

Teacher Recruitment, Recovery, and Retention Task Force

November 9, 2022

1:00-3:00 p.m.

Iowa Room, 1-153

1201 N. Third St. Baton Rouge, LA 70802

CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Susannah Craig called the meeting of the Teacher Recruitment, Recovery, and Retention Task Force to order at 1:04 p.m. and thanked everyone for attending.

ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS

Dr. Michelle DeMeulenaere called the roll, and a quorum was established.

Members Present	Affiliation
Em LeBlanc-Cooper	LDOE
Susannah Craig	Commissioner of Higher Education
Karen Peace	LA Association of School Executives
Ronnie Morris (designee)	BESE
Mike Faulk	LA Association of School Superintendents
Bruce Chaffin	LA State Association of School Personnel Administrators
Dr. Scot Rademaker (designee)	LA Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
Cynthia Posey (designee)	LA Federation of Teachers
Barry Erwin	Council for a Better Louisiana
Members Absent	Affiliation
Rep. Mark Wright	House Committee on Education
Janet Pope	LA School Boards Association
Esrom Pitre	Senate Committee on Education
Gladys Mouton	LA Association of Educators
Alex Jerrell	LA Association of Public Charter Schools
Sen. J. Rogers Pope	LA Senate
Rep. Buddy Mincey	LA House of Representatives

APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 4, 2022, MINUTES

Mr. Barry Erwin asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the October 4, 2022 meeting. On motion of Mr. Mike Faulk, seconded by Mr. Bruce Chaffin, the Task Force approved the minutes.

OVERVIEW OF THE 2023 LEGISLATIVE REPORT STRUCTURE

Mr. Barry Erwin discussed the goals for the meeting. He noted that the report provides updates related to recommendations and offers suggested next steps for the Louisiana Legislature's consideration. He noted that the report acknowledges that these issues will not be resolved overnight, but that we remain resolved to advance impactful solutions to strengthen our educator pipeline. This will require a continued and sustained focus over time for the betterment of our teachers and our students.

Dr. Craig reminded the members that when HCR 39 was approved it posed twenty-one original questions: ten around recruitment practices in the state; six questions centered around recovery; and five relating to retention.

Dr. Susannah Craig presented the timeline of the Task Force's work to date. The first action was to understand the impact of declining enrollment on the educator pipeline and cultivate a sense of urgency to solve critical shortages in school districts. The research outlines both the initial research phase in year one and the more targeted approach in year two. With teacher shortages at an all-time high last year, the TRRR Task Force discussed the areas of need. Issues for consideration included pre-educator recruitment, barriers to entering the profession, workforce data, the new teacher experience, educator listening sessions and surveys, and potential legislation for the 2023 year. Staff are in the process of finalizing the report, with a plan to present it at the Joint BOR-BESE meeting in December and submit to the legislature in January.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2023 REPORT STRUCTURE

Dr. Susannah Craig then asked Ms. Cooper to discuss recruitment. Ms. Cooper began by highlighting the work around the pre-educator pathway expansion. The goal is to have high school students interested in education join a pre-educator pathway. The curriculum and structure allow students to find out what it is like to be an educator, the different roles in education, and necessary skills, as well as provides them classroom experiences. This pathway started in 2021-2022, with 21 systems beginning implementation. To expand the work this school year, over \$1,000,000 was allocated and the program is now in about fifty school systems.

Ms. Cooper highlighted the work around increasing diversity in the educator workforce. Currently the workforce is about 25% teachers of colors, so not reflective of the 50% of students of color in our schools. She said that though this work has just started, we are headed in the right direction.

The next item discussed was the research on the feasibility of teacher loan forgiveness. Teaching is one of the largest public service occupations in the country. There are 3.5 million teachers

nationwide and they are paid some of the lowest salaries. Forgiveness programs have helped address the issue, including the Federal Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program, which forgives \$17,500 for teaching five consecutive years at a qualifying low-income school. Also, through Perkins Loans Cancellation, teachers can have up to 100% of their federal Perkins Loans forgiven for teaching at a qualifying school; in 2022, the federal government enacted a policy to forgive up to \$10,000 in student loan debt as well.

Ms. Cooper then discussed the barrier of PRAXIS core, which had been required for admission into teacher preparation programs. This prevented 1,000 students every year from enrolling in a program. She added that PRAXIS core is not a predictor of success as a teacher, but is an access barrier. This requirement was removed in law during the 2022 Regular Legislative Session, and BESE updated its policy to reflect the change in law. PRAXIS core is thus no longer a requirement to enter a program or for initial licensure.

