

CORE 24 IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE MEETING NOTES September 28, 2009

ITF Members: Michael Christianson, Jean Countryman, Linda Dezellem, Lynn Eisenhauer, Larry Francois, Chuck Hamaker-Teals, Sergio Hernandez, Julie Kratzig, Bridget Lewis, Karen Madsen, Mark Mansell, Mick Miller, Alex Otoupal, Jennifer Shaw, Sandra Sheldon, Brad Sprague, Michael Tolley

SBE Board Members and Staff: Steve Dal Porto (Board Co-Lead), Jack Schuster (Board Co-Lead), Amy Bragdon, Phyllis Bunker Frank, Kathe Taylor

Speakers/Observers: Erin Jones (speaker), Arcella Hall, Linda Hansen, Ben Kodama, Tim Knue, Linda Lamb, Representative Tina Orwall

Welcome, Introductions, Review of Agenda. Kathe Taylor introduced the newest member of the Task Force, Charles (Chuck) Hamaker-Teals. Chuck is a National Board Certified social studies teacher from Kennewick, WA. He is replacing teacher John Heley, who resigned from the ITF due to other pressing commitments. Brief biographies of ITF members can be found at:

<http://www.sbe.wa.gov/documents/Task%20Force%20Members.pdf>

Making Graduation a Reality for All Students. Erin Jones, Assistant Superintendent for Student Achievement at the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), reviewed a PowerPoint presentation outlining the challenges the students who are most likely to struggle with CORE 24 will face: English-speaking students of color, ELL students, students who were not successful in middle school/junior high, students who experience trauma or serious illness during high school, students who are homeless or transient, and students who transfer from another state late in high school. She noted that many of these students do not see the purpose of graduation (either because they have no family role models or don't see the connection between graduation and job success), and/or come from families who do not understand graduation requirements.

Erin focused on the importance of better counseling and guidance to provide accurate information and counter a culture of low expectations. She offered the following suggestions to assure that students stay engaged and complete the courses needed to graduate:

- Provide more guidance for students to develop plans, make wise choices, and get the support they need
- Allow students access to a variety of courses
- Provide a variety of ways for students to make up courses
- Provide ELL students with a variety of ways to earn credits toward graduation (competency, credit for ELL courses)
- Standardize course offerings across and within districts

Erin's PPT can be viewed at:

<http://www.sbe.wa.gov/documents/Making%20Graduation%20a%20Reality%20for%20ALL%20Students.pdf>

Beginning Considerations: Making CORE 24 Work for All Students. ITF Members raised the following issues in the discussion that followed:

High School and Beyond Plan:

- Technically, students are supposed to have a High School & Beyond (HS&B) Plan, but the flexible guidelines allow districts to do it whenever they want—it really should start earlier than the senior year, and probably in middle school.
- There is a range of quality in HS& B plans across districts, mainly because it's an unfunded mandate and districts differ in the level of investment and training that they provide. Local control means that it is inconsistent across districts.
- Seattle is trying to move from a graduation mentality to a post high school mentality.

Guidance and Counseling:

- How does guidance and counseling become central to secondary-level funding?
- How do we increase the likelihood that the people who are providing the counseling/advising/guidance are well-trained and committed to doing it well? We have to put people who want to do the work into the positions.
- Is there a way to create a formula that changes the ratio of counselors in a school depending on the number of low-income/students of color? Maybe it means 150 or 200 kids per counselor.
- The ASCA model (American School Counseling Association) would allow counselors to do more counseling, less administrative work. However, some of the administrative tasks provide an opportunity to meet with students in a “neutral” way. It's a way to build relationships with kids. It's important to start as early as possible, including at the elementary level. ASCA recommends a ratio of 1:250 students.
- Grant-funded programs like GEAR UP are great for funding people to provide college and career guidance, and for taking kids on field trips to college campuses. But the money eventually goes away, and there is no state support waiting in the offing to fill this gap.
- We have to be careful about the messages we send. It's great to try to prepare all students for all options, including four-year college. But it also sends a subliminal message that students who don't go to a four-year college “settle” for a second-class choice. The reality is we want what's best for our kids.

Flexibility

- We need to create more flexibility in the day and in the year. We also need to cross-credit more and redefine what a credit means.
- We need to standardize online learning—there's too much flexibility. Depending on where you go, you can earn a credit for as little as a few hours of work online. We need to be sure that the standards for all curricula are high and consistent.
- We need to erode the barriers of what a high school/four-year experience is, and think about policies that move the barriers.
- There needs to be a 5th year college credit conversion—If students are short HS credits, they could get into a CTC and transfer back high school credits, so they

are progressing and finishing. This would still be a part of extended graduation, with the district providing the diploma. And if students are in the program, it doesn't count against the graduation rate.

- Our union contracts often limit flexibility—we can't ignore them.

