

Louisiana Teacher Recruitment, Recovery, and Retention Task Force

Tuesday, June 27, 2022

1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m.

Iowa Room, 1st Floor of the Claiborne Building
1201 N. 3rd St.
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Reed called the meeting of the Teacher Recruitment, Recovery, and Retention Task Force to order at 1:03 p.m.

ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS

Ms. Cara Landry called the roll, and a quorum was established.

Members Present	Affiliation
Ms. Em LeBlanc-Cooper	LDOE
Dr. Kim Hunter Reed	Board of Regents
Dr. Karen Peace	LA Association of School Executives
Ms. Sandy Holloway	BESE
Dr. Paula Calderon	LA Assoc. of Colleges for Teacher Education
Mr. Barry Erwin	Council for a Better Louisiana
Sen. J. Rodgers Pope	LA Senate
Mr. Alex Jerrell	LA Assoc. of Public Charter Schools
Rep. Buddy Mincey	LA House of Representatives

Members Absent	Affiliation
Rep. Mark Wright	House Committee on Education
Dr. Estrom Pitre	Senate Committee on Education
Dr. Janet Pope	LA School Boards Association
Mr. Bruce Chaffin	LA State Assoc. of School Personnel Administrators
Mr. Mike Faulk	LA Assoc. of School Superintendents
Ms. Cynthia Posey (designee)	Louisiana Federation of Teachers
Ms. Gladys Mouton	Louisiana Association of Educators

APPROVAL OF MARCH 1, 2023, MINUTES

Mr. Erwin asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the March 1, 2023, meeting. On the motion of Dr. Peace, seconded by Ms. Holloway, the Task Force approved the minutes.

NATIONAL TRENDS IN TEACHER, RECRUITMENT, RECOVERY, AND RETENTION

Mr. Erwin opened the meeting by noting our interest in discussing national trends. Mr. Erwin introduced Mr. Geoff Carlisle, Deans for Impact, and noted that Mr. Carlisle was proxy for Mr. Patrick Steck, who previously had joined the Task Force meetings. Mr. Carlisle attended several of the Task Force planning meetings and was aware of the Task Force's work in Louisiana as well as trends nationwide.

Mr. Carlisle began by discussing national trends in recruitment related to registered teacher apprenticeships. Mr. Carlisle said that Teaching Apprenticeships have been registered with the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL). He noted that the National Center for Grow-Your-Own launched the National Registered Apprenticeship in Teaching Network in 2022-2023 and that there are 19 states in the network, including Louisiana. He also discussed the Pathways Alliance - National Guideline Standards (NGS), describing the coalition of organizations that created NGS for registered teaching apprenticeships. This organization created a set of national guideline standards, which were submitted to and recently approved by USDOL.

Mr. Carlisle moved on to discuss national trends relating to retention. Regarding competitive compensation, Mr. Carlisle shared that there was a survey by the Rand Corporation that collected data on how many school districts (62%) changed pay through raises or bonuses in 2022-2023. He then shared information from the Economic Policy Institute on wage gaps nationally and in Louisiana, noting that the national wage gap is 23.5%, with Louisiana having the third-largest wage

gap at 27.8%. He then talked about investing in high-retention pathways into the profession, including full-year teacher residencies and financial support in return for 3-to-5-year post-residency teaching, such as conditional loans or scholarships. He discussed Grow-Your-Own, paraprofessionals, and 2+2 programs, as well as resources related to braiding federal and state funds. He talked about service scholarships and loan forgiveness and mentoring and induction for new teachers (e.g., ESSA Title II, Part A).

Mr. Carlisle further provided updates regarding recovery, such as the “science of reading” (SOR). He reminded everyone that the SOR does not have a universal definition. Many states have incentivized EPPs to align with the SOR. He discussed national trends including the “Mississippi Miracle”, describing how that state drastically raised reading scores during 2013-2019 for all subpopulations of students and maintained them during COVID and through 2022. He added that 32 states have passed SOR policies since 2013. He pointed to the impact of prioritizing reading improvements and investments in grades K-3, training teachers on the SOR, creating vetted curriculum lists aligned to SOR, and blocking funding for curricula based on the three-cueing method.

