

Teacher Recruitment, Recovery, and Retention Task Force

April 11, 2022

1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Iowa Room, 1-153

1201 N. Third St. Baton Rouge, LA 70802

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Dr. Kim Hunter Reed called the meeting of the Teacher Recruitment, Recovery, and Retention Task Force to order at 1:06 p.m.

ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS

Ms. Mellynn Baker called the roll, and a quorum was established.

Members Present	Affiliation
Esrom Pitre	Senate Committee on Education
Em LeBlanc-Cooper	LDOE
Kim Hunter Reed	Commissioner of Higher Education
Wendy Baudoin (designee)	LA School Boards Association
Karen Peace	LA Association of School Executives
Bruce Chaffin	LA State Association of School Personnel Administrators
Paula Calderon	LA Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
Gladys Mouton	LA Association of Educators
Barry Erwin	Council for a Better Louisiana
Rep. Buddy Mincey	LA House of Representatives
Sandy Holloway	BESE
Joy Rimmer	Association of Professional Educators of LA
Alex Jerrell	LA Association of Public Charter Schools
Members Absent	Affiliation
Rep. Mark Wright	House Committee on Education
Mike Faulk	LA Association of School Superintendents
Edward Parks	LA Federation of Teachers
Sen. J. Rogers Pope	LA Senate

APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 22, 2022 MINUTES

Mr. Barry Erwin asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the February 22, 2022 meeting. On motion of Mr. Esrom Pitre, seconded by Commissioner Kim Hunter Reed, the Task Force approved the minutes.

After the roll was called, Commissioner Reed recognized Representative Mincey, who addressed the Task Force, thanking the members for their work. Commissioner Reed thanked Representative Mincey for highlighting the work of the Task Force during the House Education Committee presentation. Representative Mincey commented that he has challenged the committee to not put more duties on teachers and he thinks the message was well received. He also commented that the workforce has not gotten to this point overnight and that legislators need some education on what brought us to the current point.

NATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR RECRUITING TEACHERS. WHY DIVERSITY MATTERS

Commissioner Reed introduced Mr. Patrick Steck, Senior Director of Policy at Deans for Impact, to present national strategies and best practices pertaining to diversifying the teacher core. She also recognized Mr. Ronnie Morris, BESE member who attended the meeting.

Mr. Steck gave a brief overview of his role at Deans for Impact, a non-profit that works with institutions that prepare teachers spanning the spectrum from alternative certification programs to traditional programs and how program design supports aspiring teachers.

Mr. Steck stressed that teacher diversity matters, and that diversity leads to a quality workforce. He then presented data from a study conducted by The National Bureau of Economic Research demonstrating that teacher diversity holds the power to ensure students are successful academically. The study found that Black students in Tennessee who were randomly assigned to at least one Black teacher in grades kindergarten through three were 13% more likely to graduate from high school and 19% more likely to enroll in college compared to their same-school, same-race peers. He also presented evidence from a study that followed students in North Carolina for almost a decade, enabling researchers to compare the disciplinary outcomes of students in years when they had a same-race teacher compared to years when they did not.

Mr. Steck noted that the current workforce nationally is predominantly white and female and, although the diversity of the nation's 6.6 million teachers has increased since 1990, it is not keeping up with the increase in the diversity of K-12 students. He then presented data on the next generation of teachers who will be entering the workforce; those who are entering teacher preparation programs. He noted that in many places, including Louisiana, the gap in teacher enrollment mirrors the gaps in workforce diversity. He mentioned that only three states, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine, have more white students than aspiring teachers in the pipeline, while Wyoming is the closest state to having parity in the pipeline. He commented that those four states are rural states and are fairly homogeneous; many in academia attribute their success in closing diversity gaps to the homogeneity of their general population. States such as

Florida, Missouri, and Texas are in the middle of the pack of those who have worked over the last couple of years to bring down the gaps in teacher diversity, but there is still much work to do.

