

Site Visit Meeting Notes

Attendees

Tabitha Grossman, Senior Policy Analyst, National Governors Association Center for Best Practices

Sally Cauble, Member, Kansas State Board of Education

Diane DeBacker, Deputy Commissioner, Kansas Department of Education

Jennifer Knorr, Legislative Liaison, Office of Governor Mark Parkinson

Sam Rabiola, Teacher

Pamela Coleman, Director, Teacher and Licensure, Kansas Department of Education

Jarius Jones, Instructional Coach

Jim Lentz, Superintendent, Augusta USD

Andy Thompkins, Dean, College of Education, Pittsburgh State University

Kathy Martin, Member, Kansas Board of Education

Peg Dunlap, Director of Instructional Advocacy, KNEA

The leadership team met on Tuesday, July 21, 2009 for the NGA Center for Best Practices site visit. The following objectives were established for the meeting:

- *To learn about new models of teacher compensation;*
- *To discuss Kansas' context and history relative to the current status of the teaching workforce, teacher effectiveness initiatives, and the history of pay reform in the state. Team members discussed the current political and fiscal environment and how those factors might impact the teacher pay work;*
- *To conduct an overview of the state's proposal;*
- *To review and revise the state's technical assistance plan; and*
- *To discuss preparations for the policy academy.*

During the course of the site visit, state leadership team members shared their thoughts about the proposal as well as the process by which the state leadership team has proposed to move forward with developing a new model of teacher compensation. The following points were made during the course of the site visit.

- The state legislature is hesitant to allocate additional funds to public education because of the state's student achievement results. Traditionally, aggregate student achievement data indicate that students in Kansas are performing well.
- The Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) has been considered by some districts in the state.
- There is a study underway in Wichita, Kansas relevant to differentiated models of teacher compensation.
- There are concerns relative to the variances in student population in the state's 293 school districts. The average size of a district in Kansas is 550 students.
- Kansas City, Kansas did offer bonuses to teachers at one time. In that district, teachers seem to be supportive of a new model of teacher compensation, however, they have concerns about the model being fair and inclusive. If compensation was based on an evaluation, teachers would prefer that a committee of educators evaluate them as opposed to one person.
- There are concerns specific to hard-to-staff schools and recruiting effective teachers to such schools.

- The leadership team felt that one of the benefits of moving forward with the work was a willingness to work together on the issue.
- A need to fully understand ongoing efforts within the state to develop new models of teacher compensation was expressed.
- There was concern that a lack of political will among both legislators and teachers to push for higher salaries would make this work challenging.
- A survey conducted by KNEA indicates that teachers feel that they are not well compensated when compared to professionals with similar training and credentials, however, teachers do not ask for increases in salaries because in many districts public school teachers are paid more than school board members and their salaries exceed the locality salary average among all workers regardless of profession.
- Leadership team members indicated that if teachers are paid more, more will be expected of them.
- Leadership team members felt that this was the right time to move on this topic given the prior work the state has done in this area (specifically, the Teaching in Kansas Commission Report) and an increased awareness among the public that public education in Kansas is of high quality.
- Given that Kansas is a local-control state with districts willing to experiment and wanting to innovate, the leadership team sees its role as one of creating a road map for willing districts to follow as it pertains to developing a new model of teacher compensation.
- The Kansas Department of Education has worked to remove barriers to districts to allow them greater opportunities to innovate.
- The current Kansas State Board of Education is seen as “courageous” and willing to move forward with developing a new model of teacher compensation.
- The state’s P-20 Council is supportive of this work and can be used as a communications tool.
- The idea of pushing a new model of teacher compensation as an economic initiative was explored.
- Participation in the policy academy provides that state with the opportunity to make
- progress on the Teaching in Kansas Commission’s stage two recommendations.
- There was a suggestion that the leadership team consider adding a member from KASB and KASSP or KAESP.

The leadership team took action on identifying next steps relevant to the state’s proposal and preparations for the policy academy:

- Develop a calendar for leadership team meetings. The leadership team agreed that they would meet once every six weeks. The leadership team identified a date for the next meeting to be held after the policy academy.
- The leadership team would create a “stretch goal” for the proposal to include developing at least two options for districts to implement a new model of teacher compensation after the leadership team concludes its study of various teacher compensation models.
- The leadership team would work to identify districts within the state that would be willing to implement either via a pilot or as a district-wide initiative, one of the options for a new model of teacher compensation.
- While at the policy academy, the three leadership team members in attendance would use team planning time to develop a presentation that would be delivered to members of the leadership team that could not attend the policy academy during the leadership team’s

second meeting. The presentation would focus on what was learned while at the policy academy.

- The leadership team is willing to consider surveying superintendents in the state to query them about the prevalence of differentiated compensation models. This information could potentially be used to assemble superintendents whose districts have experience with differentiated compensation models to discuss their experience with the models.
- The leadership team agreed to review data from the NCES as well as data from KNEA, the Kansas Department of Education, and KASB that have been collected relevant to the various models of teacher compensation already in existence in the state.