Lastly, Mr. Carlisle gave an overview of what is missing in Louisiana. He began by discussing certifications for associate’s degree holders, noting that in Louisiana Act 99 provides for the Associate Educators Program and indicating that this is not a common policy pursuit nationally. He said only two states have enacted similar legislation, and both faced stark concerns from key education groups:

1. Florida: CS/HB 1035 allows associate’s degree holders to participate in apprenticeships.
2. Colorado: CO SB087 allows candidates who are enrolled in a bachelor’s program to participate in teacher apprenticeships.

Mr. Carlisle discussed mobilizing aspiring teachers as high-impact tutors. He noted that, in Louisiana, the Accelerate States Leading Recovery Grant and matching funds will provide \$2 million for high-impact tutoring in Louisiana schools. He said that Louisiana could benefit from partnering with EPPs to mobilize aspiring teachers as tutors. At the national level, he indicated that many EPPs see this as a win-win approach, tapping aspiring teachers to serve as high-impact tutors. He noted that tutors are paid, which makes the process of becoming a teacher more affordable. Also, aspiring teachers are effective tutors and receive more practice-based experiences prior to licensure. Representative Mincey asked for more information on the Mississippi Miracle. Mr. Carlisle provided additional details and noted that, in 2013, Governor Bryant added into the budget funding for teacher training around what science shows about how children learn how to read. Dr. Calderon added that, in Mississippi, students were held back if they could not pass the reading test in third grade. Dr. Reed talked about the literacy plans set for grades K-3 in Mississippi, in particular the plan for students who were off track related to parental engagement, having books in the home, etc. She said that the goal was not retention, but success. Ms. Cooper stated that Louisiana has modeled its programming on Mississippi's. Ms. Holloway asked how long the program has been running; Ms. Cooper responded that over the past three years all the pieces have come together, with Dr. Craig adding that the Literacy Commission in Louisiana started prior to COVID. Ms. Cooper noted that NAEP stated that Louisiana is number one in reading growth. Mr. Pope responded that policy has not always followed practice. Mr. Carlisle noted that a recent resource, the podcast Soul to Story by Emily Hanford, noted that change starts with research, curriculum and then state policy. Mr. Erwin asked if states with wage gaps prioritize closing them. Mr. Carlisle responded that the states with the smallest gaps were Rhode Island, Wyoming, New Jersey, and North Carolina, with their gaps falling under 10%. Dr. Reed asked that all resources

from this research be sent to the Task Force.

COMPENSATION STUDY

Dr. Reed then called upon Dr. Christel Slaughter and Mr. Rudy Gomez from SSA Consulting to discuss the results of the compensation study.

Mr. Gomez explained that the compensation study's findings were separated into three main sections: Survey of Louisiana's Local School Systems, Regional Comparative Analysis, and National Comparative Analysis. Beginning with the Survey of Louisiana's Local School Systems, which began over a year ago, Mr. Gomez discussed the 159-question survey instrument designed to gather teacher salary, benefits, incentives, and vacancy data from Louisiana's local school systems. Sixty-seven of Louisiana's 69 traditional school systems submitted responses; the two school systems that did not respond were Union Parish and Assumption Parish. He indicated that the top-paying systems' starting salaries for teachers with a bachelor's degree range from approximately \$48,000 to \$55,000, and the low-paying systems have starting salaries of approximately \$30,000 to \$37,000. He noted that the survey showed that higher pay correlates with lower vacancy rates and higher system performance. Teacher vacancies are concentrated in ten local school systems, though he said that most local systems are struggling with defined, hard-to-fill positions, and local systems are offering a wide range of benefits and incentives to attract and retain teachers.

Moving on to the Regional Comparative Analysis, Mr. Gomez said that all data (including the Louisiana data and the national averages) were collected in 2019-2020 and compiled by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB). SREB ranks Louisiana 12th out of the 16 member states for average salary, and Louisiana ranks 5th and above the SREB and national averages (bachelor's prepared). He noted that SREB ranks Louisiana 15th for average salary growth potential,

suggesting that serious salary compression (also known as pay compression or wage compression) in Louisiana will make it very difficult for Louisiana to ever achieve the goal of reaching the “southern regional average”. Representative Mincy asked which four states ranked lowest; Dr. Reed responded that the lowest states are Arkansas, Florida, West Virginia, and Mississippi.

