

Minutes of the Meeting

STATE OF NEVADA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
COMMISSION ON PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS IN EDUCATION

February 9, 2011

Call to Order; Roll Call; Pledge of Allegiance

President Owens called the meeting of the Commission on Professional Standards in Education to order at 9:00 A.M. via video conference in the Board Conference Rooms of the Nevada Department of Education Offices in Carson City and Las Vegas, Nevada.

Roll call showed the following Commissioners present:

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT IN LAS VEGAS:

Dr. Terry Owens, President
Brian Boothe, Commissioner
Dr. Nancy Sileo, Commissioner
Dr. Cheryl Lau, Commissioner

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT IN CARSON CITY:

Elissa Couch, Commissioner
Mary Keith, Commissioner
Wendy Zastawniak, Commissioner

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Brianne Thoreson, Vice President - excused
Dr. Jeffrey Geihs, Commissioner – excused

President Owens read the resignation letter submitted by Commissioner Geihs and her response to Commissioner Geihs. Deputy Attorney General Irvin stated that Commissioner Geihs' resignation is not final until the resignation has been accepted by the Governor. Mrs. Harper advised that she requested Commissioner Geihs submit his resignation to the Governor.

STAFF PRESENT IN CARSON CITY:

Gloria Dopf, Deputy Superintendent, Instructional, Research and Evaluative Services
Christina Harper, Commission Administrative Assistant
Katherine Rohrer, Licensure Office

STAFF PRESENT IN LAS VEGAS:

Dr. Jerry Barbee, Director of Teacher Licensure

LEGAL COUNSEL PRESENT IN LAS VEGAS:

Dr. James E. Irvin, Senior Deputy Attorney General

AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE IN CARSON CITY:

Thomas Harrison, University of Nevada, Reno
Francey Dennis, University of Phoenix, College of Education
Dortay Devenunzi, Washoe County School District
MaryAnn Demchak, University of Nevada, Reno
Shanon Taylor, University of Nevada, Reno

AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE IN LAS VEGAS:

Andre Yates, Clark County School District – Director of Licensure and Recruitment
Brenda J. Jones, Sierra Nevada College
Dr. Tom Pierce, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Peter Yeager, Educational Testing Service
Clairin DeMartini, Nevada State College

It was determined that a quorum of the Commission was present.

Dr. Barbee led the pledge of allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

MOTION: Commissioner Lau moved to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Commissioner Sileo. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes: a) December 9, 2010 Meeting

MOTION: Commissioner Lau moved to approve the December 9, 2010 minutes as submitted, seconded by Commissioner Zastawniak. The motion passed unanimously.

Fiscal Report – Review of Current Budget Account Balance

Dr. Jerry Barbee, Director of Teacher Licensure, reviewed the budget status report dated January 14, 2011. Dr. Barbee reported being half through the fiscal year, revenues received to date total \$1,071,586. The Commission's expenditures total \$5,250; expenditures for the Licensure budget total \$651,371; for an available funding total of \$420,214; with funding available from the Commission budget of \$6,880.07.

Update of Nevada Department of Education Activities

Ms. Dopf provided an update and indicated that the Department staff has been involved with preparing documents and testimony for the upcoming legislative session.

The Department continues to be involved in the roll out of the education reform agenda, specifically the Common Core and working with the Superintendents and the School Districts to generate a timeline for the incorporation of the newly adopted Common Core Standards in English Language Arts and math into the instructional arena to include professional development. It is anticipated that, particularly in math, there will be a sequential roll out by particular grade levels to allow for adequate opportunity for professional development before the incorporation of the revised Standards. In the English Language Arts area, there will be a more comprehensive roll out in a shorter period of time as the difference between the previous Standards and the Common Core Standards are less significant. Ms. Dopf advised that with the roll out, there will be implications for training programs and ultimately for licensure; staff will bring back the timeline for the roll out when it has been finalized.

Ms. Dopf updated on the work of the Coalition with regard to educator effectiveness linking achievement data with teacher/administrator evaluations. The Coalition continues to work to bring forth recommendations either through legislation or through the State Board to continue moving forward with education reform.

Ms. Dopf stated that the staff is gearing for the program approval process for educator preparation programs. Dr. Barbee is developing a timeline for that to occur as the seven year review process is approaching and modifications are needed to the analysis to ensure incorporation of State Standards into the training programs.

Dr. Barbee reported that the Licensure Office is in the process of implementing a new data base as a program improvement area for teacher licensing; this is currently under review by staff with an implementation date of April 1, 2011.

