



CLASSROOMS FIRST INITIATIVE COUNCIL MINUTES

Meeting – June 21, 2016 2:00 P.M.

Location: Kitchell Corporation
Training Room
1707 East Highland Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85016

Members Present: Co-Chair Jim Swanson, Alicia Alvarez, Ashley Berg, Brian Capistran, Tim Carter, Susan Chan, Kenneth Hicks, Beth Maloney, Kathy Senseman, and Dawn Wallace

Members Absent: Governor Doug Ducey, Superintendent Diane Douglas and Annie Gilbert

Staff Present: Kristin Sorensen

Call to Order, Welcome & Introductions

Jim Swanson called the meeting to order at 2:06 P.M.

Mr. Swanson then called for an approval of the March 15, 2016 Council meeting minutes as presented. Tim Carter motioned for approval of the minutes, Susan Chan seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Presentations of School Funding Proposals

Binky Jones of Arizona Alternative Education Consortium highlighted the mission of the Consortium, the students it targets and the “100-day dilemma” that is their focus. She recommended replacing 100-day funding with sustainable funding throughout the entire year for all schools and providing innovative approaches to funding alternative education which some states already do.

Tim Carter asked if they had a concept for how a 180- or 200-day calendar would be put into formula. Mrs. Jones said there are proposals out there right now from other states with solutions.

Alicia Alvarez asked how easily the Consortium could present data on late start students by using just their 100 schools in their Consortium. Mrs. Jones said she could get the information – it would not be easy, but they could get it. Ms. Alvarez said it would be important to see the impact on schools.

Dawn Wallace asked how the Consortium would align a revamping of how we recognize our headcount with academic outcomes. Mrs. Jones said it is important that the state accountability

captures the different components of these students to encourage school and programs to graduate students and grow.

Alicia Alvarez asked what other data the Consortium looks into. Mrs. Jones said they look at accountability, 4-7 year grad rates, and other information from ADE.

Jim Swanson asked is there a gold standard within the 50 states? Mrs. Jones said she has gotten numerous gold standards from their members but Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Illinois have been discussed.

Ken Hicks asked if socioeconomic status of alternative education aligned? Mrs. Jones said there are more factors than socioeconomic impact.

Jacob Boyle of Holbrook Unified School District stated his proposal is more of a recommendation. The location of his district is the biggest challenge and therefore his recommendation is to break funding into urban, suburban, rural and remote categories.

Dawn Wallace stated that the next stage of this proposal is to identify what markers they would use to define those categories and coming back with this information would be helpful. Mr. Boyle agreed.

Tim Carter asked if he was thinking about how to adjust the funding for these categories if they could be defined. Mr. Boyle said there are different opportunities but first they must define the categories.

Ken Hicks stated that quality is sometimes at odds with equity and money doesn't go as far in some districts. Mr. Boyle agreed and referenced that his school buses do not last as long as they should and they have difficulty in replacing them.

Jim Swanson asked if his premise is that current weights are insufficient, improperly quantified or should be changed. Mr. Boyle said that it is not about being a small school but about being far enough away that they incur many additional costs.

Craig Hazeltine, an education advocate, stated he was there to represent parents and grandparents that have just woken up to what is going on with education funding. In general, Mr. Hazeltine believes we need more funding for education and being income neutral would be tough. He said that we have the privatization and the public mind in education and that in the fringes there is hostility. This hostility needs to be addressed and our different approaches to education have inequities.

Susan Chan rebutted Mr. Hazeltine's assertion that charters schools are held to same accountability measures as school districts if not more because charter schools can be closed and all schools deserve the same equitable amount.

Cal Baker from the Arizona Association of School Business Officials & the Education Finance Reform Group presented a conceptual framework for a funding formula that meets the standard of being equitable, transparent and understandable.

Tim Carter asked for Mr. Baker to talk through the transition of the elimination of overrides. Mr. Baker said that if we move to all students receiving the same base level of funding than we can move

towards not having to compete for those dollars. Tim Carter rebutted that if there is a 5 or 7 year window to get there and that creates some additional hurdles.

Dawn Wallace said she thought it was a good dashboard, but Council Members are looking for an entire K-12 impact with adjustable variables and include charter schools in this dashboard. Would like to see what is going up and what is going down and how that affects the bottom line.

Dawn Wallace suggested that there might be an opportunity for a partnership with Center for Student Achievement to have two validators of the data. Mr. Baker said they had shared their information with the Charter Association and is optimistic that the two systems could be blended together. Dawn Wallace also noted how this framework may impact property taxes and the state obligation to subsidize property tax.

Lisa Graham Keegan from A for Arizona began by reminding that A for AZ exists to create a rapid expansion in the number of low income students who attend high quality schools. Three big goals: grow what is excellent; new formula should support any student in any public school equitably and make teacher salaries a priority; simple, predictable, equitable tax support. She noted that there was a lot of common ground between what A for AZ wants and the other submittals.