The discussion then moved to shaping the perception of the education profession for the public. The members talked about what it would take to launch a statewide marketing campaign to attract more people into the profession. The Task Force also discussed investing in and expanding the parent-to-teacher model, and ways for paraprofessionals and others without degrees to enroll in a teacher program and get certification. There are over 600 professionals currently in the program. The goals of the program included increasing diversity, and one-third of those candidates were of color, exceeding the initial goal. In Louisiana, in this school year's system planning process schools can request a \$1,000 stipend for candidates who are in the program, to be paid upon completion of a year of coursework. Mr. Chaffin asked which programs are eligible for the \$1,000. Ms. Cooper responded it is for a para-to-teacher model and is currently only available at Reach. Mr. Faulk asked about other funding opportunities and making districts aware of them. Ms. Cooper referenced the Geaux Teach Fund, created by the Legislature with initial funding of \$5,000,000. Anyone who is enrolled in the program and meets the criteria can be eligible for additional financial assistance. The program is funded at the university level and can be used for any approved teacher prep program. Ms. Cooper said students must have expended financial aid and TOPS before applying for these funds. Dr. Craig noted that a student would get TOPS first and the Geaux Teach funds would be used for the remainder of the balance.

Ms. Cooper then provided updates in two areas. The first was related to the Regional Education Laboratory, which is completing a study on the Believe and Prepare pilot, which will be implemented statewide in the next school year. She said we are collaborating with them on a further study around full implementation. The other item was related to compensation increases. Ms. Cooper noted that in the 2022 Session a \$2,000 stipend for mentor teachers was permanently added to the MFP. In addition, LDOE's school system planning process will be providing \$1,000 stipends for content leaders. Ms. Cooper also discussed the compensation and incentive study

and survey, noting that SSA is taking that data and producing a study that should be done at the end of the month. Also in the 2022 Legislative Session pay increases were approved at \$1,500 for teachers, \$750 for support staff, \$2,000 for mentors, and \$3,300 for residents. Mr. Faulk offered to share a copy of a previously completed compensation study for review. Dr. Craig added that the compensation study is not in the Task Force packet because it is not complete, but it will be included in the materials presented to BESE.

Finally, Ms. Cooper discussed the Aspiring Principals and Human Resources Fellowships. The Aspiring Principals Fellowship pool has expanded and there are now 50 aspiring principals. The Human Resources Fellowship has also been expanded for another year, with 18 HR directors or staff in similar roles selected. Across the state, HR directors from 35 systems have participated.

Ms. Posey asked if members would get a draft of the report before the December meeting. Dr. Craig said that it would be possible to provide a draft when it is ready.

Dr. Craig then moved on to a discussion of recovery. She said prior to the 2022 Legislative Session laws allowed educators entering Louisiana with three years of out-of-state experience and one year of successful in-state experience to be excluding from taking Louisiana exams. Act 244 amended these provisions out of state certifications reciprocity requirements to increase mobility and remove barriers to certification. The one year of successful teaching in Louisiana has been removed and a provision added that if the out-of-state educator meets all other Louisiana requirements except the exams, they can be given a three-year certificate. As this work began, the Council of State Governments started to lay the foundation for an interstate teacher mobility compact. This compact would create reciprocity among participating states and reduce barriers to license, portability, and employment. For this to work, the Legislature must approve the compact in 2023, and ten states must sign on.

Dr. Craig then discussed the new teacher experience program, a comprehensive induction program developed by the Department of Education, launched in summer 2022. The program provides multiple services, and is designed to increase teacher effectiveness, enhance skills, and reduce attrition in early years. Ms. Cooper stated that the professional learning is regional, and the affinity groups are virtual and statewide.

Dr. Craig described how LDOE is reviewing the educator evaluation system, with a report to be produced in the winter. Focus groups were conducted this summer and a survey was released. The feedback will be used to understand educators' experiences and needs to drive decision-making on the evaluation system. This is separate from the teacher survey related to the classroom environment. It is focused on the education evaluator system and how to gain solid data to make improvements.

Shifting to retention, Dr. Craig noted that because of listening sessions, support strategies are being developed and informed decisions made about the needs of educators. She said we must consider processes and procedures to alleviate some of the 20,000 pieces of paper teachers must deal with. She added that we also want to listen to them about their well-being. Most of the information on retention has been based on listening sessions in the survey, and the next phase is to implement changes based on these listening sessions. Mr. Morris asked what we can do to address this issue. Dr. Craig discussed the work done around the teacher career ladder. Mr. Morris asked what we are formally doing to create this process. Ms. Cooper responded that it is not a singular process. She referenced the Aspiring Principles Fellowship and ways we are helping school leaders to develop that climate and culture. Mr. Chaffin responded that so much of what we discuss is not a system problem but a local problem. He said we are concerned about test scores because administrators are having to spend so much time explaining lesson plans, SLTS, and other things. He indicated that he is concerned about test scores in March and April because of teachers not knowing what they are doing. He said we must change the narrative, and instead of telling them what they are doing wrong, be there to help.

