

**Minutes of the  
Committee of Practitioners Meeting  
September 20, 2011**

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 am by Chairperson Becky Guffin.

**Attendance**

Members present were: Becky Guffin, Mary Schwab, Joyce Larsen, Liz Venenga, Laura Willemsen, Lori Bouza, and Rebecca Eeten.

Staff members present were: Dr. Kris Harms, Betsy Chapman, Christine Christopherson, Beth Schiltz, Shawna Poitra, Janet Ricketts, Becky Nelson, Gay Pickner, Judy Merriman, and Laura Johnson Frame.

**Approval of the Agenda**

Guffin asked the committee to add review of the Accountability Workbook to the agenda.

Motion by Schwab, second by Eeten to approve the amended agenda. Motion passed.

**Approval of Minutes – July 14, 2011 Meeting**

Motion by Schwab, second by Eeten to approve the Minutes of the July 14, 2011 Meeting. Motion passed.

**Committee Members**

**Re-appointment**

The following committee members were re-appointed by SD Department of Education Secretary Melody Schopp to serve terms through June of 2014:

Lori Bouza – Administrator – East River area of the State

Mary Schwab – Private School Administrator

Laura Willemsen – Administrator and Title I Part D-Delinquent Representative – East River area of the State

**Appointment**

The following committee member was appointed by SD Department of Education Secretary Melody Schopp to serve a term beginning immediately and ending in June of 2014:

Sarah Lieber – Private School Teacher (Mitchell Christian School)

**Resignation**

Susan Beukelman, private school teacher, resigned from the committee because of duties with her job.

**Recruitment**

The committee discussed recruiting additional members and several people volunteered to make contacts.

### **Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

June is considered the annual meeting of the Committee of Practitioners and the positions of chairperson and vice chairperson are elected annually. The June meeting was cancelled because of flooding in the Pierre area, the election was not held at that time.

Guffin asked for nominations for the position of chairperson.

Motion by Schwab, second by Venenga, to nominate Becky Guffin as chairperson. No other nominations were heard and the Committee cast a unanimous vote to elect Guffin as chair.

Motion by Willemsen, second by Eeten, to nominate Mary Schwab as vice chairperson. No other nominations were heard and the Committee cast a unanimous vote to elect Schwab as the vice chairperson.

### **School Improvement Grants- 1003g**

Poitra provided a School Improvement Grant overview for the committee. The school improvement grant (SIG) has two cohorts of schools currently implementing programs with the federal funds. The first cohort has one Tier I school, one Tier II school, and 16 Tier III schools. After the completion of year 1 of the grant, the schools have showed gains in both math and reading, and have transformed the culture at their schools to help increase student achievement. Cohort I is entering year two of the three year grant.

The second cohort has two Tier I schools and 12 Tier III schools. These 14 schools are entering their first year of the grant, and years 2 and 3 are contingent on federal funding and student gains.

SD DOE participated in a Federal SIG Review completed by the USDOE May 17-18, 2011. USDOE visited New Underwood High School, a Tier II school from Cohort I. USDOE visited with SD DOE staff and administration, teachers, parents, and students from New Underwood High School during their visit. SDDOE received one finding under the Implementation indicator as New Underwood had not increased learning time for all students at the time of the visit. This finding was resolved as New Underwood High School has increased the length of their school day along with the number of days of the school year for the 2011-12 school year.

### **Regional Reviews Update**

Christopherson updated the committee on the Regional Review process. The Regional Review Handbook will be completed and available online to school districts within the first couple of weeks in October with a target date of October 7<sup>th</sup>. It will encompass the documents to be used to complete the process: checklists, examples, information, and templates to use. Assurances will be submitted at the meetings and a short interview to gather any additional information not contained in documents or assurances will be conducted the day of each meeting. All information will be identical to what we have published on our website and will be consistent with other reviews that we conduct in our department. The main ideas to make this process different than the previous desk reviews are the amount of technical assistance given and the idea of districts getting to build their capacity with other districts similar to themselves. A findings letter will be sent after the meetings with a corrective plan of action expected following our current timelines for other reviews. All meetings are scheduled to take place between October 25-December 8 to allow letters to be written during the times schools administrators

are unavailable over the holidays and time to develop and implement missing components before the end of the school year.

### **Supplemental Education Services**

Chapman reported on the status of the Supplemental Education Service program. There are now 30 state approved Supplemental Educational Service (SES) providers. We have 18 districts that are now required to offer SES as a result of the level of improvement of one or more of their schools.

Participation in the program appears to be growing. The committee discussed the program for new members who were unfamiliar with the program.

There was also a discussion of some current legal issues and how, as a result, it might be necessary to review and update the complaint policy and the removal policy applicable to the SES program. Specific concerns were discussed about removing providers from specific districts' lists, even if they stay on the overall state list. This issue may be addressed at the next COP meeting for approval of any updated policy.