Moving on to the National Comparative Analysis, Mr. Gomez discussed the GAO report in October of 2022 that examined key recruitment and retention challenges contributing to teacher shortages. Key recruitment challenges included negative perception of teaching profession, cost of teacher preparation, and differing state licensure requirements. The negative perception challenge captured such elements as lack of appreciation for teachers in communities and in society at large, negative media, and discouragement by family and friends to enter the profession. He shared that key retention challenges were lack of support for teachers (from their states, school systems, schools, and/or communities), school workplace culture issues (unreasonable job demands, persistent student behavioral concerns, and resulting mental health concerns for teachers), and teacher compensation (low compensation and earning potential). He said that Louisiana wage penalty was estimated to be between 20% and 30% – less than the median salary in the all-other-full-time-college-educated workers category. He noted that the Education Commission of the States – 50-state comparative resource included a set of seven questions focused on state-level financial incentives and compensation, saying that states are pursuing a wide range of financial incentives and compensation-related innovations to address teacher recruiting and retention issues. Mr. Gomez stated that SSA did not find any significant “new” innovations in other states and suggested that the emphasis on “incentives” by local school systems and states reinforces the market evidence that basic teacher pay rates are grossly inadequate. Dr. Slaughter stated that a person with a bachelor’s degree has many options upon graduation that have a higher salary range than teaching. Mr. Jerrell

asked if states had provided specified funding for districts to increase this funding gap. Dr. Slaughter replied that each state is doing something different. Mr. Erwin noted that Alabama passed a pay increase that was based on years of service.

Recommendations included:

1. Feature the Certified Teacher Percentage Rate as the Metric that Reflects Louisiana's Teacher Employment Goal
2. Feature Multiple "Southern Regional Average" Teacher Pay Comparisons to More Completely Understand How Louisiana Compares to the Other SREB States
3. Begin Reversing Teacher Pay Scale Compressions
4. Offer and Promote Differential Teacher Pay
5. Begin Eliminating the Teacher Wage Penalty by Raising Teacher Pay 25% by 2025
6. Sponsor Innovative Teaching Model Research Projects and Pilot Programs Focused on Improving Teacher Recruitment, Recovery, and Retention

Regarding the first recommendation, Dr. Slaughter indicated that, from her personal experience, it was impossible to find teachers and that she was anxious that we are giving the public a false sense of where we are with vacancies. Dr. Reed noted the correlation between certified and uncertified and added that we get what we pay for. Dr. Reed asked how the 25% for raising teacher pay was determined. Mr. Gomez indicated that it was a ballpark average. Dr. Slaughter stated that each district is offering different salaries, which causes teachers to move across parish lines. Mrs. Holloway observed that for the first time districts put more pressure on the legislature about funding formulas.

The fourth recommendation was to offer and promote differential pay to teachers. The fifth recommendation was to begin to erase the pay penalty for teaching. Dr. Slaughter discussed studying the current evaluation system and establishing a plan to approve it. Dr. Slaughter drew attention to the feedback regarding the shift from compliance to professional learning and growth.

The last recommendation was sponsoring innovative teaching model research projects and pilot programs to improve teacher recruitment, recovery, and retention. Representative Mincy suggested that we take some of the burden off teachers and asked how this information is going to be delivered to school systems. Ms. Cooper stated that LDOE is delivering the study to major stakeholders, and then will take recommendations and determine how to prioritize them. Ms. Cooper also stated that they are rethinking the evaluation system, to place emphasis on the professional growth of teachers.

AN UPDATE ON THE 2023 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. Erwin then introduced a discussion of the results of the 2023 Regular Legislative Session, which ended on June 8th. Mr. Erwin called on Dr. Susannah Craig, Deputy Commissioner for Strategic Planning and Student Success, to provide Board of Regents Legislative Updates.

