

**Date: December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022**

**Session: Working Group Sessions with Commissioner Morath**

Task Force members joined their original working groups to discuss how their prioritized recommendations from their discussions were reflected in the preliminary recommendations. Commissioner Mike Morath and Deputy Commissioner Kelvey Oeser rotated to each working group to listen to the discussion and feedback of Task Force members.

**Compensation Working Group Discussion Summary**

**The group discussed key takeaways from the breakout session:**

**Theme 1: Overall Salary**

- Strong appreciation for increasing base pay and updating the minimum salary schedule
- Reinforced that it is important to take into consideration inflation and the cost of living
- Identified the need to clarify state funding mechanisms and district requirements related to increasing salary
- Reinforced that strategic compensation comes in many different forms and needs to be accessible to all teachers

**Theme 2: Indirect Compensation/Benefits**

- Strong support for free pre-k for teachers' children
- Identified a need to include mental health support in health insurance
- Consider other factors that can help reduce health insurance premiums
- Need to confirm the difference between penalty and surcharge for retire/rehire

**The group then discussed the following potential refinements to recommendations:**

- Clarify the state funding mechanisms, the updated minimum salary schedule, and the district requirements to increase teacher salary
- Define how to incentivize districts to engage with strategic compensation and strategic staffing

**Improving Educator Preparation Working Group Discussion Summary**

**The group discussed key takeaways from the breakout session:**

**Theme 4: Talent Pipeline (Residencies and GYO (Grow Your Own))**

- Reinforced compensation for additional responsibilities and time allotment to effectively participate

**Theme 5: Teacher Leadership and Mentorship**

- Need to examine how we can further build on the success of the Mentor Program Allotment and Teacher Leadership Grants and utilize lessons learned around funding, support, data collection and reflection, etc., to develop new initiatives like the state Teacher Leadership Fellowship
- Highlight and utilize the strong connections to strategic staffing – stay mindful of working climate and the critical need for a culture of support

- Mentors need time and money for their service – if we provide materials for mentoring, we must also balance the desire for consistency and support while maintaining local control and flexibility – TEA (Texas Education Agency) needs to ensure there is helpful guidance and flexibility to sustain the program

#### **Theme 6: High-Quality Instructional Materials**

- We need to increase awareness in addition to expanding access to HQIM (High Quality Instructional Materials)

#### **The group then discussed the following potential refinements to recommendations:**

- Further refine 4A to clarify CTE (Career and Technical Education) high school GYO and the educational aide/paraprofessional pathways to certification, and explore funding strategies and connections to accountability; strengthen 4B to specify/ensure that a portion of the funding that supports these programs is allocated to cooperating and mentor teachers; and explain/define the role of EPP (Educator Preparation Program) technical assistance support and its importance
- Clarify how the fellowship will be established and implemented
- Improve the TEA website to locate resources and raise awareness around statewide initiatives/leadership opportunities more easily
- Increase awareness of and expand access to HQIM

#### **Talent Pipelines Working Group Discussion Summary**

#### **The group discussed key takeaways from the breakout session:**

- Clarify what we mean by Grow your Own with considerations for how we address the needs of our talent pipelines beyond just consideration for current paraprofessionals and high school students. Consideration for that broader apprenticeship model.
- Consider the needs for staffing models to enable mentorship programs.
- Utilize a statewide employment website, job board, and common application.
- Examine marketing of the profession to reshape perception of the teaching career
- Provide state funding for certification exam costs, testing fees, and travel for exams. This may allow for long-term sustainability.

#### **The group then discussed the following potential refinements to recommendations:**

- Market for the profession- thinking about stronger targeted marketing for re-enterers
- Increase Grow Your Own Programs through:
  - Growing the pipeline of substitutes and paraprofessionals, so that teachers are not fulfilling those roles during their conference periods.
  - Attracting high school students to the GYO program
  - Recruiting high school students by educating them on the benefits of a teaching career (i.e.: favorable retirement benefits)
- Develop the Teacher Leader role and compensation:
  - Compensate teacher leaders, instead of overloading them with additional duties and creating burn-out.
  - Provide time and staffing for those teacher leaders to work outside of the classroom.

- Expand the mentor program allotment or create a separate position for mentor teachers or reduce their number of teaching preps.
  - Utilize research-based models for mentor training.
- Utilize tools and resources, such as a district-level needs assessment to determine staffing and scheduling technical assistance.

## **Understanding the Teacher Experience Working Group Discussion Summary**

### **The group discussed key takeaways from the breakout session:**

#### **Theme 5**

- Teacher mentorship is essential, but this is often a burden on teachers. Examining the schedule and ensuring teacher mentors are not continued to be burdened is important in ensuring successful mentorship.

#### **Theme 7**

- Overall, support for scheduling academies and the teacher time audit.
- Teachers expressed that no recommendation should add any additional time or tasks to teachers.
- The time audit should be more specific about the purpose and what happens after.
- The group stated that some recommendations may be needed in some places more than others. Therefore, differentiation is important.

#### **Theme 8**

- The group recognized the importance of training and support but wondered if Theme 8 recommendation A was misplaced and would be better served in the Training and Support bucket of recommendations.
- The group discussed the importance of mental health support being added for both students and teachers.
- The group discussed the need for competitive state-based healthcare - Add in mental health policies that carry the bulk of financial burden, provide service outlets, and accounts for time needed.
- The group discussed that additional days of leave for teachers could be beneficial, but that is just a band aide and additional funding, and support is necessary to address mental health concerns.

### **The group then discussed the following potential refinements to recommendations:**

#### **Theme 5**

- Include opportunities for teacher voice at the local level

#### **Theme 7**

- For the Teacher Time Study, the group proposed the following refinements:
  - Ensure the study is conducted with teacher volunteers

- Explicitly state the end goal of the study to streamline teacher tasks and specify what the responsibilities are of a teacher

**Theme 8**

- Add mental health components, particularly the addition of counselors