2011 Legislative Report and Update

Ms. Dopf informed that the Department is part of a legislative bill tracking system; tracking education related bill. Commissioners can access bill information through the Superintendent's Office.

The Governor, through his State of the State Address, indicated certain priorities proposing changes in the governance structure of the K-12 education system and supports the platform for the appointment of the members of the State Board of Education and the appointment of the Superintendent of Public Instruction by the Governor.

The ACR 2 Governance Group and the Blue Ribbon Task Force will be submitting their recommendations with regards to amendments to the K-12 governance structure to the Legislature. The State Board has supported some of the concepts in the ACR 2 recommendations, but have made recommendations for slight modifications, specifically as it relates to orientation of the State Board and retaining the responsibility that the State Board appoints the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The ACR 2 Governance Group did recommend a consolidation of commissions and councils; the Governor did conceptually agree that there is a need for the elimination/consolidation of commissions

and councils. The ACR 2 Governance Group recommended that the Commission on Professional Standards in Education not be eliminated.

Ms. Dopf stated that the Department and educational stakeholder groups continue in discussions regarding educational issues with the Governor and his staff.

Ms. Dopf provided an overview of possible cuts for state workers and school district employees. There is discussion for the elimination of furloughs and replaced with a 5% salary reduction for state workers; for school district employees their salary reduction would have to be met through employee collective bargaining and the Distributive School Account (DSA) would be reduced by 5%.

Ms. Dopf stated that the elimination of teacher tenure and teacher Pay for Performance has been recommended as a way to improve performance of students within a system of achievement analysis. There has been discussion regarding the implementation of the Nevada Growth Model to look at the growth of schools and growth of student achievement as opposed to the static model that currently exists under the just proficiency model testing each year. The Nevada Growth Model was developed under teacher effectiveness, accountability, and progress reporting.

Upon questioning, it was discussed that tenure and seniority are tied to achievement data.

Ms. Dopf reviewed AB 39, requested by the Nevada Department of Education, which revises NRS 391.042 to eliminate the requirement for the Nevada Department of Education to send notification by mail regarding a licensed individual's license expiration and replaces with maintenance of the directory and information available on the Department's website. Ms. Dopf reported that approximately one-third of the licensure expiration notifications are returned as "undeliverable" and the website is updated daily with education licensure information. This would be a cost savings for the Department.

Ms. Dopf stated that there is a hearing scheduled for AB 39 today in Assembly Education.

Workshop to Solicit Comments for Temporary Regulation NAC 391.378 – Qualifications for Teaching Pupils Who Have Autism

President Owens opened the workshop at 9:46 A.M. There were ten individuals present. There was public comment.

Andre Yates, Clark County School District, stated that this proposal would separate the autism endorsement to a stand-alone endorsement. In the present format, the autism endorsement must be attached to another special education endorsement. This proposal strengthens the requirements for an autism endorsement and opens opportunities to individuals to fill vacancies within autism classrooms.

Dr. Tom Pierce, Chair of the Department of Special Education and Early Childhood at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, stated that the Department of Special Education and Early Childhood at UNLV fully supports and endorses this proposal.

Rorie Fitzpatrick, Nevada Department of Education Director of the Office of Special Education, Elementary, Secondary Education and School Improvement Programs, stated that MaryAnn Demchak and herself are here on behalf of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), per the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the SEAC must have an opportunity to comment on rules and regulations that could have an impact on special education services for students with disabilities. Ms. Fitzpatrick stated that the SEAC discussed this proposal and indicated unanimous support for the autism endorsement to be a stand-alone endorsement but also expressed concern regarding the deletion of the Options Program. It was the strong recommendation of SEAC to continue the Autism Option Program and recommended removing the sunset date for the Options Program.

MaryAnn Demchak, University of Nevada, Reno and Vice Chair of the Special Education Advisory Committee, endorsed autism as a stand-alone endorsement and to retain the Autism Option Program. Dr. Demchak recommended that under 4 (b)(IX) it should read, "Assistive technology or augmentative alternative communication". Dr. Demchak also recommended wording, to be consistent with wording in other special education endorsement regulations, "some colleges/universities combine subject matter into one course and we will accept one course that encompasses two areas listed above if the course was specifically designed to fulfill more than one area and is a minimum of three semester credits however the allowance will only be made once."

Shanon Taylor, Assistant Professor in Special Education at the University of Nevada, Reno, strongly encouraged the Commission to retain the Autism Options Program to allow additional avenues for individuals in order to obtain the Autism Endorsement.

