

Nonpublic School Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

Feb. 13, 2024

Members Present: Patty Lansink (virtually), Josh Bowar (virtually), Brian L'Heureux (Virtually), Natasha Havercamp (virtually)

Others in Attendance: Kim Buryanek, Kassandra Cline, Rachel Bosovich,

Agenda Item	Person	Notes
1. Welcome and Review Agenda	Patty Lansink Kim Buryanek	Reviewed the agenda. No additions were made at this time. Order of items discussed were shifted due to staff's prior commitments. Committee members introduced themselves to Zacchary Foust, the Department's newest member to the School Improvement team.
2. Legislative Update	Rachel Bosovich	Rachel Bosovich stated the 16 th is the first funnel for legislation. If a bill hasn't made it through committee, technically the bill doesn't move forward. There are still exceptions that can be made in the amendment stage however. The second funnel is March 15. Rachel encouraged members to sign up on the Iowa Department of Education website for Eric St. Clair's legislative updates. Rachel gave a brief summary of several bills.
3. Future of Nonpublic School Advisory Committee	Rachel Bosovich	Rachel Bosovich reported that Eric St. Clair stated he currently has no more information on the boards and commissions and therefore has no more information regarding the future of the Nonpublic School Advisory Committee. Patty Lansink asked if there has been an updated version of the bill. Rachel stated that the last version contained a report that called for a 43% reduction in boards and commissions.

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<p>4. ESA Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. State testing Requirements b. Application period c. Other 	<p>Kassandra Cline</p> <p>Thomas Mayes</p>	<p>Kassandra Cline stated the Department is now working on ESA application. The applications open April 16th and will remain open through June 30. We are working on updating the Department website for new application guidelines. That includes updating the table to 400% within the poverty line. Families are asking if they met income requirements last year, will they still be required to meet it this year? She stated the answer was no. If income was maintained throughout the year, they will be approved for the next year. She asked that the nonpublic schools remind families that an application is required every year for an ESA to determine residency eligibility. The Department is hoping that families will have filled out their 2023 tax returns before applying, because any application not accompanying a 2023 application will have to be manually approved.</p> <p>Patty Lansink stated many families have reached out to Odyssey and have received no response. She asked if there is an update on that? Kassandra stated they have onboarded more customer service representatives in order to address the increase.</p> <p>Kassandra also stated that customer service is a notable part of the contract and asked that nonpublic administrators let families know that if they have unanswered inquires to have them forward them to the ESA email, studentsfirst@iowa.gov.</p> <p>Josh Bowar also asked about payments. He stated that he noticed the payments to schools this spring were delayed and sporadic compared to fall payments and asked if there was a reason for this. Kassandra let him know that this was a first-year implementation issue. The marketplace was launched the same week that spring payment funds were available. She also pointed out that the Department audits every dollar before it is spent. She mentioned that the delay compared to the fall, due to the more complicated vetting process. She stated that by fall semester she intends to have the payments processed within a few days of receiving them.</p> <p>Brian L'Heureux asked if these will be processed by the end of the month. Kassandra pointed out that only a handful are still "outstanding" the rest are in the process of being payed out to the schools.</p> <p>Josh Bowar asked about schools that are currently not accredited but working towards accreditation, are those schools able to receive funds if they are accredited during the school year? Kassandra stated those students would not be considered eligible until they were met the application deadline. He asked if those students currently considered "homeschooled" would be eligible for the 2024-2025 school year. Kassandra stated in that case, their status the year before wouldn't make them ineligible, but they would still have to maintain income eligibility. The availability of a school's accreditation would depend on whether or not that particular school has completed Iowa's accreditation process by the ESA deadline. Students in that circumstance would select that they were <i>not attending an accrediting school in the 2023-2024</i> in their upcoming ESA application.</p> <p>Patty Lansink asked if they were able to have a contact for specific questions about assessments. Kim Buryanek stated that she would provide an email to the committee to get any answers regarding Iowa Assessments answered.</p>

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LETRS Course Enrollment	Wanda Steuri	<p>Wanda Steuri, a member of the literacy team in the Department, gave an update on LETRS courses and enrollment. She stated the nonpublic schools ended up with 109 members signed up and another 100 in cohorts. In total over 266 educators signed up from nonpublic schools. She asked for feedback regarding sign-ups.</p> <p>Patty Lansink commented that many of her educators signed up in December. Josh Bowar stated 20 of their educators are also signed up and thanked Wanda for her help in keeping everything organized.</p> <p>Kim Buryanek stated that the communications team is going to be creating features on public school's success with LETRS. She urged the nonpublic to reach out if they had a school or cohort who had success with the LETRS course and wanted to be featured.</p>

Next Meeting Date: May 14, 2024