

Louisiana Teacher Recruitment, Recovery, and Retention Task Force

Wednesday, September 6, 2023

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

ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS

Ms. Melanie Sandahl called the roll, and a quorum was established.

Members Present	Affiliation
Dr. Esrom Pitre	Senate Committee on Education
Ms. Em LeBlanc-Cooper	LDOE
Dr. Susannah Craig	Commissioner of Higher Education
Dr. Janet Pope	LA School Boards Association
Dr. Karen Peace	LA Association of School Executives
Ms. Sandy Holloway	BESE
Mr. Mike Faulk	LA Assoc. of School Superintendents
Mr. Bruce Chaffin	LA State Assoc. of School Personnel Administrators
Dr. Paula Calderon	LA Assoc. of Colleges for Teacher Education
Mr. Barry Erwin	Council for a Better Louisiana
Sen. J. Rodgers Pope	LA Senate
Rep. Buddy Mincey	LA House of Representatives

Members Absent	Affiliation
Rep. Mark Wright	House Committee on Education
Dr. Janet Pope	LA School Boards Association
Ms. Cynthia Posey	LA Federation of Teachers
Ms. Gladys Mouton	LA Association of Educators
Mr. Alex Jerrell	LA Assoc. of Public Charter Schools

APPROVAL OF JUNE 27, 2023 MINUTES

Mr. Erwin asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the November 9, 2022, meeting. On motion of Dr. Pitre, seconded by Ms. Holloway, the Task Force approved the minutes.

LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAMS AND GEAUX TEACH

Loan Forgiveness Programs

Mr. Erwin opened the meeting by calling on Dr. Craig to present information regarding Loan Forgiveness and Geaux Teach.

Dr. Craig began by discussing the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF), which is administered through the U.S. Department of Education. She said that PSLF forgives the remaining balance on federal direct loans after 120 qualifying payments, typically spanning 10 years. She explained that eligibility for PSLF is based on working for a qualifying employer, such as government organizations, tax-exempt not-for-profit organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS Code, or other not-for-profit organizations offering specific qualifying public services. She described that direct loans are required for PSLF eligibility. She explained that different requirements must be met for payments to count towards the 120 payments (10 years) needed for forgiveness. She added that the IRS does not tax loan amounts forgiven under PSLF.

Dr. Craig then moved on to the Teacher Forgiveness (TLF) Program. She noted that Teacher Loan Forgiveness forgives up to \$17,500 of Direct or Federal Stafford Loans after five complete and consecutive years of teaching at a qualifying school. Dr. Craig then explained the eligibility requirements, which include: employment as a full-time teacher at an eligible school for five consecutive academic years, with at least one year of teaching after the 1997-98 academic year,

and special education and secondary math/science teachers qualifying for up to \$17,500. She then discussed Teacher Loan Forgiveness Forbearance, which can be applied to maximize the forgiveness amount. She added that borrowers with a loan balance greater than the TLF amount for which they are applying are not eligible.

Lastly, Dr. Craig discussed the Perkins Loan Cancellation for Teachers Program, which offers up to 100% forgiveness of Federal Perkins Loans for full-time teachers in certain conditions. Dr. Craig explained that eligibility, which applies only to Federal Perkins Loans, includes full-time teaching at a low-income school or in specific subjects. She explained that 15% per year is canceled for the first and second years of service, 20% is canceled for the third and fourth years, and 30% is canceled for the fifth year. An online database determines if a school qualifies as low-income. Dr. Craig also discussed subject qualification and private school eligibility.

Geaux Teach

Dr. Craig then moved on to discuss the Geaux Teach Program, established to provide scholarships to students who are enrolled in teacher preparation programs or alternative certification programs approved by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) at postsecondary education institutions within the state. Dr. Craig noted that to be eligible for this program the student: must be a United States citizen and, if required, registered with the selective service; be a Louisiana resident for at least two years prior to July 1 immediately preceding the academic year of enrollment; have at least a 2.50 cumulative college grade point average; and be enrolled full time in an approved teacher preparation program or alternate certification program. Dr. Craig explained that each institution will determine its own selection criteria for scholarship recipients. She added that the maximum annual award is \$5,000 for the academic year and that scholarship awards shall be