Mr. Steck also provided national data that showed the difference in diversity across the types of teacher preparation programs, from traditional university-based preparation to alternative route programs. Of those enrolled in a teacher preparation program, nearly 64% are white compared to the public-school student population, which is 47% white. In alternative certification, only 46.8% of enrollees across the country are white, which is much closer to the reality of the K-12 student population. This leads to the question of whether alternative certification is potentially producing a more diverse workforce than the traditional pipeline. Mr. Steck advised that not all alternative pathways are designed the same and come with their own set of challenges.

Mr. Steck then presented three evidence-based strategies for recruiting a more diverse teacher workforce. The first strategy focused on increasing access and affordability to high-quality teacher preparation programs and included discussion of certification and licensure, as well as funding for teacher candidates and entrance exam requirements. The second strategy focused on how to generate awareness and support for teaching as a profession and communicate the value of serving as a teacher, noting that Tennessee provides a good model for undertaking this work. Finally, the third strategy was developing pipelines and pathways. He advised that Washington State provides a very promising statewide example with a program that has driven recruitment of a more diverse student population to pursue their certification, with a critical emphasis on identifying existing talent pools. Mr. Steck also commented on the importance of investing in HBCUs and minority-serving institutions and noted that Louisiana has no specific funding opportunities for HBCUs, which disproportionately prepare aspiring teachers of color.

In closing, Mr. Steck highlighted the areas where Louisiana is doing the work that cuts across these three strategies. The Task Force is already focusing on eliminating some of the certification barriers, but he encouraged members to think about establishing scholarship, loan forgiveness, or tuition reimbursement programs for aspiring teachers of color. In addition, he noted that the Task Force has an opportunity to review and weigh in on the recommendations and updates that will come from establishing clear diversity goals and reporting the annual progress towards those goals. The state data system can also be improved, and Mr. Steck recommended that the Task Force look at what types of data are currently missing or overlooked. He also called attention to the Prior Learning Assessment Policy recently passed by the Board of Regents and how it can be used to support existing talent pools in becoming teachers. Finally, he encouraged the Task Force to think deeply about investing in HBCUs and MSIs that are doing the work every day and could be doing more with additional resources.

Mr. Ronnie Morris asked if Mr. Steck had any experience with any loan forgiveness examples, such as an exchange commitment for teaching in a school district? Mr. Steck replied that he had not seen this particular model, but that there are several other paths that the Task Force could consider. Mr. Morris inquired whether campuses miss the recruitment of potential teacher candidates when they are not able to apply for scholarship support until they are enrolled. Mr. Steck replied that institutions have control of their own institutional processes, and that scholarship support could be an effective recruitment strategy.

Mr. Morris referred to the removal of the Praxis One barrier for potential teachers. He asked if Praxis One or its equivalent is required after enrollment. Mr. Steck replied that this is on a state-by-state basis, but that more states are dropping the assessment. Mr. Morris asked if there was any data to show the outcomes related to that decision. Mr. Steck replied that there are data on the predictive value of the assessment in determining whether a person is going to be effective in the classroom. He advised that the assessments are in place to ensure that the person entering the classroom is going to be able to teach and produce gains in both academic and social outcomes for students, but in terms of correlation to effectiveness in teaching, there are no data to support. Also, with the shift towards changing policy, there is still much to learn about its effect on producing a more diverse aspiring teacher population.

Mr. Morris asked Mr. Steck about reporting annual progress and tracking for diversity goals. Mr. Steck replied that many states are thinking about how to do this in a more coordinated way.

Ms. Gladys Mouton asked about investing in retention, specifically school climate. Mr. Steck replied response rates on state surveys are around 15%, so data are insufficient to draw conclusions. Community-based organizations may be able to generate better responses.

Mr. Erwin asked about the mechanics of loan forgiveness programs. Mr. Steck replied that the best practice is to look at loan forgiveness as a scholarship for recruitment, which does come at a very real cost as there is no guaranteed return on investment. Dr. Paula Calderon also noted that Louisiana previously had a service obligation agreement.

