

Illinois School Leader Task Force
November 5th, 2007
Chicago, Illinois
Minutes

Task Force members present: Steve Tozer, University of Illinois at Chicago; Linda Tomlinson, Illinois State Board of Education; Debbie Meisner-Bertauski, Illinois Board of Higher Education; Jo Anderson, Illinois Education Association; Gail Ward, CPS Office of Principal Preparation and Development; April Ervin, New Leaders for New Schools, Chicago; Brad Hutchison, Olympia School District; Diane Jackman, EIU College of Education; Michael Johnson, Illinois Association of School Boards; Jeff Mays, Illinois Business Roundtable; Peg Mueller, Chicago Community Trust; John Murphy, Illinois Council of Professors of Education Administration; David Prasse, Loyola University College of Education; Diane Rutledge, Large Unit District Association; Jason Leahy, Illinois Principals Association; Faye Terrell-Perkins, Chicago Principal and Administrators Association; Darlene Ruscitti, DuPage ROE; Carlene Lutz, Illinois Federation of Teachers; and, Janet Knupp, Chicago Public Education Fund

Task Force members not present: Chris Koch, Illinois State Board of Education; Deborah Curtis, Illinois State University; Deana Demuzio, State Senator; Judy Erwin, Illinois Board of Higher Education; Judy Hackett, IAASE; Michael Smith, State Representative

Task Force members on conference call: Dennis Williams, Illinois State Board of Education and Patrick Murphy, Illinois State Board of Education

Staff members present: Michele Seelbach, Illinois Board of Higher Education; Erika Hunt, Illinois State University; Lisa Hood, Illinois State University; Norm Durflinger, Illinois State University; and, Anthony Marotta, Illinois State University

Guest speakers present: Cheryl Gray, Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) and Betty Fry, Southern Region Education Board (SREB)

11:13 a.m. – 11:20 a.m. Welcome

- Steve Tozer called the meeting to order
 - Led introductions and discussed plans for the future of the Task Force
- Erika Hunt introduced Cheryl Gray and Betty Fry

11:20 a.m. – 1:10 p.m. Preparing Highly Qualified School Leaders
Illinois Benchmarking Report

- Cheryl Gray, SREB, provided an overview of the Preparing Highly Qualified School Leaders *Illinois Benchmarking Report Executive Summary*
 - Described the role of SREB, their 16 member states, and governance structure
 - Described their learning-centered leadership program

- Described the seven core components of a learning centered school leadership system
 - Learning focused leadership standards
 - Recruitment and selection of future school leaders
 - Preparation programs that emphasize the principals' responsibilities for curriculum, instruction and student learning
 - School based experiences that expose candidates to the real world challenges of school leadership
 - Licensure that serves the public's expectation for improved school and student performance
 - Professional development that continually develops expertise in school improvement
 - State and district conditions that motivate and enable principals to affect improvement in teaching and learning
- Described how SREB rated the leadership system in Illinois
- Presented information on how Illinois compared to the progress of the pacesetter SREB states on the following 7 indicators:
 - Adopt learning-focused leadership standards
 - Recruit and select future school leaders
 - Redesign leadership programs to emphasize curriculum, instruction and student learning
 - Develop programs with school-based experiences that prepare participants to lead school improvement
 - Base professional-level licensure on improved school and classroom practices
 - Create alternative pathways to initial licensure
 - Provide training and support for leadership teams in low-performing schools
- Encouraged Illinois leaders to examine our leadership system to determine how to increase the focus on student learning
- Betty Fry, SREB, presented a power point presentation on Preparing Highly Qualified School Leaders - *Illinois Benchmarking Report* – November 2007 – Preliminary Report
 - Stressed that states need to have learning centered systems and gave core components of a learning centered leadership system:
 - Focus on learning; must have strong partnership; cannot allow students to pick mentor and placement; continued need for diverse setting for principals; tiered system; continuous support for principals throughout their career
 - Reviewed the positive and negative aspects of Illinois policy and practice as documented in the *School Leader Preparation: A Blueprint for Change*
 - Reviewed the positive and negative aspects of the benchmark documentation provided by Illinois
 - There is minimal action in school based experiences
 - There is a joint responsibility for quality internship programs

- There is a requirement for assessments, but no criteria
- No evidence about evaluating mentors
- Illinois has minimal action for Professional Level Licensure
 - Some parts of the system are strong, but not a truly tiered system
 - New mentoring program is strong with some well defined selection criteria
 - Some selection and credentialing criteria within new Illinois Distinguished Principal Program
- Renewal of Licensure is confusing because it is focused on maintaining competence at an initial level; should go to proficient or advanced level
- Illinois has some action in regards to alternative licensure mainly around the alternative route to certificate for NBCTs and the teacher leadership endorsement
- Illinois has a state wide data base lacks information for low performing schools
 - Programs for leadership teams and low performing schools was not reflected in documentation
 - No documentation that teachers and principals train to work effectively with leadership teams
 - Administrator Academy focuses on leadership training, but not on low performing schools
- Gave recommendations
 - Expand the role of the Task Force to make recommendations for improving the whole system supporting school leaders not just the preparation
 - Provide oversight for the development and implementation of new cohesive learning-centered system
 - Develop strategies to monitor the effectiveness of state evaluation system for each state goal
 - Bottom Line: What will it take?
 - Using money creatively
 - Time and effort to revamp system
 - Constituencies to help
 - Better prepared faculty and staff to generate passion about learning centered school leadership system

1:10 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Working Lunch – Small Group Discussion

- Steve explained the expectations for the small group lunch discussions
 - Do we buy these seven indicators for Illinois?
 - If we do support these seven indicators, how can we improve on them?
 - What should we focus on in doing so?
- Steve thanked Betty Fry and Cheryl Gray and dismissed the Task Force for the working lunch

2:00 p.m. – 2:55 p.m.

Group Discussion

- All Task Force members contributed varying perspectives on the issues raised so far, including: praise for the indicators, the indicators as a wake-up call, concern about having the right people to recruit, streamlining indicators or identifying more specific indicators in Illinois, making standards consistent across the board, a request for a general or specific list of databases used for the Report, learning from some district level practices as models for success, acknowledging all forces involved with the task and system and the need for a systemic approach, concern about tiered licensure, the diversity of the state and the need for prioritization, and the critical nature of the internship,
- Steve gave four closing discussion remarks:
 - Thinking systemically is critical
 - Masters programs may need to be mapped much better onto the diversity of leadership responsibilities in schools
 - Continue to pay attention to assessment ; “standards based” is not going deep enough for the skills and behaviors that leaders need to improve student learning
 - Seven indicators should not be used as a guide for state standards, but instead should be used to stimulate our own thinking toward change
- Steve noted the Tribune has created a powerful online tool to research the performance of public schools in the state, which can be found at chicagotribune.com/reportcard
- Steve called to continue moving forward to get data and announced that the focus of the next meeting will be on data collected by the Illinois Council of Professors of Education Administration (ICPEA)
- Steve thanked the Task Force again and announced the next meeting on November 27th from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Illinois Principals Association building located at 2940 Baker Drive in Springfield