### **McKinney-Vento Education of Homeless Children and Youth**

Frame updated the members on activities with the McKinney-Vento programs. Awareness of the federal law increased this year with the flooding of the Missouri River and the realization that displaced families would qualify under the statute. At this point, there is only anecdotal information about the numbers of persons displaced as each family must be contacted. Also, the flooding event happened over the summer and many families were able to return to their homes after three months and just prior to school beginning this school-year. Frame spoke about each district being monitored for compliance with the statute whether or not the district receives M-V funding or has ever identified a homeless family. As other federal laws are being reauthorized, components are being added requiring interaction with the M-V law. Frame is being asked to provide trainings on the law and homelessness in South Dakota and she is also being asked to sit on advisory boards pertaining to foster care and child abuse prevention in her role as the M-V state coordinator.

### **Title I Part D - Neglected – Delinquent Programs**

Frame gave the committee a brief overview of the programs describing the difference in funding for the neglected programs (Title I Part A) and the delinquent programs (Title I Part D) and explaining the district programs and Department of Corrections programs. The committee was advised of the monitoring schedule for the programs and closing of some programs and opening of others. Frame reminded the committee that they reviewed the State Plan for the Title I Part D programs last fall. This plan was sent to the US ED funded technical assistance center and returned after several months with comments. After revision, the plan will be submitted to US ED for approval.

### **On-Line School Improvement Grant Tool**

Schiltz informed the committee that the Department plans to pilot an on-line tool to evaluate the elements of School Improvement Grant projects for schools in Tier I and Tier II that are in the "turnaround" and "transformation" levels of improvement. The program called IndiStar provides the Department with the capability of monitoring progress and will be used as a tool for formative and summative evaluation. The Department will set reporting dates and the schools will be able to document meetings, planning and tracking of their implementation indicators, and collection of data along with various other features. The Department will have access to reports, evaluation rubrics, evaluation questions, and various data sources.

## **Core Content/Pilot Programs**

Becky Nelson, DOE Office of Curriculum, Career and Technical Education, and Gay Pickner, DOE Office of Assessment and Technology, gave a report on the implementation of the Common Core Curriculum.

The Common Core State Standards Initiative is a state-led effort to establish a shared set of clear educational standards in English language arts and Mathematics grades K-12. It was launched by the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices. The Common Core Standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that young people need for success in college and careers.

The South Dakota Department of Education gathered input from educators regarding content, rigor, developmental appropriateness, and alignment of the Common Core Standards and then provided that feedback to CCSSO and NGA. Feedback from South Dakota educators was generally positive. The South Dakota Board of Education voted to adopt the standards for English language arts and mathematics at a meeting on November 29, 2010. South Dakota joined at least 39 other states in adopting the Common Core State Standards.

A thorough review of the Common Core standards for English language arts indicated that they align closely with South Dakota's current standards in that area. The Common Core is more rigorous than the state's current math standards, however, they align better with the math standards the state was in the process of developing when the Common Core initiative was first announced.

In preparation for 2014-15 assessment, the SD Department of Education is launching the "Common Core Professional Development" series, which will cover a span of three years. The series will provide South Dakota educators with a systemic model to implement the Common Core within a learning environment rich in collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking.

The underlying outcomes for this initiative are:

- Provide teachers with a hands-on experience to gain a deeper understanding of the standards;
- Investigate how the Common Core standards impact teaching practices;
- Learn about the Common Core standards starting with the end in mind, how the standards can be assessed, working through curriculum planning;
- Give teacher opportunities to collaborate with other teachers from their grade levels as they understand Common Core standards;
- Emphasize standards-driven curriculum;
- Utilize Standards in Practice® theory and Understanding by Design model to gain model units of how to teach the standards that illustrate the vision;
- Connecting relevant initiatives and the 4 Rs (rigor, relevance, relationships, results).

Training will concentrate on disaggregating the standards as a foundation of the development of the curriculum and lesson planning. The DOE will implement Web Leveling – Expectations for Student Performance adapted from Norman L. Webb's "Alignment, Depth of Knowledge, and Change" from the Wisconsin Center for Education Research rather than Bloom's Taxonomy. The first and second year of training will center on disaggregating standards and aligning lessons to Common Core State Standards. The Department will offer a third year of training, however, the exact focus has not been finalized. Assessment may be the focus of year three training.

A schedule of professional development dates for this school year was distributed. Districts are encouraged to develop a local implementation plan, which may mean that participants that attended the training train other staff members. The department is offering three hours of graduate credit for participating in the fall training and the district will be provided with substitute pay. The primary focus is on a process for disaggregating standards, the secondary focus is a process to align lessons and curriculum to the standards. Participants will partake in online work to review all standards in their grade level and content area.

The DOE will adjust the 2012 Dakota STEP test to align assessment with the South Dakota Standards and to the focus standards. Achievement Series has been phased out and will no longer be available. The Portal will be able to show Dakota STEP and Common Core results for a district's students.

South Dakota along with 30 states have joined the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). In 2015, a set of comprehensive and innovative assessments including state-of-the-art adaptive online exams, for grades 3-8 and high school in English language arts and mathematics aligned to the Common Core State Standards will be assess so that all students leave high school prepared for postsecondary success in college or a career through increased student learning and improved teaching.