Mr. Esrom Pitre asked if Mr. Steck came across any states that offered housing incentives to help those who want to join the teacher corps. Mr. Steck replied that Connecticut has created a program for those who enroll in their minority-serving institutions to provide mortgage assistance for teachers. He also commented that Hawaii has a similar program converting unused military housing into affordable housing for teachers.

Commissioner Reed thanked Mr. Steck for his presentation and advised the Task Force that the teacher scholarship legislation had just cleared the committee, and was moving forward.

PRE-EDUCATOR RECRUITMENT

- Campus Recruitment Survey

Commissioner Reed then introduced Dr. Susannah Craig to discuss the Teacher Education Preparation Program Survey. Dr. Craig advised the Task Force that the survey was sent out in January asking four-year institutions how they are recruiting students to become teachers in high-need areas. Responses varied from hosting district open houses, submitting brochures to Human Resources personnel, visiting directly with high school students, and meeting with paraprofessionals to create a paraprofessional-to-certified-teacher pipeline. The survey also asked how students are placed in the districts. The responses included partnering with local school districts, working with recruiters to connect students to schools, and exposing students to a variety of schools through methods, experiences, and mandatory meeting settings at the school sites. Survey responses reported the number one obstacle to teacher preparation was the cost of the Praxis. Dr. Craig added that an elementary school teacher must take eight different tests to be certified. Mr. Morris asked about the cost of each test, which Dr. Craig cited as \$150. Dr.

Calderon commented that there is a single test for elementary teachers, but BESE and LDOE did not want to replace the multiple tests with just one.

Dr. Craig informed the Task Force that the survey specifically asked what processes are in place to ensure that teachers of color are being recruited into educator preparation programs. She advised that several institutions have established processes such as using the Call Me Mister program, Education Rising programs, and the pre-educator pathway, which is a Jumpstart Pathway where students earn dual enrollment credit for courses they are taking. Institutions were also asked how they are addressing barriers, with answers including advocating for additional funding, providing practice study sessions, and working directly with school districts to provide scholarships. Institutions identified needed support including monies for recruitment, expansion of articulation agreements between two- and four- year institutions for seamless transfer, and a rigorous new teacher induction program that provides both emotional and financial support during the first years of teaching. Many institutions indicated that they do have partnerships with the business community and educational organizations.

- Pre-Educator Pathway - University of Louisiana Monroe

Dr. Craig then introduced Dr. Amy Weems from the University of Louisiana at Monroe to discuss the Pre-Educator Pathway. Dr. Weems advised that in response to the difficulty in recruiting teachers in the rural areas surrounding Monroe, she and others created a workgroup to focus on recruitment. In response to the growth of the workgroup, LDOE asked her to help develop a pre-educator pathway, being one of the first generation of hybrid pathways for students bound for both community colleges and four-year institutions. In addition, ULM was also established as a state affiliate of Educators Rising. Once the pathway was recognized by BESE, she was contacted by others around the state who felt that this needed to be a Louisiana option and a statewide group. The work began and a year later, the program was given statewide status as a jumpstart pathway by BESE. The first pilot courses were offered in 2019-2020 at both Neville and Wossman High Schools. The group partnered with highly diverse high schools and made sure that teachers from underrepresented populations were serving as instructors of record.

Dr. Weems noted that the team is continuing to build upon its momentum, hosting the first state conference with Northwestern State University and forming its first collegiate chapter. A \$100,000 grant from Regions Bank will go towards scholarships for completers from high school partner programs. The program also received statewide articulation for Foundations of Education, which is one of two specific educator courses in the pre-educator pathway. Dr. Weems mentioned that the group sees Praxis I as its number one roadblock in developing the teacher workforce and asked that the Task Force work to help clear that roadblock.