Dr. Rademaker discussed how ways of teaching are not matching up at the local level. She noted communication issues at the local level with universities, adding that teachers need to understand that there is differentiation across the local levels. Dr. Rademaker said that pre-service teachers may do their residency in a one parish and then teach in another parish. Mr. Morris asked if that results from a cultural issue in a different part of the state or a different student group. Dr. Craig said it could be a different classification. Ms. Cooper noted that it goes back to the leadership as well. She said it is not necessarily bad, but challenging. The group discussed whether this is a regional or national issue. Mr. Morris asked how principals are trained to address this situation and Mr. Chaffin responded that they are trained by learning what others are doing.

The Task Force discussed the effect of paperwork burdens and residency requirements on teachers. Dr. Craig said that we must start thinking about residency as a paid internship. Mr. Chaffin said there is a significant difference in the support provided to an alternative certification versus a resident, adding that residents should get more than just a stipend. Ms. Cooper indicated that LDOE is looking at applying for apprenticeship model for the state and getting it approved, adding that LDOE just contracted with the National Grow Your Own Center. Mr. Morris asked about this group providing a report to BESE/BOR and asked about the timeline for this work. Ms. Cooper replied that the contract was signed last month and LDOE is working with a group to help with the application, but that LDOE is unsure about the timeline from submittal to approval. Mr. Steck added that from a national perspective, Louisiana had good intentions with the residency, but suffered unintended consequences like the accountability metrics. Mr. Faulk noted that at the local level he has a wonderful team who provides feedback and assistance, but because there are so many residents the feedback is limited.

TASK FORCE NEXT STEPS

Mr. Erwin discussed Task Force next steps. He listed year three priority items: extend the Teacher Recruitment, Recovery, and Retention Task Force; explore options for increasing teacher pay and compensation; and support the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact. Mr. Morris noted that we do not really know what percentage of a student's education is covered by the MFP. Mr. Faulk responded that it is supposed to be 70%. Mr. Chaffin added that about 90% of funds are salaries and benefits. Mr. Erwin responded that this should become an election issue as the Task Force has been working for two years on the TRRR issue, but not enough has been done to raise the level of urgency among legislators. Ms. Cooper indicated that one of the many reasons to do a deep study was to give groups leverage for making the case to the Legislature. Mr. Morris asked, since BESE is going to send the recommendations to the Legislature, what can this Task Force do to get ready? Ms. Cooper said that the Task Force has approved LDOE to pursue additional pay. The compensation study will be released at the end of the month and meetings are happening to prepare for the MFP. Mr. Morris asked whether the request would be similar to last year's. Ms. Cooper said that the desire of the Task Force is to increase compensation, but it may take several years to get to the national average.

Mr. Chaffin then discussed concerns about not having certified teachers. Mr. Morris asked about the curriculum for the alternative certification program. Mr. Chaffin responded that these students go through an intense program, but it is quick and there is no substitute for a four-year college program. Mr. Morris asked why providers do not teach the pedagogy taught by education programs. Ms. Cooper provided an overview of these programs.

Dr. Susannah Craig asked for a motion to accept and allow Board of Regents and LDOE staff to edit the draft report in order to finalize the 2022 Report prior to its submission to the House and Senate Committees on Education. On the motion of Mike Faulk, seconded by Barry Erwin, the Teacher Recruitment, Recovery and Retention Task Force approved the motion.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Steve Van, HR Director of Livingston Parish, discussed a program, survival 101 training, where new teachers have the opportunity to ask questions and feel supported. He noted that a large numbers of new teachers have been hired recently and that stability is needed because staff is insufficient to support the constant training. He added that teachers should be relieved of paperwork and other responsibilities, to encourage them to stay in the profession.

Mr. Chaffin said that the two hundred plus new teachers is why we see such a back log in certification applications. He noted that it takes 70 to 90 days for an application to get through the teacher certification process.

Mr. Morris asked the Task Force to bring forward recommendations to address the issues raised when they receive these comments.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion of Mr. Faulk, seconded by Mr. Erwin, the meeting was adjourned.

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES & GUESTS

Name	Affiliation
Richard Baker	Louisiana Federation of Teachers
Steve Vempran	
Megan Jenny	LSU