

## **Louisiana Teacher Recruitment, Recovery, and Retention Task Force**

Wednesday, June 26, 2024

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

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

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Barry Erwin 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.

<b>Members Present</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Dr. Karen Peace	LA Association of School Executives
Mr. Mike Faulk	LA Association of School Superintendents
Dr. Paula Calderon	LA Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
Mr. Barry Erwin	Council for a Better Louisiana
Dr. Kim Hunter Reed	Commissioner of Higher Education
Rep. Barbara Freiberg	House Committee on Education
Dr. Kevin Nanney (designee)	LDOE
Sen. Rick Edmonds	LA Senate
Rep. Shaun Mena	LA House of Representatives

<b>Members Absent</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Dr. Esrom Pitre	Senate Committee on Education
Mr. Ronnie Morris	BESE
Ms. Cynthia Posey	LA Federation of Teachers
Dr. Janet Pope	LA School Boards Association
Mr. Bruce Chaffin	LA State Association of School Personnel Administrators
Dr. Keith Courville	Association of Professional Educators of LA
Ms. Gladys Mouton	LA Association of Educators
Mr. Alex Jerrell	LA Association of Public Charter Schools
Sen. J. Rodgers Pope	LA Senate

### **APPROVAL OF APRIL 24, 2024 MINUTES**

**Mr. Barry Erwin asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the April 4, 2024 meeting. On the motion of Senator Rick Edmonds, seconded by Dr. Karen Peace, the Task Force approved the minutes.**

### **REVIEW OF TEACHER RECRUITMENT, RECOVERY, AND RETENTION TASK FORCE PRIORITIES**

Dr. Michelle DeMeulenaere reviewed the Teacher Recruitment, Recovery, and Retention (TRRR) Task Force Priorities. Dr. DeMeulenaere noted that in 2023 the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) released a statewide compensation study. Results showed that the state must do more to make the teaching profession competitive and provide differentiated compensation options at the local level.

Dr. DeMeulenaere shared that improving the quality and impact of entry points on the pipeline is paramount for long-term success and sustainability. School system leaders and preparation providers must be supported by and included in recruitment and retention efforts specific to their local contexts. She indicated that the goal by 2026 is to have 85% of certified teachers teaching in their field and certified educators of color comprising 42% of Louisiana teachers.

Lastly, Dr. DeMeulenaere shared that to continue elevating the teaching profession, efforts are needed to promote the nobility of this profession and spotlight the positive impact teachers have on Louisiana's students.

### **LET TEACHERS TEACH WORKGROUP**

Ms. Sabre Masters, LDOE Office of the Superintendent, then shared information on the Let Teachers Teach Work Group.

Ms. Masters stated that the Let Teachers Teach (LTT) workgroup was tasked with identifying common classroom disruptions and unnecessary bureaucracies, as well as formulating

practical solutions to help educators focus on the most important aspect of their job: teaching students.

She added that there are eighteen recommendations divided into these six categories:

- Professional Learning
- Required Trainings
- Student Behavior and Discipline
- Non-Academic Responsibilities
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Planning

Ms. Masters then discussed the top ten LTT Recommendations, which included:

- Ensure ample time for classroom preparation.
- Shift legislatively mandated training to a cycle.
- Decouple student behavior and the school accountability system.
- Trust us, don't blame us.
- Place ungovernable students at alternative sites for behavior support.
- Limit cell phone use.
- Pay teachers for additional, non-academic work.
- Stop forcing teachers to work as mental health professionals.
- Eliminate the mandate to read verbatim from teaching manuals, excluding direct instruction.
- Abolish antiquated lesson planning requirements.

A discussion was then held on ways in which several pieces of legislation have addressed these recommendations.

### **LDOE UPDATES**

Dr. Kevin Nanney then provided updates from the LDOE. Dr. Nanney first discussed the Out of Field Authority to Teach Support. He shared that the LDOE is making funding available to reduce barriers for certified teachers currently teaching out of their field. He added that LDOE will be covering Praxis exam costs and certification costs provided exams are completed by August 16,

2024. He noted that so far 66 educators have been approved for vouchers and 96 Praxis Content Exams vouchers have been awarded. He said that applications are still open and educators should complete the survey by July 19, 2024.

Dr. Nanney then discussed the Resident Teacher Apprenticeship Model. He noted that the Louisiana Workforce Commission approved an LDOE-sponsored Teacher Registered Apprenticeship Program (T-RAP). He shared that Registered Apprenticeship is an industry driven, high-quality career pathway through which school systems can build the future workforce and individuals can obtain paid work experience. He added that the LDOE T-RAP is competency-based and uses Louisiana Teacher Preparation Competencies. Finally, he noted that this partnership and program recognition allow for the expansion of the T-RAP program, identifying funding sources, Grow Your Own (GYO) program success, and financially sustainable GYO programs.

He shared that approval includes:

- Southeastern – Provider
- Tangipahoa – Employer
- LDOE – Sponsor

## **LEGISLATIVE UPDATES**

Katherine Whitney, Director of the Teachers Retirement System of Louisiana (TRSL), stated that TRSL monitored legislation with a direct impact on the retirement system and/or its members in the areas of:

- Return to Work (RTW)
- Optional Retirement Plan (ORP)
- Investments
- Transfer of Service Credit
- Social Security Offsets
- Supplemental Unfunded Accrued Liability (UAL) payments.

She noted that three individual statutes comprise the group that collectively is referred to as

the RTW Laws and that each is named for the respective year in which it was enacted. She shared that RTW Laws specify what happens to retiree benefits and whether contributions are required during reemployment, but do not state whether employers can or cannot hire a retiree.

Ms. Whitney shared updates regarding Act 394 of 2024 as well as the annual statistics regarding the number of reemployed retirees. She indicated that this number has decreased since 2010. She then provided fiscal year statistics, 2010 RTW group statistics, and 2020 RTW group statistics.

In conclusion, Ms. Whitney discussed the optional retirement plan. She noted current law, which states that certain higher education employees can choose to enter an ORP, a defined contribution plan, when first hired in a TRSL-covered position. She also indicated that participation in the ORP is an irrevocable choice, so a participant is not eligible to join the TRSL defined benefit plan after joining an ORP. She shared that Act 109 of 2024, effective June 30, 2024, provides a window of opportunity for certain ORP participants to make a one-time, irrevocable decision to opt into the TRSL defined benefit plan.

Mr. Ben Lemoine, Director of Governmental Affairs at the Louisiana Department of Education, then led discussion of education-related legislation status.

Mr. Lemoine stated that LDOE's roles in the legislative session is to provide information on proposed bills and how they impact education in Louisiana; present a package of bills for consideration that advance the agency's and BESE's priorities; represent BESE and its positions in committee hearings; provide unbiased, accurate, and honest calculations on the costs of proposed legislation; educate legislators on existing policies, programs, and outcomes; and respond to constituent/legislator requests. Mr. Lemoine concluded by shared information on the 2024 education policy legislation, including different House and Senate bills.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further discussion, Mr. Erwin asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. On the motion of Dr. Calderon, seconded by Dr. Peace, the meeting was adjourned at 2:17 p.m.

### **ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES & GUESTS**

Patrick Steck - Deans for Impact  
Sabre Masters - LDOE  
Ben LeMoine - LDOE  
Katherine Whitney - TSRL  
Lisa Honore - TSRL