President Owens closed the workshop at 9:56 A.M.

Upon questioning by Commissioner Zastawniak, Ms. Dopf clarified that currently autism is an endorsement to a special license. The proposal would have autism remaining as an endorsement to a special license. Currently in order to obtain an autism endorsement, an individual must go through an existing license and add coursework onto an existing special license. The intent of the proposal is to eliminate the requirement of having to go through another special education endorsement as the only avenue to become endorsed in autism. The proposal sets the requirements to obtain an autism endorsement. Currently, the Options Program allows a special education teacher to work as a teacher of autism, while completing the autism requirements over a three year period.

Ms. Fitzpatrick stated that the SEAC recommended that the Commission amend the Options Program in order for regular education teacher to access the Options Program. Currently, only an individual with a special education license can access the Options Program.

MOTION: Commissioner Sileo moved to post the proposal for NAC 391.378- Qualifications for Teaching Autism for a public hearing with the following amendments: 1) #4(b) to allow for a course to compass two areas; 2) include the Options Program for all licensure areas (elementary, secondary or special); and 3) #4(b)(IX) include the wording “augmentative alternative communication, seconded by Commissioner Lau. The motion passed unanimously.

Workshop to Solicit Comments for Temporary Regulation NAC 391.1306 – Major or Minor in Social Studies

President Owens opened the workshop at 10:29 A.M. There were eight individuals present. There was no public comment.

President Owens closed the workshop for public comments at 10:30 A.M.

Commissioner Boothe, as the Task Force Chair, reviewed the proposal and outlined that the recommendations from the Task Force include geography as a required course and that an individual must take a course in all listed areas to be better prepared as a social studies teacher.

MOTION: Commissioner Lau moved to post the proposal for NAC 391.1306 – Major or Minor in Social Studies for a public hearing, seconded by Commissioner Boothe. The motion passed unanimously.

Workshop to Solicit Comments for Temporary Regulations for Amendments to Special Education Regulations: NAC 391.347 – Limited Endorsement to Teach Pupils Who Have Specific Learning Disabilities, Emotional Disturbances or Mild to Moderate Mental Retardation; NAC 391.360 – Qualifications for Teaching Pupils Who Have Intellectual Disabilities and Moderate to Intense Needs for Assistance and Intervention; NAC 391.363 – Qualifications for Teaching Pupils Who Have Disabilities and Who are Under 8 Years of Age; NAC 391.376 – Endorsement as Professional Teacher of Pupils Who Have Disabilities; NAC 391.378 – Qualifications for Teaching Pupils Who Have Autism

President Owens opened the public hearing at 10:32 A.M. There were ten individuals present. There was public comment.

Rorie Fitzpatrick, Nevada Department of Education Director of the Office of Special Education, Elementary, Secondary Education and School Improvement Programs, offered testimony relative to the workshop that was held in December; Ms. Fitzpatrick provided the following recommendations from the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC):

1. In NAC 391.343-2(d)(II)(XI) add, “health and orthopedic impairments and traumatic brain injury”; “or” should be changed to “and” before the wording intellectual disabilities and also for 2(d)(II)(X).
2. To not delete NAC 391.350 as a stand-alone endorsement. The SEAC would like to revisit with the Commission, in the future, NAC 391.350 to possibly strengthen the coursework in this area.

Dr. Tom Pierce requested to acknowledge Elizabeth Howe's dedication to education and students; and her input into the development of the special education regulation proposal as she passed away this past weekend. President Owens offered, on behalf of the Commission, condolences to her family, friends and colleagues.

President Owens closed the public hearing at 10:50 A.M.

MOTION: Commissioner Lau moved to post for a public hearing the special education regulation proposal from both the December and February workshops, seconded by Commissioner Sileo. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Hearing and Possible Adoption of Temporary Regulation to Consider Comments for Deletion of NAC 391.088 – Qualifications for Teaching Pupils From Birth Through Kindergarten

President Owens opened the public hearing at 10:51 A.M. There were ten individuals present. There was no public comment.

President Owens closed the public hearing at 10:52 A.M.

Commissioner Zastawniak, Task Force Chair, stated that the Task Force recommended deleting NAC 391.088 as all of the licensure requirements/coursework for early childhood birth through kindergarten are included in NAC 391.089 – Early Childhood Education - Birth through Age Eight.

MOTION: Commissioner Zastawniak moved to approve the proposal which includes the deletion of NAC 391.088 – Qualifications for Teaching Pupils From Birth Through Kindergarten, seconded by Commissioner Sileo. The motion passed unanimously.