Dr. Craig shared updates regarding *HCR 17*, *HB 472*, and *HB 471*.

HCR 17: To continue and provide with respect to the Teacher Recruitment, Recovery, and Retention Task Force that was created pursuant to House Concurrent Resolution No. 39 of the 2021 Regular Session of the Legislature.

HB 472: Provides for the state's entry into the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact, which provides relative to certification and qualification of teachers.

HB 471 was amended to apply only to military families and as a result Louisiana will not be part of the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact. Our military families will, however, have an expedited certification process.

Mr. Erwin then called on Ethan Melancon, Executive Director of Legislative Affairs, Department of

Education, to present information regarding the 2023 Regular Legislative Session, including the status of the latest bills: SCR 2, SB 81, SB 197, HCR 17, HR 190, HB 191, and HB 472. The most important bill was the MFP, which was not approved. He noted that more money was added to Early Childhood Education and a teacher stipend was added to the budget. He described Senate Bill 81, regarding the associate's degree in teaching, which passed with revisions. He then noted the rest of the bills, including Senate Bill 197 to clean up the certification bulletin, HR 190 by Senator Frieberg to study all the ways that a teacher can be certified, and House Bill 191 to create a third-party evaluation system.

Katherine Whitney, Director of Teachers' Retirement System of Louisiana, then discussed the 2023 retirement legislation. She began by noting that with the reported \$2.2 billion in surplus/excess revenue, TRSL and LASERS became a recurring topic during budget discussions. Proposals included: pay down all or a portion of the unfunded accrued liability (UAL) with excess/surplus revenue; pay down UAL with a portion of the 0.45% sales and use tax; make UAL payments on behalf of employers to fund pay raises at the local level; and/or direct 25% of surplus money to UAL of four state retirement systems.

She then discussed the UAL payments that passed:

- Act 107 (HB 47): Constitutional amendment will allow voters to decide in the October 14 statewide election whether to annually direct 25% of nonrecurring revenue to the UALs of the four state retirement systems.
- HB 560: Appropriates \$50.6 million to the TRSL-UAL from nonrecurring revenue and the UAL fund.

Ms. Whitney then discussed Defined Benefit (DB) retirement plans. These form part of a

member's entire compensation package, providing stable, lifetime income to retirees, including disability, survivor, and beneficiaries' benefits, if eligible. Benefits are determined by years of service, average salary, and benefit factor (2.5%), and are not tied to ups and downs of markets like 401(k) plans. As such, this is an effective tool to attract and retain teachers. She noted that Louisiana does not participate in Social Security, so TRSL is often the sole source of post-employment income for educators. Without regular COLAs, Louisiana retirement benefits lose value because they cannot keep up with the rising cost of food, medicine, utilities, and other living expenses. She noted that two 2020 legislative study requests (SR 15/HR 21) sought to find a better way to fund and provide more regular COLAs. She then explained that SB 18 fixes the way Louisiana currently funds COLAs for retirees of the four state retirement systems—and rounds out the value of their DB retirement plan. Ms. Whitney then showed a chart explaining total employer contribution rate and how the cost of COLAs is indirectly paid by employers; it is embedded in the shared UAL payment. Ms. Whitney then gave a return-to-work (RTW) update. In general, she explained what RTW Laws do and do not do: They do specify what happens to retiree benefits and whether contributions are required during re-employment, but do not state whether employers can or cannot hire a retiree. She then discussed Act 549 and Act 601 of 2022 and the eligibility criteria for the 2022 RTW Law. She noted that annual statistics from TRSL data show that the number of re-employed retirees has decreased since 2010.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Erwin announced that the Task Force’s next meeting will be held September 6th, 2023, from 1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m.

There being no further discussion, on motion by Dr. Calderon, seconded by Ms. Holloway, the Task Force voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 2:39 p.m.

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES & GUESTS

Rudy Gomez	SCA Consultants
Christel Slaughter	SCA Consultants
Geoff Carlisle	Deans for Impact
Ethan Melancon	LDOE
Katherine Whitley	TRSL
Rep. Barbara Freiberg	House of Representatives
Lisa Honore	TRSL