applicable only to the cost of tuition, required fees, textbooks, and instructional materials required for the course of study. Dr. Craig indicated that the award can be used only after all other state or institutional financial aid and awards are applied and only for any remaining balance due for tuition, required fees, textbooks, and instructional materials required for the course of study. She said that students currently enrolled in a teacher preparation program or alternate certification program approved by BESE can apply by contacting their college or university school of education or program provider and submitting the required Geaux Teach Application Form. Mr. Erwin asked for clarification as to whether this is stackable with TOPS. Dr. Craig explained that it is, but the maximum is \$5,000. Representative Mincy asked if the Legislature had acted regarding FAFSA requirements for TOPS, and Dr. Craig replied that they did not. She said that there are already alternatives for FAFSA in place. There was then further discussion regarding alt-cert programs. Mr. Faulk asked how the new programs being developed are going to impact access to this program. Dr. Craig named the different alternative certification programs eligible for these dollars. She explained that, in this case, new programs are going to need to be registered and approved through LOSFA. Finally Dr. Craig presented on the 2023-2024 Geaux Teach Allocations.

TASK FORCE NEXT STEPS

Mr. Erwin introduced the next item on the agenda, SSA Compensation Study and Next Steps. The Teacher Recruitment and Retention Compensation Study by SSA Consultants made several recommendations, which 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 15 states of the Southern

Regional Education Board (SREB).

3. Begin reversing teacher pay scale compressions.
4. Offer and promote differential teacher pay.
5. Sponsor innovative teaching model research projects and pilot programs focused on improving teacher recruitment, recovery, and retention.
6. Begin to eliminate the teacher wage penalty.

Ms. LeBlanc-Cooper then introduced Superintendent Brumley to speak about the SSA Compensation recommendations. Dr. Brumley explained that LDOE has seen an overall decline in the number of vacancies. He noted that SSA's report provided a good resource, with helpful information and recommendations worthy of consideration, and that consultants were very receptive to input shared with them. Dr. Brumley noted that around 80% of vacancies are within 10 school systems. He discussed one recommendation around the compression issue, regarding teachers' ability to earn more money. Mr. Erwin discussed future pay being based on a percentage rather than flat. Dr. Brumley responded that he thinks that teachers are professionals who must be compensated like professionals, meaning pay should be recognized as professional pay. He said that moving forward, teachers must be guaranteed that they will earn professional pay. He said that from the market standpoint, decision makers must look at where the needs are and direct resources to those needs. Mr. Faulk discussed the difference in resources available in local districts, explaining that some have the resources while others do not. Dr. Brumley mentioned state involvement in that process. Mr. Chaffin discussed losing groups of teachers, as well as how to retain teachers once they are in place. Dr. Brumley discussed the data regarding exiting teachers. He said that data show 39% of teachers who exit the profession have been teaching for 10 or more years, meaning systems are losing many teachers early on. He added that 44% of teachers are exiting the profession within the first five years. There was discussion regarding the difficulty in keeping those teachers within the first five years. Representative Mincey requested to stop putting additional requirements on

teachers. He asked if there is anything the state can do or is doing to remove some of the “baggage” from the school systems. Dr. Brumley suggested that schools must be focused on being academic institutions and not social institutions. There was then a discussion regarding the amount of training required for teachers. Representative Mincey asked for an update regarding the teacher pay raise. Dr. Brumley discussed this as a signaling problem and said that the dollars went out to the systems on August 28th. He said that systems are making decisions on when they want to pay out these stipends and that LDOE has provided them with guidance on this.

TASK FORCE UPDATES

Mr. Erwin then stated that Ms. LeBlanc-Cooper would provide an update on key initiatives related to the work of this Task Force.

Ms. LeBlanc-Cooper shared that the recruitment goals stated that by the end of 2026, the percentage of certified teachers will be 85% and the percentage of educators of color will be 42%. She described the current state: in 2022, the percentage of certified teachers increased by 2 percentage points from 67% to 69%, and the educator workforce increased in diversity of race/ethnicity by 2 percentage points, from 27% to 29% teachers of color.

Ms. Cooper then explained the goals and progress regarding the pre-educator pathways.

Expanding the Pre-Educator Pathway

Goals:

- The pre-educator pathway course is taught in 50 schools/school systems in 2022-2023.
- There are at least 1,000 students participating in the pre-educator program statewide.
- By the 2022-2023 school year, 50% of students enrolled in the pre-educator pathway will be students of color.