Possible Approval of the Comparable Licensure Testing Matrix in NAC 391.036

President Owens stated that the testing matrix clarifies work previously completed with regard to AB 425 and reciprocity, whereby an individual coming from another state to obtain a teaching license would qualify as long as there was reciprocity with that state and comparable testing requirement. Dr. Barbee stated that this testing matrix will help clarify and define "comparable testing".

Dr. Barbee reviewed a state-by-state testing matrix, which included the state, the license, and the testing required in that state. Dr. Barbee also provided a handout with high-low scores; which included the Praxis test, Nevada's score and the state with the lowest test score and the largest gap. Dr. Barbee stated that the comparable testing matrix applies to any license that is not provisional.

It was stated that per NRS 391.032 1(b) allows the Commission to adopt regulations for reciprocity with other states.

There was a discussion on how to equate test scores with other states and should there be a gap analysis for each test and state.

Ms. Dopf provided history on the concept of comparable testing as an effort to maintain the standards of teachers in Nevada; wherein in a state if there is a "state accepted" comparable test in the subject area then Nevada would accept that test. This process was not intended to equate tests scores.

Dr. Barbee recommended accepting the Testing Matrix and charge an individual with taking a test if the test was not offered in their state; but not charge an individual with taking a test if the previous licensing state offered that test, but that state has a lower test score.

There was a discussion on whether or not to consider an acceptable test gap or percentage. Peter Yeager, Educational Testing Service (ETS), responded that scores for tests are determined on a state by state analysis and basis; and a score in one state does not equate to a score in another state. The questions offered on the test and the quantity of test questions differ from state to state for each test.

President Owens suggested that the Commission look at possibly accepting a broad view of comparable testing in the subject areas.

Ms. Dopf suggested adopting the concept of comparable testing and accepting a license from another state and not perform a coursework analysis; and cautioned the Commission of performing an analysis of the testing. Ms. Dopf suggested that if a test exists, then accept that test; and if the test does not exist then charge the individual with taking the test as an equitable approach.

MOTION: Commissioner Lau to approve the "Comparable Licensure Testing Matrix" (pages 39-41 in the packet) for use in a broad but consistent manner, seconded by Commissioner Boothe. The motion passed unanimously.

A break was granted at 11:52 A.M.
The meeting reconvened at 12:07 P.M.

Discussion and Possible Development and Approval of a Position Statement on the Alternative Route to Teacher Licensure Regarding an Accelerated Program Non-Traditional Training Program

President Owens stated that the Legislature is looking at "Race to the Top" criteria which includes numerous components for an Alternative Route the Licensure Program (ARL) for teachers and administrators.

President Owens opened up the discussion to Commissioners on their thoughts on the ARL Program.

President Owens stated, as her personal opinion, she strongly feels that the ARL Program is on a path that degrades and devalues the profession of teaching. President

Owens stated that content knowledge does not drive a good teacher, and that the pedagogy/methodology/student teaching is being ignored as a trait of a good teacher. A teaching degree does not equate that an individual is a good teacher. President Owens feels strongly that teaching is a profession and an important component in the development of students.

Upon questioning by Commissioner Lau, Dr. Barbee responded that staff has not performed any research or analysis on ARL Programs. However, discussions have ensued on the amended regulations as it relates to the utilization of ABCTE and the Administrator ARL Program process. Dr. Barbee offered that it is time to perform an analysis of the regulations, with the one-year introduction into program, how this process is occurring, and identify any loopholes.

ACTION: Dr. Barbee will perform this analysis as a priority for the next meeting.

Commissioner Sileo, as the representative from higher education, stated that she has significant professional concerns with Alternative Route Programs that do not contain a component tied to higher education or professional education programs. Dr. Sileo stated that she would be very interested in working with Dr. Barbee or a Task Force in researching alternative route to licensure programs both in Nevada and nationwide.

Ms. Dopf provided history and stated that Nevada has had an ARL program for many, many years. Based upon 2009 Legislative action, the Commission appointed a Task Force to provide an extensive review of the current ARL regulations and make recommendations for modifications. That Task Force worked very hard over several meetings and provided comprehensive recommendations to the Commission, which was adopted. The current ARL Program requires a three year program for additional training while the individual is under a mentorship program with coursework requirements through a higher education program. Ms. Dopf stated that with the Race To the Top, it was recommended to rethink our ARL Program in two areas: 1) ARL Program for administrators; and 2) Consider an avenue through non-traditional training programs and quicker two-year ARL Program. The Task Force did create an ARL Program for administrators, but did not put forth a proposal for an avenue for non-traditional training programs

Commissioner Keith expressed support for a stronger ARL Program with a mentor in the classroom in order for the ARL candidate to strengthen their skills in the classroom. Commissioner Keith expressed concern allowing any individual be allowed into a classroom and teach; as with requirements for Race To The Top there are tighter achievement rates and expectations for teachers.