Dawn Wallace noted the theme of the day was systemic change and asked whether Ms. Keegan saw areas of commonality in the proposals. Ms. Keegan said the most difficult part will be how much of an override any particular geographic boundary a school district can apply when it wants to and you give that advantage to some and not to others.

Susan Chan asked Mrs. Graham Keegan to clarify “backpack funding”. She explained that the funding follows the student and that student counting should be counted every day in order for it to work.

Jay Kaprosy from Arizona Charter School Association referred to a chart that attempts to show debits and credits in the system. The Charter Association’s proposal suggests a dramatic increase in funding for school districts by increasing district additional assistance. He also suggested taking the money in the transportation fund and reallocating to the districts and charters that actually provide transportation and simplify the system. He stated the need to reform the Extraordinary Special Education Needs Fund as well as the reduction and reallocation of local bonds and overrides. Mr. Kaprosy concluded that the proposal is for all schools, not just charters.

Susan Chan asked for clarification on teacher experience index. Mr. Kaprosy said it was not addressed specifically in the proposal but would be open to addressing it.

Kathy Senseman asked how Mr. Kaprosy’s proposal addresses equity funding in base funding. He said that students in schools in low income communities would be served similar to how they are today. The Charter School Association has been in past discussions about the costs to serve these students but there is nothing in the proposal that would provide additional funding to this population. Mrs. Senseman then asked what the timeline for a revenue neutral approach would be. Mr. Kaprosy said there is no timeline and there are policy questions to ask in order to make one.

Rebecca Gau from Stand for Children began with her first recommendation to reevaluate the 1980 cost study as well as special education. She followed with her second recommendation to

compensate based on socioeconomic factors, or “poverty weight”, and to reevaluate Title I. Finally her third priority was tax rates and property tax. There were no questions but Council Members voiced opinions and information on two initiatives that Rebecca mentioned. Jim Swanson indicated that Council would get a presentation on the Arizona World Class Progress Meter.

Robby Koerperich, the Superintendent of Holbrook Unified, had three recommendations. His first was to have the council consider the diversity of Arizona and the fact that Arizona is a minority-majority state. He wants the Council to look at ELL students and upgrade the weighting for all basic and intermediate ELL students to .50 for K-2, and .425 (2:01:00) for 3-12. Secondly he wants to add a poverty weight to the current formula.

Council Members had no questions but Dawn Wallace commented on a letter from Dr. H.T. Sanchez from Tucson Unified School District that endorses the plan. The letter says that if the equity plans is implemented there would be a commitment from the school district with the largest desegregation dollars to consider a phase out in lieu of the more targeted set of funding items.

Dianne McCarthy, representing JTED Consortium, requested that they be represented and included in the K-12 funding formula. She also asked that the Arizona Department of Education adopt rules based on the statutory requirements in the same fiscal year the statute is being enacted.

Ashley Berg commented that work is being done on business rules and will be updated based off of SB1525. There were no further questions or comments.

Becky Hill representing the Arizona Chamber of Commerce and Industry began a request that they still move forward with some of the recommendations in the report even if they cannot move forward with the one equitable formula. She pointed out transparency, performance funding and empowerment for highly effective school leaders as some of these recommendations.

Ms. Hill then commented on their support of performance funding and achievement weight. Next she mentioned that funding distributed to schools that have not shown outstanding results be given guidance about best practices and effective strategies. She also wants facility funding to be based partially on performance. Particularly, funding for new schools should be reformed. Finally, she asked that the council not recommend using funds from different pots. There were no questions.

Public Comments

Dave Dirksen of the Flagstaff Unified School District addressed the AASBO/EFRG proposal and that he would not be supportive of any proposal that left 10% of students behind. He also commented on transportation and how addressing equity means taking the differences in each district into account.

Paul Kulpinski from Flagstaff Unified School District commented on equal transparency and accountability for all institutions that receive public funds. The uneven playing field is about that transparency and accountability. Local control needs to be preserved and giving our local authorities the ability to respond to local needs, not state authority. Finally the current year funding hampers educators’ abilities to manage the district.

Christine Marsh, 2016 Teacher Of The Year, commented on the need for more overall funding as well as the high poverty rate in Arizona. She finished by asking the Council to look at the public school tax credit and the disparities in school districts.

Mark Jorannstad, Executive Director of the Arizona School Administrators, commented on their support for the AASBO/EFRG proposal. However equity does not mean equal funding for every student. Regarding building renewal and construction they support funding but public revenue should not fund private properties. He supports local control, and the removal of two-tier funding and reporting system, there must be uniform and transparent reporting of a uniform and transparent funding system.

Joe Geusic spoke on education excellence.

Kevin Hegarty recommended evaluating proposals so that they do no harm and leveling the playing field on rules.

Next Meeting

Mr. Swanson advised that the next meeting will be scheduled soon. Dawn Wallace said a Doodle would go out in order to schedule the next meeting and the proposal link on the website would continue to be active.

Adjourn

With no further business before the Council, Mr. Swanson adjourned the meeting at 4:51 P.M.