies to, define decision makers, and do a comparison of ERS and TRS and number of people within ERS and TRS
- Understand how HB 3 legislation was written
- Determine number of retired teachers that this would apply to and do a comparison of other state retirement programs and other state policies around retire/rehire

The working group asked if any Task Force members had questions.

A Task Force member asked if the group had considered the pay scale after 20 years. The working group shared that it had been part of the discussion to extend it. Another Task Force member asked if there had been a discussion around paying teachers for extra duties. The working group shared that teachers are tired, and stressed the importance of no more free work. A Task Force member mentioned the Reading Academies particularly as an extra duty that should be paid if it is required to happen outside of working hours.

Chair Josue Tamarez Torres thanked the working group and asked the Teacher Experience working group to share.

Teacher Experience

The Teacher Experience working group explained that they had broken their working group into three sub-groups: instructional supports, teacher time and requirements, and school climate. They shared that they had generated many recommendations and chose as a group 6 to share out with the whole group. The working group shared the following initial ideas:

- Instructional Supports
 - Ensure teachers have access to High Quality Instructional Materials
 - Expand the Mentorship Allotment
- Teacher Time and Requirements
 - Conduct a time audit to better understand time requirements of the teacher
 - Re-engineer staffing models and schedules to allow for more collaborative instructional planning
- School Climate
 - Provide 5 additional “wellness days”
 - Improve opportunities for teacher representation and input at school board, district level, and school level

The working group asked the Task Force members if they had any questions or feedback. A Task Force member shared that we are all on the Task Force because we have a shared vision. Another Task Force member expressed that those who have the least experience have the most say. A Task Force member mentioned that in regard to school climate and culture it was important for schools to establish affinity groups for teachers of color in order to retain them.

The working group closed out by mentioning the overlap of mentorship among the working groups along with additional compensation for teachers taking on more duties.

Session Closing

Deputy Commissioner Kelvey Oeser thanked the Task Force for their work. She expressed gratitude for the group, noting the time and passion displayed. She shared that she had been in all the working groups throughout the day and was inspired by the many great ideas that had been shared. Deputy Commissioner Oeser noted that there was quite a bit of commonality and agreement within and across the working groups. She stated that this was just the beginning and that now we need to go deeper to understand implications before we can go from ideas to recommendations. Ms. Oeser revisited the recommendations roadmap. She shared that there is an interim charge hearing on September 20th where initial ideas and progress of the Task Force will be shared. She stated that a lot of work needs to be completed in order to finalize recommendations.

Mr. Tamarez Torres closed out the meeting, thanking everyone for their time and efforts.