

Nonpublic School Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

December 13, 2022

Members Present: Patty Lansink, Josh Bowar, Brian L'Heureux, Donna Bishop

Others in Attendance: Kim Buryanek, Eric St Clair, Jillian Dotson, Tiffany Wood, Veronica Anderson, Rachel Bosovich, Thomas Mayes, Tom Chapman, Cathy Walz, Lynne Devaney, Kelly Kohout

| Agenda Item | Person | Notes |
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| Welcome and Review Agenda | Patty Lansink Kim Buryanek | Reviewed the agenda. No additions were made at this time. |
| Legislative Priorities | Eric St Clair | <p>Kim introduced Eric St Clair, the Iowa Department of Education's (Department) legislative liaison. Legislative session begins January 9. The Department is still discussing legislation for the 2023 Iowa Legislative Session, and how to advance it. A couple of bills are related to community colleges, including the community college Gap tuition assistance program, career counseling, teacher/admin statewide task force participation, special education services for homeschool students.</p> <p>Governor Reynolds will make her legislative priorities official on January 10 during her Condition of the State address. Last session's private school scholarship proposal could come up, as well as legislation around curriculum transparency. The Governor will release her proposed budget at that time as well.</p> <p>Legislative leadership was recently elected, and committee assignments set. The House created a new Education Reform Committee led by Republican leadership, with Speaker Grassley serving as chair. The House Education Appropriations subcommittee will be chaired by Rep. Nordman, and Rep. Wheeler will chair the Education Committee. In the other chamber, Sen. Sinclair will now serve as Senate President, with Sen. Rozenboom stepping in to chair the Education Committee. Education Committee Vice Chair Taylor will serve as chair of the Education Appropriations subcommittee.</p> <p>Both Rachel Bosovich and Lora Vargason will also be working with Eric during the legislative session. The committee asked Eric to provide an update during the February meeting.</p> |

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| <p>Stronger Connections Grant (Bipartisan Safer Communities Act 2022)</p> | <p>Jillian Dotson Tiffany Wood Veronica Anderson</p> | <p>Kim introduced presenters from the Department’s Federal Programs Bureau: Interim Bureau Chief Jillian Dotson and consultants Tiffany Wood and Veronica Anderson. The bureau handles Title funding allocations, including Title IV-A, which covers the Stronger Connections Grant. Jillian shared a slide presentation on the grant program. The funding period expires on September 30, 2026. The Department is in the planning phase now, and is also seeking stakeholder feedback. A public comment period is anticipated to open in January of 2023. The grant will be awarded as a competitive subgrant, which includes an application process for high-need school districts. Questions for public comment will include the definition of “high-need” and the prioritization of funds. Subgrants must also follow nonpublic consultation requirements, similar to other Title funding. The application process will likely begin in spring of 2023. There was discussion of whether nonpublic schools can access funds, and if they must offer the same services as public institutions. Local Education Agencies (LEAs) must apply and be awarded a grant for nonpublic schools to qualify for funding, and the winning LEAs will determine their funding priorities. Currently “high-need” districts are defined as having at least 40% of students eligible for free or reduced lunch. Subgrant applications are modeled after the GEER II (Governor’s Early Education Relief Fund) application process, in which awards are split between small, medium and large school districts. The total award for the state of Iowa is \$5,988,079.</p> |
| <p>Update on Task Force for SF2197</p> | <p>Rachel Bosovich</p> | <p>Rachel Bosovich distributed copies of the task force’s final report. It was submitted to the Iowa legislature on December 1, 2022. Josh Bowar also served on the task force. Rachel summarized the report. The task force began with discussion of federal law. Three primary issues were identified:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Resources nonpublic schools have in place, 2) Resources of public agencies, and 3) The relationship between public and nonpublic schools. <p>The task force determined that Item #3 would be the best issue on which to focus their recommendations.</p> <p>The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), doesn’t entitle parentally placed nonpublic school students to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). Iowa is one of only three or four states that entitles parentally placed nonpublic school students to FAPE. To that end, the task force outlined six recommendations in its report:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Revise Iowa Administrative Code to clarify that a child with a disability should receive their education in the school the child would attend if nondisabled, including a nonpublic school. |