In other areas, the DOE is preparing for the move to the Common Core. World-class Instructional Design and Alignment (WIDA) from Wisconsin is working on a SIG grant for funding to develop an English Language Learners assessment aligned to the Common Core. South Dakota uses WIDA assessments for ELL students such as W-APT and ACCESS. South Dakota is a partner in the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC); an effort in research on alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards to develop a multi-state comprehensive assessment system for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

### **New Generation Accountability**

Harms and Guffin informed the committee about activities leading to the creation of a new accountability system for South Dakota. A task force was appointed by Secretary Schopp and met for their first meeting on September 14-15. Dr. Rick Melmer, former Secretary of the DOE, is chairing the committee and representatives from several districts are involved. Guffin is a COP/ Title I representative on this committee. The committee was form with three objectives identified:

- a. Review existing accountability system for South Dakota and determine strengths and weaknesses.
- b. Study characteristics of existing accountability systems that could be implemented in South Dakota.
- c. Develop an improved accountability system for South Dakota that will be approved by the US Department of Education.

The task force is scheduled to meet periodically during the next year with the plan to implement a new accountability system in two years. The task force began by identifying the elements of an accountability framework:

Performance objectives aligned to college and career readiness

-What does College and Career ready mean?

Valid measures of student outcomes disaggregated by student subgroups

-What indicators are valid measures of student achievement?

Determinations that capture school and district performance

-How should schools and districts be evaluated?

Transparent reporting of determinations and other data

-What is the best method to share school and district accountability results with all educational stakeholders?

Diagnostic reviews to determine causes of school and district performance, including review and analysis of school/district processes

-How can schools and districts be studied to determine effective processes and necessary interventions?

Classifications that distinguish schools and districts which will drive supports and interventions at all levels

-How can schools and districts be identified accurately and fairly?

Range of supports and interventions to promote continuous improvement, particularly with regard to lowest performing schools

-How can the state support schools and districts that are in need of assistance?

Innovation, evaluation and continuous improvement of the accountability system

-How can the accountability system be positioned for continuous improvement?

Teacher Quality

-How can we identify highly qualified and/or highly effective classroom teachers?

Ricketts gave the committee an overview of the events leading up to the planning of a new accountability system. On June 29, Secretary Schopp sent a letter to the US Department of Education stating that South Dakota would hold our annual measurable objectives (AMO) at the 2009-10 levels and not increase our levels per our accountability workbook. The letter also stated that South Dakota would re-set the graduation rate bar at 80 percent instead of the current 85 percent. After calls and correspondence between US ED and SD DOE, US ED has agreed to allow South Dakota to retain the goal of 85 percent for graduation, but set the current target at 80 percent with incremental increases in subsequent years. Also, US ED has agreed to allow South Dakota to remain at the 2009-10 AMO levels in reading/language arts. This was allowed as South Dakota had implemented new reading/language arts standards within the last 3 years and the statute allows holding the AMO under that circumstance.

The last remaining item to resolve is South Dakota's desire to hold the AMO level for math to the 2009-10 level. On September 1, an official letter was sent to US ED asking to amend the 2011 accountability workbook to the changes in the math AMOs. If this request is denied, the state will seek a waiver from increasing the math AMOs.

### **Accountability Workbook**

Ricketts informed the committee that the SD DOE's Accountability Workbook is submitted to US ED annually. This year the workbook was submitted in January. Approval of the workbook was received on August 24. See the above paragraph for the last remaining unresolved request. Ricketts also reported that the responsibility for the Accountability Workbook will be immediately moved from the Office of

Educational Services and Support to the Office of Assessment and Technology Systems. The Committee of Practitioners will continue to review the workbook each year.

Guffin asked the committee whether they recommend that any areas of the workbook require revision. Two areas were identified and discussed.

Critical Element 7.1 - Currently, the workbook states that any student in a school district for 15 or more days and drops out while in that district will be counted as a dropout in that school district.

Motion by Eeten, second by Bouza for the Committee of Practitioners to request a change in Critical Element 7.1 pertaining to the graduation rate to be more in-line with the AYP requirements of enrollment in a district for a full academic year as defined in other areas of the workbook. Motion passed.

The accountability reports posted on the DOE website report subgroups and their proficiency level in whole number percentages to enable bar graph representation. The percentages are rounded-off in an unusual way. Using rounded numbers is confusing to the districts and may not fairly report a true picture of a district's achievement. The published report using rounded numbers may indicate that a district has reached a sufficient percentage to make AYP or to be recognized as a distinguished school when in reality upon reviewing the actual numbers the district did not reach the desired level. The committee discussed showing the number out to one one-hundreths in the published report. They also discussed whether changing how the reports are created could have an adverse effect in other areas of accountability. In any case, the accountability workbook does not indicate that the published reports will be published with percentages that have been rounded. If the practice is continued, the committee believes that the workbook should clearly state that rounded numbers are used.

Merriman will check with a vendor to determine whether the charts can be created by using numbers that may be decimals out to one one-hundreths.

### **Meeting**

The committee decided to have their next meeting on June 13, 2012.

### **Adjournment**

Motion by Guffin, second by Dunmire to adjourn at 3:00 pm. Motion passed.