This discussion will resume at the November 2 meeting, when the ITF will focus on two questions:

- Within the SBE's graduation requirements authority, what policy changes need to be considered in order to make it possible for all students (from struggling to advanced) to meet CORE 24 requirements?
- In what areas outside the SBE's authority is advocacy needed in order to further the aims of CORE 24?

Phase In. Discussion of phase-in continued from the previous meeting. Four small groups formed and discussed a series of questions, recording their responses on one summary sheet. The responses are thus group responses—one summary sheet was turned in for each group.

1. The SBE will advocate for graduation requirements funding to begin in the 2011-2013 biennium. (Using the four funding parameters identified by the SBE), prioritize what you think SBE should be advocating for.

Group	Funding for 6 Instructional Hours	Funding for Struggling Students	Funding for Guidance and Counseling	Funding for Curriculum and Materials
1	1A	3A	1	3
2	2	1	3	4
3	1	3	2	4
4	1 or 4	2 or 3	2 or 3	1 or 4

Although a couple of groups hedged (i.e., using designations like “1A and 1” or “1 or 4”), several messages emerged in the large group discussion:

1. Fund us first for what we are already doing—and most of us are already doing 6 instructional hours, using levy money to make it happen.
2. The infrastructure for guidance and counseling is critical and connected to support for struggling students. Two groups wrote:
 - “Guidance is an important next step to help students/parents see what they need for future success.”
 - “Guidance and counseling is the heart of the situation and can help struggling students with additional counseling support. If the state funded more counseling and instructional hours, materials and curriculum might be funded locally. The system cannot work without increased funding. Counseling, if not active and proactive, will not work.”

Other comments on this item were:

- Build the support structure before implementing the increased credit requirements.
- Depending on how resources are allocated, funding 6 instructional hours could meet the same needs to support struggling learners.

- Potential CBA issues: Pressure could be to use any new resources to reduce existing class sizes and/or enhance compensation rather than support CORE 24 implementation
- It's very difficult to dissect these categories one from each other. Fund basic education, period.
- Is 6 hours sufficient for struggling students? How do we fund the additional support?

2. Funding that begins any later than 2011 would push back the state-directed implementation of CORE 24 (Districts could move ahead if they chose). The Board is assuming that five years is sufficient time, with funding, to implement CORE 24 requirements.

a. Is 5 years for implementation reasonable? Why or Why not?

All four groups said 5 years was a reasonable implementation period, and all qualified their statements:

- Five years is reasonable but we need to clearly define what is funded, and it must be ongoing—not start-up only.
- Five years is okay as long as there is a one-year period to plan for implementation (some districts will never be ready!)
- Assuming 100% front funding, five years seems reasonable. This presumes adequate support structures are in place, counseling/guidance is effective, and highly qualified teachers can be retained in all areas (particularly in science, math, world languages, and fine arts).
- Five years is reasonable assuming full funding and support structures are in place. We are currently not funded—need to be clear that funding is needed to do what we currently do.

b. Is there any reason you would not want the SBE to advocate for funding to begin in 2011?

The short and clear answer to this question was a definitive no, with repeated admonitions to advocate for funding as early and as often as possible, recognizing that it might take multiple biennia to secure funding.

c. If funding does not begin in 2011, what incentives might encourage districts to move forward on their own?

Competitive pilot projects were suggested by three groups, with a suggestion that there could be a “Race to the Top for CORE 24,” providing resources to districts opting to go ahead before rules were in place. There was uncertainty about how to do this—what amount of funding might be appropriate—as “issues of implementation can differ drastically from one district to another.” There was also some unease in districts moving forward without funding because it would put more pressure on local districts and levies.

3. Three of the guiding principles for CORE 24 are “Give focus,” “Plan Ahead,” and “Start Early.”

- a. **What will districts need to do to provide comprehensive education and career guidance to help students not only plan for high school and beyond, but to revisit their plan regularly to adjust it as needed?**
- b. **What support would be needed to enable districts to provide comprehensive education and career guidance (Be specific; e.g., more counselors, Navigation 101, etc.)**

There appeared to be general agreement that guidance needed to start, at a minimum, in middle school, and that the HS&B Plan needed to be more than a piece of paper. One group even suggested it needed to be a “Middle School and Beyond Plan.” Another group went so far as to suggest that “some things cannot be ‘local control’—guidance and counseling models must be similar in all districts.” All groups sounded the call for funding, funding, funding.

- Begin by 5th or 6th grade in providing ongoing, relevant activities (mentorships, site visits, real world applications) and conversations that continually and consistently provide both motivation and support for students to connect with their plan—all staff need to be actively engaged with students.
- Professional development for counselors and teaching staff. Counselors need greater expertise in career and college guidance vs. bureaucratic roles; training in AVID and Navigation 101.
- Bolster parent involvement component in HS&B Plan; student-led conferencing a possible vehicle
- Find the appropriate model (i.e., Navigation 101) and fully fund it.
- Lower FTE loads for counselors (Suggestions varied as to what these might be: 1:100; 1:250).
- Funding for guidance and career counselors, and for career activities such as postsecondary visits, internships, mentorships, job shadows.
- Funding for more registrars (as opposed to more counselors) would be a greater help to alleviate the counselors from routine/bureaucratic duties.
- Pre-service teachers need to be trained and taught that it’s an expectation to provide student advocacy/advising (goal setting, planning, when to send to counselor)
- Better guidelines for administrators as to appropriate role for guidance counselors.