Dr. Weems noted that the group is working with LOFSA to strengthen their 60 plus 60 agreement, so students who complete the pre-educator pathway have the option to attend

community college for two years and additional opportunities beyond that. Though currently only partnered with Delta Community College, the group would like it to be a statewide option and an option for TOPS Tech. Mr. Barry Erwin asked what issues need to be addressed to accomplish this.

Dr. Weems indicated that there are needs for curricular options and related funding to support the Educators Rising national curriculum. She informed the Task Force that she has been asked by LDOE to do work on supporting materials for schools and districts that are implementing the program related to budgeting, selecting teachers, onboarding students, recruitment, and other factors, which will be presented at the Teacher Leader Summit in New Orleans.

Mr. Morris asked if there was an estimate of the number of students enrolled in the pre-educator pathway that was approved by BESE. Dr. Weems replied that there are approximately 60-75 students enrolled among the six partnerships.

● Pre-Educator Pathway – Ed Rising Program

Mr. Barry Erwin introduced Ms. Maegan Schopper with Rapides Parish Schools to discuss the Pre-Educator Pathway.

Ms. Schopper highlighted the Pre-Educator Pathway in Rapides Parish, noting that this is the first year the pathway has been implemented in the district, and that it is currently implemented in four high schools in the district. The program currently has four teacher leaders and 26 students and uses the Educators Rising Curriculum. In addition, the district has an Educators Rising club, which is currently in 16 schools. The club has a total of sixteen sponsors and over 200 students.

Mr. Morris asked for an example of their engagement with sponsors or community service and Ms. Schopper provided additional information on several events.

Ms. Schopper also spoke on dual enrollment and the pre-educator pathway, stating that 26 students are actively enrolled in a dual enrollment course, Multicultural Learning Communities. A waiver for the dual enrollment requirements for the ACT score and the ability to enroll students based on counselor recommendations led to such a large number of participants. She hoped the waiver could be retained in the future as there are several students who want to be teachers, but have not reached the required ACT score. Commissioner Reed responded that the Board of Regents approved a three-year commitment to allow a GPA and counselor recommendation as an alternative measure for enrolling in dual enrollment.

Ms. Schopper then discussed the success of the program, and Mr. Alex Jerrell asked if administrators have a sense of a successful conversion rate. Ms. Schopper replied that 40% of

the students going into education is the current goal. She noted that the program was awarded a Models of Excellence Award for its early accomplishments and the team has partnered with LSU-A to offer two dual enrollment courses for students who have declared to enter the pre-educator pathway. She added that the team hosted the 2022 regional Educators Rising conference, and have assisted three parishes in developing a pre-educator pathway. She announced that on May 3rd, they will be having a signing day for those who want to go into education, similar to signing days held for athletes, and added that funding is available to use for recruitment and teacher stipends. Mr. Morris asked who the stipends are for, and Ms. Schopper replied that they are for the teacher leaders who are teaching the pathways. Dr. Calderon commented that West Baton Rouge Parish also held a signing day which doubled as a recruiting event.

Mr. Morris asked Ms. Schopper to provide more details about current and future networking. Ms. Schopper explained that currently she is working to get as many schools as possible to offer at least the Educators Rising Club and is arranging campus visits at several universities. In addition, she plans to reach out to businesses to create partnerships to generate funding as well as student visits to the businesses.

Mr. Esrom Pitre asked about the teachers in the program. Ms. Schopper replied that while many are core subject teachers, some are electives teachers. Selection is based on their passion for the profession, and not necessarily the subject that they teach.

Ms. Schopper then presented the goals of the program going forward. She advised the Task Force that their two goals include expanding from six to eight schools and enrolling 50 students in the pre-educator pathway, which would double the number of enrollments. The four-year goal is to expand into all eleven high schools and enroll at least one hundred students in the pathway. She then provided a video that showed the impact of the pre-educator pathway.

- Call Me Mister Program

Commissioner Reed introduced Dr. George Noflin, Grambling State University, to speak to the Task Force about the Call Me Mister Program.