Progress:

- In 2022-2023, 70 schools offered the pre-educator pathway.
- In 2022-2023, 1096 students were enrolled in the pre-educator pathway.
- In 2022-2023, 51% of students were students of color.

Expanding the Para-to-Teacher Model

Goals:

- The para-to-teacher model will increase by 75 participants each year.
- The percent of new enrollees in the para-to-teacher model will be 40% candidates of color in 2023-2024.

Progress:

- 331 new Louisiana school system employees. Enrolled in the para-to-teacher model to begin coursework in Fall 2023.
- 49% of the 2023-2024 para-to-teacher cohort are candidates of color.

Mr. Faulk asked if schools could use Title I funding to support these programs. Ms. LeBlanc-Cooper stated that they could.

Compensation

Goals:

- Additional compensation for teacher leaders will be included in the Minimum Foundation Program formula.
- Use the Compensation and Incentives study to increase educator pay in Louisiana.

Progress:

- The Mentor Teacher Stipend of \$2,000 is not included in the Minimum Foundation Program formula.
- A \$2000/\$1000 stipend was provided along with \$25M in differentiated compensation funds for school systems to compensate educators for 2023-2024.

Career Pipeline

Goals:

- The number of certified Mentor Teachers will increase by 1,000 from 1,854 to 2,854 by July 2023.
- The number of school systems serving as employers and the number of educator preparation programs serving as providers for registered apprenticeships will increase by 20 percentage points annually.

Progress:

- As of July, there were 2,633 credentialed mentors working in schools: an increase of 779 certified mentors this year.
- The first Registered Apprenticeship in Teaching with the Department as the sponsor was approved in August. 2023-2024 will be an expansion year for apprenticeships.

Data Collection

Goals:

- 100% of traditional school systems will report vacancy data in EdLink beginning August 2024.

Progress:

- Vacancy data are live in EdLink and are a required reporting extract for each of the data cycles.

Fellowships

Goals:

- 80% of school systems represented in the Recruitment & Retention Fellowship will see an increase in overall retention rates in the school system.
- 33% of the Aspiring Principal Fellows will have moved into a leadership position upon successful completion of the program.

Progress:

- Retention rates will be released with the Workforce Snapshot in January 2024.
- 90% of Cohort 1 Aspiring Principal Fellows are currently serving in a school leadership position.

Retention Strategies

Goals:

- 400 new teachers will be enrolled in the New Teacher Experience annually.
- 17 schools/school systems will participate in the system-level New Teacher pilot.
- At least 15 school systems commit to participating in the 2023-2024 Evaluation Pilot Year
- 125 school leaders will administer a school environment survey and use the results to build a plan to improve working conditions in 2023-2024.

Progress:

- In 2022-2023, 415 new teachers enrolled in the New Teacher Experience.
- 17 school systems participated in the pilot.
- 17 school systems have committed to participating in the Evaluation Pilot Year.
- 150 school leaders signed up to administer a school environment survey and use the results to build a plan to improve working conditions.

Ms. LeBlanc-Cooper introduced Ms. Garrett to discuss Praxis II requirements. In order to complete a teacher preparation program and obtain professional teaching certificates, teacher candidates must pass the Praxis Subject Assessments, which measure the knowledge of specific subjects that K-12 educators will teach. She explained that to obtain professional teaching certificates in Louisiana and complete some teacher preparation programs, educators are required to pass the Praxis Principles of Teaching and Learning Assessment, and a teacher applicant for certification must successfully complete the appropriate written or computer-delivered assessment prior to issuance of a Louisiana educator certification.

Ms. Garrett continued to discuss the 50-state scan of Praxis II, which showed:

- 9 states require content assessment while in an EPP, prior to student teaching.
- 3 states require content assessment while in an EPP, but not prior to student teaching.
- 2 states recommend the content assessment be administered while in an EPP, but it is not required.
- Hawaii is the only state that does not require a content assessment.
- 4 states have developed multiple options for demonstrating content knowledge.
- The remaining 31 states require content assessments prior to licensure.

Ms. Garrett then shared the Praxis II cut scores and passage rates, compared to those in neighboring states. Mr. Chaffin added that a couple of years ago the certification department looked into changing the math content. He noted that, though 18% is low, it is higher than last year.