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| | | <p>2) Provide state-level Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting facilitators trained in the issues surrounding placement decisions and available when placement and location decisions are being made. This would require legislative funding.</p> <p>3) Provide professional learning opportunities and support/informational materials to Area Education Agencies (AEAs), LEAs and nonpublic staff regarding the concept of FAPE and placement to encourage innovation and resource sharing.</p> <p>4) Provide professional learning opportunities and support materials on meaningful consultation to increase the consistency and efficiency of consultation between public and nonpublic schools.</p> <p>5) Establish accountability and data collection systems to help determine where more guidance and/or service is needed, and</p> <p>6) Develop an implementation plan and models. This would require legislative funding.</p> <p>A key takeaway was that the school in which the student is enrolled, whether public or nonpublic, should be the default location for IEP services.</p> <p>There was further discussion about ongoing education on all sides of administration (public, nonpublic and AEA). In its report, the task force pointed to the committee as a resource for more information and future conversations.</p> <p>The task force's goal is to have a broad group of stakeholders discussing issues, rather than isolated individuals. Rulemaking can't be finalized until the end of the school year, meaning rules would be in effect for the start of the next school year, at the earliest. However, since it is a clarifying rule, there is nothing preventing further conversation on the matter.</p> <p>There were questions regarding further communication, and whether the Department would have resources ready for administrators by the March 2023 consultation period. Rachel said that was the hope, but it is difficult to tell at the moment. The committee expressed interest in the Department issuing clarification of nonpublic special education budget allocations and rules. Concerns were raised that meaningful consultation between nonpublic schools and public schools wasn't happening for special education services.</p> |

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| Update on Disposition of EANS Property | Thomas Mayes | <p>Thomas discussed the skip pattern for disposition of Emergency Assistance for Nonpublic Schools (EANS) property when the period of availability is over. Items costing \$5,000 or more are classified as “equipment.” The Department can permit the property to remain in place to use for federal purposes (IDEA, Title programs, etc.), or dispose of it. Under state law, methods of disposal include: selling, scrapping, recycling or donating. Donations can be made to another state agency, any unit of government or to a nonprofit organization. Items costing less than \$5,000 are considered “supplies.” If they remain unused by the end of the period of availability, they must be sold by the state to repay the federal government. Federal statute does not care about supplies that are used, but they are still state property, and subject to the same state disposal regulations as equipment.</p> <p>Iowa Department of Administrative Services rules require a donation agent (from an AEA or the Department) to assess donation requests. Thomas recommended the Department set up a donation procedure for used supplies and equipment, and create a rank-order offering preference for educational institutions. The period of availability will likely run to September 30, 2023 for EANS I and September 30, 2024 for EANS II.</p> |
| Conditions for Learning Survey Update | Kim Buryanek | <p>Kim provided a recap of the Conditions for Learning Survey (CfL) discussion held during the October meeting, and asked the committee for updated feedback. One concern raised was that some nonpublic schools aren’t set up with the Panorama data platform, through which the survey is administered. There were also questions about how the information would be used. Kim said the primary use would be to help inform nonpublic school leadership about possible strengths and areas that could be further strengthened. Building-level data from nonpublic schools would not be considered public record. Individual nonpublic schools can decide if they want to participate in the survey; it is not an “all or nothing” proposition. Committing quickly is important, however, since the Department must create participating schools’ profiles in Panorama, then school administrators need to communicate with their constituents about the new survey. The committee suggested the Department write an explanation of CfL, the process through which data is collected and how the data would be used, which committee members would share with their professional networks. Then, the Department could reach out to its full list of nonpublic institutions and ask them to commit by a certain date if they want to participate. Kim said the Department will give the committee the initial message before the December break, and the Department will distribute the same information to its full list of nonpublic administrators shortly after the New Year.</p> |

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| Next Steps Agenda for February | | The committee added updates on the Iowa legislative session and Title IV-A to the next meeting's agenda. |

2022-2023 Nonpublic Advisory Meetings

- February 14, 2023
- May 9, 2023