4. In what subjects/specialty areas are you most concerned about teacher capacity as you think about implementing CORE 24. Prioritize your concerns with “1” being the subject you are most concerned about and “10” the least.

Concerns about teacher capacity were greatest (i.e. identified by those selected by at least two groups as priority 1, 2, or 3) in the following subjects: science, world languages, arts and ELL. Of these, science was the greatest area of concern. There was little concern (i.e. identified by those selected by at least two groups as priority 8, 9, or 10) about capacity in English, social studies, and health and fitness.

One group rated only the top five areas of concern, and another group simply said “no concerns” with respect to English, social studies, and health and fitness.

Groups' Assessment of Teacher Capacity Concerns by Subject Areas

Subject	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Math		x		x		x				
Science	xx		x							
CTE			x	x	x		x			
Arts	x		x				xx			
WLang		xx		x		x				
SocStud									x	x
English								x	x	
H&Fitness								x		x
Spec Ed		x			xxx					
ELL	x		x	x		x				

b. What would you like to see the state do to increase capacity in your top 3 priority areas?

- Train teachers well to teach to both sets of standards in cross-credited classes.
- Loan forgiveness for teachers in challenging schools or in high demand areas.
- Multiple endorsement requirements in teacher preparation programs; guide teacher candidates to appropriate endorsement areas.
- State cap on teacher preparation enrollment in subject areas where the state is over-supplied
- Incentivize mid-career changes
- Provide regular communication between K-12 and higher education about training needs
- Regular state surveys of districts on projected staffing needs and articulating with teacher prep programs to align those needs with candidate preparation
- Differentiated pay by endorsement area
- Better recruitment—show job satisfaction and that teachers make a difference, if not a fortune

5. What concerns do you have about the facilities capacity to implement CORE 24?

The ITF acknowledged that, like teacher capacity, this was a big question and the answers would vary district by district. While noting that science, arts, and CTE facilities might be the areas where upgrades/construction might be most needed, there was greater concern expressed for the facilities implications of smaller class sizes—part of the prototypical schools conversation.

- We need to be smarter about how we utilize what we already have—can we better utilize skills centers?
- We need to be able to pay for construction without relying on local bonds.
- Most concerned about science/arts/CTE (sports medicine, engineering, and medical science labs)
- CORE 24 in and of itself may produce some additional facility needs to lab science and fine arts facilities.

- A huge concern is implementation of the prototypical class sizes envisioned in 2261. If these are fully implemented, there will be class size/facility issues across the state.
- It was very concerning to hear from Gordon Beck that Capital Facilities is not actively engaged in the Basic Education redefinition work, including prototypical schools and CORE 24.

b. What would you like to see the state do to address these issues?

- Encourage a broader course menu and multiple times/options/opportunities for learning, especially in 11th and 12th grade.
- Utilize existing facilities and staff to bigger capacity (more hours each day, more weeks out of the year) (labs, performing arts, gyms, etc.)
- Conduct an inventory and analysis of current facilities, with an overlay of the 2261 proposed staffing ratios to assess the impact on facility capacity statewide. This has to be a part of the 2261 and CORE 24 conversation.
- Provide stable funding for skills centers
- Fund upgrades so districts don't need to rely on local money
- Guarantee a match for certain high need facilities

Communication Strategy and Revised Work Plan. Kathe Taylor reviewed the revised work plan, noting that the SBE at its September, 2009 meeting had assigned an additional task to the ITF: devising a process for students to elect an alternative to the default set of CORE 24 graduation requirements in which students would be automatically enrolled.

The ITF identified three meeting dates in 2010: January 11, February 5, and March 15. Locations to be determined.

The location of the November 2, 2009 meeting has been changed to Olympia, WA in order to accommodate a speaker on prototypical schools. The meeting will be held at ESD 113.

Kathe also reviewed the communications packet that ITF members can use when collecting feedback from groups. Karen Madsen suggested that a line be added to the summary feedback form to reflect the number of people providing feedback. The revised communications packet can be found with the meeting materials at: <http://www.sbe.wa.gov/documents/09-23-09%20CORE%2024%20Communications.pdf>

Alex Otoupal, Jennifer Shaw, and Larry Francois spoke briefly about reactions they had received from groups that they had spoken to at ESDs 112, 113, and Puget Sound.

The next meeting will be November 2, 2009, 10:00-4:00 at ESD 113 in Olympia, WA.