Ms. Garrett then described Praxis II considerations, which included: current Praxis II passage rates do not show a significant need to move the timeline of the content and pedagogical assessment requirements; recent legislative and policy updates have opened entry points for educators in Louisiana; the content and pedagogical exams prior to issuance of a teacher license help ensure the quality of educators for our students in Louisiana; and no other states are extending the timeline to pass content exams.

There was then discussion regarding the Praxis II recommendation, which is to leave the Praxis II content and pedagogy exams' cut scores completion timeline as currently required by BESE policy, so prior to certification.

Ms. Garrett then asked Ms. Stevenson to update the Task Force on the Elementary Multiple-Subject Praxis Exam. Ms. Stevenson explained that beginning January 1, 2024, any applicant applying for initial certification to teach kindergarten through third grade must pass the Teaching of Reading: Elementary examination. She explained that this was approved by BESE in August. Mr.

Erwin reiterated that aspiring teachers will take the new exam, but existing teachers will take the course in the Science of Reading.

Ms. Garrett then discussed the Taskforce Recommendation Updates regarding the Marketing Toolkit. She said that MESH will develop a marketing toolkit that will aim to aid in marketing and communications initiatives such as promoting a school system's accomplishments, attracting families and staff members, and improving the school system's visibility and reputation within the community. She explained that the Marketing Toolkit will provide school systems with Social Media Strategy and Templates, Marketing Collateral Templates, and Advertising Templates. Two different concepts were presented and discussed. The Task Force decided on option 1, the Aspirational Model.

Ms. Garrett then discussed LEAN Practices for School Leaders. She said that a session for school principals was held at the Teacher Leader Summit as an introduction to LEAN practice applications in the context of a school setting. Participants left the session with specific tools they could begin to implement in their schools focusing on eliminating waste, thus increasing efficiency for educators. She said that a collaborative will be held in the fall for 40 school leaders. Participants in the collaborative will receive an overview of the LEAN practices, be asked to begin a LEAN initiative within their school and receive coaching periodically throughout the collaborative.

Ms. Garrett then discussed Upbeat principal coaching support for school climate. Ms. Garrett explained how this company specializes in the engagement and retention of teachers and staff by providing a unique research-based employee survey. She noted that the Upbeat team will administer an expert-designed, research-based survey twice a year, once in the fall and then again in

the spring for 150 schools in Louisiana at no cost to the school/system. Dr. Calderon asked if higher education leadership had been included. They have not but this will be considered.

Ms. Garrett then moved on to discuss the Human Capital Handbook and professional learning. She discussed how The Urban Schools Human Capital Academy is working to develop a Human Capital Handbook and pieces of training that provide school systems with information, strategies, and tools to improve human capital systems.

Ms. Garrett also discussed the Registered Apprenticeship in Teaching. She noted how in August; the Louisiana Workforce Commission approved the Department's first competency-based registered apprenticeship in teaching in partnership with Tangipahoa Parish Schools and Southeastern Louisiana University and they are just awaiting the official signature from the Workforce Commission. Mr. Mincey asked what this would look like. Ms. Garrett stated that there would be a progression of rate increases based on education.

Lastly, Ms. Garrett briefly discussed the Aspiring Principal Fellowship and Recruitment and Retention Fellowship. Ms. Bono then talked about the expanding opportunities for aspiring educators. She noted that the Department hosted the first Louisiana Aspiring Educator Summer Academy to strengthen the statewide network of high school students committed to a future profession related to the field of education. Ms. Nicole continued to discuss the New Teacher Experience, which is a comprehensive induction program that offers multiple services designed to increase teacher effectiveness, enhance skills, and reduce attrition among beginning teachers. The New Teacher Experience provides both direct support to teachers and system support to improve student achievement by improving beginning teacher effectiveness and teacher retention. There was also discussion regarding the professional learning modules and affinity groups that are part of the

new teacher experience.

Finally, the new teacher of the year, Ms. Phoenix Leblanc from Livingston Parish (Albany Middle School), was recognized and congratulated.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Erwin announced that the next meeting will be held on October 25, 2023, 1 p.m.- 3 p.m. There being no further discussion, Dr. Craig asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. On the motion of Mr. Chaffin, seconded by Mr. Faulk, the meeting was adjourned.

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES & GUESTS

LSU – Dr. Cindy DiCarlo
LSU – Dr. Margaret-Mary Sulentic-Dowell
LDOE – Brandy Gurrett
LDOE – Nicole Bono