

Tuesday, March 19, 2024
4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., Central Time
Virtual Call through Microsoft Teams

Call to Order: 4:05 p.m. – Kim Jacobson, Vice-Chair

Roll Call 8 - Present, 3 – Absent. Quorum met.

Members in Attendance:

Kimberly Jacobson
Representative Brandy Pyle
Senator Michelle Axtman
Superintendent Kirsten Baesler
Sara Stolt

Veronica Zietz
Russell Riehl
Shawn Huss
Daniell Breland

Members Absent:

Representative Michelle Strinden
Senator Kathy Hogan
Maria Neset

Justice Lisa Fair McEvers
Janell Regimbal

Other Attendees:

Kellie Ullberg
Kayla Stastny
Shauna Eberhardt
Sara Kapp

Cathy Ferderer
Lisa Jahner
Wayne Salter
Pam Sagness

Staff:

Jim Collins Jr.

Approval of Agenda

Motion: Veronica Zietz moved to approve the agenda as written.

Second: Sara Stolt

Motion approved.

Approval of Minutes

Motion: Stolt moved to approve the minutes as written.

Second: Russell Riehl

Motion approved.

Health and Human Services: Wayne Salter, Commissioner

Jacobson welcomed the commissioner to the North Dakota Children's Cabinet.

Salter expressed his passion for the work that needs to happen around the state's children and the creation of a safety net continuum for them. Salter said it is his hope the partnership with the North Dakota Children's Cabinet will make the job easier.

Senator Axtman asked the new commissioner if he had partnered with children's cabinets in previous roles. The commissioner stated he had no direct partnership with a cabinet, however he had worked with members/partners, and he is looking forward to a direct interaction.

School Choice Task Force/Interim Education Policy Committee

Senator Axtman provided an update on the legislative request to study school choice options in North Dakota. To date, the interim committee has met three times and has worked on all the school choice options currently available. This included a deep dive into public school choice options in terms of open enrollment policy. Additionally, they brought in experts and researched public charter schools and private school choice options. The committee has started studying voucher programs, what those programs look like across the nation and how that would fit in North Dakota. Axtman said the primary question being asked by the committee focuses on if school choice will benefit all of the state's youth?

Superintendent Baesler commented the entire conversation is rooted in accountability for all schools, not just in the delivery of money, but accountability as it relates directly focused on student achievement.

Zietz asked about the intention of the committee's work with the Hunt Institute, as well as the group's timeline and whether it expects to have a bill draft prior to the next session. Senator Axtman noted that is the goal of the committee.

Senator Axtman closed by discussing the focus on schools' ending fund balances and noted a small subset within that ending fund balance study was to review how schools are utilizing those funds and what portion of the funds are used to help address mental and

behavioral health. A portion of the study allowed the task force to revisit the issue and partner with the Department of Public Instruction (DPI).

Cabinet Member Updates

Stolt noted the strategic planning facilitation contract was awarded to the Forum for Youth Initiative. The cabinet can move forward with the facilitation of the strategic planning process.

Zietz said when protection and advocacies caseloads were reviewed this year, education was the second most requested area for service, after abuse, neglect and exploitation. When looking at funding through the group's mental health program, education is the largest area requesting services and assistance.

Stolt also discussed the changes coming in the redesign of case management. The process started Feb. 1, with an 18-month target for completion.

Next Meeting

4:00 p.m., April 16, 2024

Adjourn – 4:23 p.m.

Motion: Stolt moved to adjourn the meeting.

Second: Representative Pyle

Motion approved.