Commissioner Boothe stated that he feels that there is a delicate balance within the ARL Program and while world experience is wonderful to have in the classroom, it takes more than experience to make a good teacher. Commissioner Boothe stated that since there is currently not a teacher shortage, this is an opportunity to hire quality educators and recommended not rushing individuals through an ARL Program. Commissioner Boothe stated that being a "highly qualified teacher" has a value to students and parents.

Commissioner Zastawniak expressed support for teachers to be highly qualified and that teaching is an art, science, and a profession. Commissioner Zastawniak offered that the delivery of content knowledge to a group of students takes more than content knowledge, due to student developmental levels, family backgrounds, and issues surrounding special education.

Commissioner Couch agreed with the previous comments and expressed that educators need to have a strong educational background in order to benefit students.

There was discussion to develop a task force to develop a position statement to gather additional information and determine why there is a push for a quicker route to teaching.

Ms. Dopf recommended that the Commission develop a three paragraph Position Statement and answer the following questions: 1) How do we keep the ARL Program but keep good teachers in the classroom? and 2) Higher education preparation programs vs. an educational system that is broken in Nevada.

ACTION: The Commission agreed to hold a video conference meeting on March 1, 2011 to begin at 9:00 A.M.

Update, Submission of Reports and/or Recommendations From Task Forces and Possible Adoption of Recommendations From Task Forces

- Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 2 (ACR 2) Action Plan Task Force

President and Task Force Chair Owens reported that the Task Force has not met since mid-December. At that meeting the Task Force developed and approved the letter sent to Assemblywomen Bonnie Parnell and the ACR 2 Governance Committee dated December 18, 2010.

Future Agenda Items

The following items were noted to be on the March 1, 2011 agenda:

- Discussion, development and possible approval of an accelerated route for the Alternative Route the Licensure Program and non-traditional coursework programs.

The following items were noted to be on the March 24, 2011 agenda:

- Department of Education Update;
- Legislative Update;
- Public Hearings: 1) Autism Endorsement – NAC 391.378; 2) Social Studies Endorsement – NAC 391.1306; and 3) Special Education regulations;
- Update from Task Forces: ACR 2 Action Plan Task Force.

Comments From Public

Andre Yates, Clark County School District, raised a concern regarding testing and offered that Nevada may be losing quality teachers due to the lack of reciprocity. Mr. Yates requested that the Commission revisit allowing a one-year provisional license, in order for an individual to remove testing provisions. Mr. Yates stated that a one-year provisional license will keep standards high; but allow an avenue for individuals to begin testing and complete testing requirements.

Clairin DeMartini, Nevada State College - representing the faculty and school of education, offered, with regards to the comparable testing matrix, the Commission consider looking at non-provisional vs. provisional licenses when looking at test scores. There may be issues requiring a non-provisional veteran teacher to take a test, when they have taken alternative tests in their original state not listed on the comparable testing matrix. Ms. DeMartini also suggested looking at when the individual took the exam. Ms. DeMartini would like to see a reference on the comparable testing matrix that addresses highly qualified teacher federal requirements as an avenue for reciprocity.

Ms. DeMartini stated that with regards to the ARL Program; she has enjoyed working with Clark County School District in the area of the ARL Program. Clark County provides excellent mentorship with outstanding individuals going through the ARL Program.

Comments from Staff

Ms. Dopf informed the Commission that she is retiring effective in February 2011. Ms. Dopf stated that she has enjoyed working with the Commission.

Dr. Barbee wished Ms. Dopf the best from the Licensure Office and expressed his appreciation for all of Ms. Dopf's guidance.

Comments from Commissioners

Each Commissioner wished Ms. Dopf well and expressed their gratitude for all of her work for students and education in the State of Nevada.

Commissioner Couch informed the Commission that the first week in February has been designated as National School Counseling Week; she will be attending the State Conference as President-Elect for the Nevada School Counselor Association this week.

Adjournment of Commission Meeting

President Owens adjourned the meeting at 1:10 P.M.