Dr. Noflin began by introducing two of the members of the Call Me Mister program, Mr. Nicholas Cobb and Mr. Ja'deric Talbert, current President. He then informed the Task Force that the goal of the Call Me Mister program is to increase the pool of available teachers from broader, more diverse backgrounds, particularly in low-performing elementary schools. The program had its first graduating class in 2004, and all the alumni are still in the education field, whether as a teacher, a principal, or a human resources position. Almost 20% have been designated teachers of the year.

Dr. Noflin then described the program and how students are involved. Students receive need-based scholarships, preferred housing, and early advising. They participate in campus activities such as student government and are band members, as well as meeting with him once a week and participating in community service. He then provided a brief video that showed the impact of the Call Me Mister program and announced the first Call Me Mister conference on June 30, 2022 at Grambling State University.

Dr. Noflin then asked Mr. Cobb and Mr. Talbert to answer any questions. Mr. Pitre asked what they like most about the program. Mr. Cobb responded that inspiring other Black male educators is what excites him. Mr. Talbert responded that representation is what excites him, as he is from a small town and wants to show others like himself what they can do. Commissioner Reed asked what the message should be going forward as they try to recruit more young men like themselves to enter the pipeline. Mr. Cobb responded that there are many like him from his neighborhood that respond well to accomplishment and motivation. Mr. Talbert replied that they can show potential teachers the why or purpose. Ms. Mouton asked if they saw themselves staying in Louisiana. Both replied that they do because they are seeing the work done in the state and want to be part of that change. Mr. Morris asked if they could change any current BESE rule or add a new rule, what would it be? Both agreed that they would like to see a change to student teaching, to eliminate the year-long residency requirement.

Commissioner Reed thanked Dr. Noflin, Mr. Cobb, and Mr. Talbert for their presentation.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Commissioner Reed asked Ms. Em Leblanc-Cooper to provide a update on three pieces of legislation that have been discussed in the group. She first discussed the Geaux Teach Scholarship Fund, which was reported favorably by the Education and Appropriations Committees and noted that both the Return to Work and Praxis Core bills have not been scheduled yet.

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

Commissioner Reed highlighted the one-pager that describes preliminary recommendations and actions.

Dr. Michelle Demeulenaere advised that statewide listening sessions will take place in lieu of surveys, so the Task Force is able to hear from everyone. She then provided a timeline for the listening sessions, and noted that they will begin meeting with stakeholders in April, with plans to have a report in August for the Task Force.

FUTURE EDUCATOR HONOR ROLL

Dr. Demeulenaere announced the Future Educator Honor Roll event being held on May 3, 2022 from 9:00-11:00 a.m. at the Louisiana Old State Capitol. The event will honor future educators who will be entering the teaching field next fall and have been nominated by their institutions.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Donald Broussard commented that, in addition to teacher pay, he knows many teachers who have left due to certain policies and curriculum, the inability to use culturally relevant resources to teach, as well as the pacing guide. He noted that of his 55 students, only four came into his class on grade level. He asked who the pacing guide is for and how the Task Force determines pacing for those who do have the ability. Ms. Cooper replied that curriculum companies provide the pacing guides, but each district determines their use on its own. Commissioner Reed noted the item for Task Force review.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, the Task Force voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES & GUESTS

Name	Affiliation
Mellynn Baker	Board of Regents
Dr. Susannah Craig	Board of Regents
Dr. Michelle DeMeulenaere	Board of Regents
Melissa Anders	Board of Regents
Kim Langlois	Board of Regents
Patrick Steck	Deans for Impact
Arlene Duos	LSU-Alexandria
Maegan Schopper	Rapides Parish Schools
Don Sanders	Central Louisiana Technical Community College
Donald Broussard Jr.	LAE
Brandy Branigan	Louisiana Department of Education
Jan Robichaux	McNeese State University