**Wyoming School-University Partnership**

**Governing Board Meeting**

**Casper, Wyoming**

**Thursday, April 14, 2016**

**10:05 a.m. – 1:54 p.m.**

In Attendance

Governing Board Members

Andrea Bryant (Executive Director, Wyoming Professional Teaching Standards Board), Diana Clapp (Superintendent, Fremont 6), Dennis Fischer (Superintendent, Platte 1), Joanne Flanagan (Assistant Superintendent, Fremont 25, for Terry Synder), Shon Hocker (Superintendent, Big Horn 1, by conference call), Paige Fenton Hughes (Coordinator, Wyoming State Board of Education), Marty Kobza (Superintendent, Sheridan 1), Brent Notman, (Principal, Converse 1, for Dan Espeland), Ray Reutzel (Dean, UW College of Education), Leslie Rush (Associate Dean, UW College of Education), Ray Schulte (Superintendent, Park 6, by conference call), Audrey Shalinsky (Associate Dean, UW College of Arts and Sciences), Ron Sniffin (Executive Director, Wyoming Education Association, for Kathy Vetter), Walt Wilcox (Assistant Superintendent, Natrona 1), Marty Wood, (Principal, Niobrara 1, for Aaron Carr), Rick Woodford (Superintendent, Big Horn 2, by conference call)

Guests

Nicholas Bellack (Assistant Director, Wyoming Professional Teaching Standards Board), Joel Dvorak (Consultant, Wyoming Department of Education, by conference call), Brent Young (Chief Policy Officer, Wyoming Department of Education)

Staff

Kara Duggan (Office Associate), Audrey Kleinsasser (Director).

Diana Clapp, Partnership chair, convened the meeting at 10:05. She welcomed all in attendance and asked each to share his or her name and position also a word of wisdom or quotation that provides encouragement during the challenging days of April-May.

Diana then turned to the items on the consent agenda. Audrey Kleinsasser clarified that the Partnership follows the University of Wyoming’s fiscal year, which runs July 1 – June 30. Andrea Bryant moved and Paige Fenton Hughes seconded the motion. With no further questions about the materials, the board members voted to approve the consent agenda.

Diana then turned to the proposed Partnership budget for the coming 2016-2017 year as well as the draft of the Opportunities for Partnership Members document Audrey K and Kara Duggan created at the behest of the governing board.

She asked for feedback on the Opportunities document. Paige Fenton Hughes commented that the document was a great tool for recruitment and explaining what the Partnership does. Joanne Flanagan asked for clarification if only Partnership members were invited and could participate in Lost in Transition and other conferences the Partnership support. Audrey K clarified that everyone was welcome. Members support the meetings through their dues, and, at the same time, the meetings served as a recruitment tool for non-members. Since the WDE and WEA are Partnership members, one way to think about the issue is that all Wyoming K-12 educators have a Partnership sponsor.

Dennis Fischer commented that smaller school districts find the Partnership’s events valuable because it offered opportunities for teachers to become leaders in their teaching area.

Next, Diana addressed the proposed Partnership 2016-2017 budget and reminded the group of the new dues structure for the school district members adopted at the January 28 governing board meeting, and how the change was to encourage smaller school districts in the state to join the Partnership. She urged all those in attendance to help recruit these districts.

Ray Schulte asked for clarification about the $28,000 from the P-16 Council and its soft encumbrance for the Partnership comparison charts. Audrey K explained that the documents were created about ten years ago to highlight differences between high school and the university for incoming students. The documents are particularly popular with parents at UW’s Discovery Days. With the P-16 money, Audrey K plans to update the documents with an eye to stronger digital presentation and a strong connection to disciplinary content standards. Ray thanked her for the clarification and asked if she was comfortable using one-time money to pay for document updates. Audrey K said it would depend on the recruitment effort of the Partnership, and she would keep the governing board posted.

Audrey K then reminded the governing board that the Partnership is the current fiduciary home for the League of Democratic Schools. Its money is separate from Partnership accounts and is held at the UW Foundation.

Ray Schulte moved to adopt the proposed budget as is, and Paula Lutz seconded the motion. With no more discussion, the board members moved to adopt the budget. Diana thanked the board and said that she, Audrey K, and Kara would be in touch about dues and recruitment.

Diana introduced the panel discussion about the Wyoming Statewide System of Support, moderated by Paige Fenton Hughes with Brent Young, Nicholas Bellack, Leslie Rush, Joanne Flanagan, and Joel Dvorak (by conference call).

Paige first asked each panelist to share the positives they saw with the collaborative council’s work on the Statewide System of Support. Each panelist said he or she was most enthusiastic about the potential of the systematic assistance. In the end, the System of Support should provide a streamlined process to provide individualized assistance for school districts. Panelists credited that potential to the diverse group of Wyoming educators working together. Brent Young also said that one positive outcome of the council was the humbling nature of the work. It brings home how much rests on a single school’s leadership team, and how even in even low-performing schools, the educators want to do their very best.

Paige then asked the panelists to highlight any areas of concern they have for the System of Support. The main concerns and questions the panelists had included:

* Managing the system and alignment;
* Making it user-friendly so that common sense prevails;
* Making sure the information gathered gets back to policy makers; and,
* Branding the system as positive for teachers, parents, and policy makers alike.

Paige opened the discussion to the rest of the group. Marty Kobza, Marty Wood, and Diana Clapp all expressed concerns about the system adding more work for educators, specifically in regard to reporting, and supported the idea of having a streamlined process. Diana also wondered if the data collected could be accessed and used by the educators to make improvements in the classroom.

Dennis Fischer wondered how the System of Support could help better convey information to school boards, and commented the System of Support’ framework document was confusing about what it required. Brent said he would be happy to go through the logic model and explain it in future detail about what it requires and doesn’t require. He also commented that it was important to think about the implications of the System of Support for all schools, not just underperforming ones.

Joanne thanked the group for their input, stating it made her think the collaborative council should look at the components of the System of Support and examine how it affects all the stakeholders.

Ray Reutzel wondered how the information from the System of Support could be utilized by the College of Education in order to better prepare pre-service teachers.

Paige concluded the panel discussion by reminding the governing board that everyone is represented on the collaborative council, and she urged them to contact to their representatives or Joel with questions or comments. Diana thanked her and the panel for their contributions, and then broke the meeting for lunch.

After lunch, Diana reconvened and turned the meeting over to Leslie Rush to lead the grounding discussion about a short essay called, “Don’t P@nic: Punctuation Has Rarely Been Truly Stable,” taken from the March 12, 2016, issue of *The Economist*, a weekly periodical. Leslie started the grounding by asking the governing board to split into small groups and discuss what punctuation rules they did or did not follow.

After a few minutes, Leslie brought the group back together and asked them their thoughts on punctuation, specifically in regard to their leadership. A number of participants said they judged people based on their grammar in formal documents. Both Audrey S and Paige stated they saw mistakes as distractions that take away from the document. Joanne commented that correct grammar was an indication of preciseness in a person. The group also agreed that grammar is less important in informal writing and, in the age of social media, teaching students to pay attention to the different types of writing is vital.

Audrey S brought up the possibility that students have a hard time with the concept of formal writing in education when it is so different from what students usually write. She pointed out that the disconnect between student and teacher expectations can sometimes have severe consequences, such as plagiarism.

Leslie then asked the group to focus on the concept of change and asked what type of change was hardest to deal with in their respective institutions. Marty Kobza brought up the significant cultural beliefs systems about students. In the past, it was the students’ responsibility to learn, but now society is starting to see it as a shared responsibility between students and teachers.

Joanne commented another challenging change is the movement to put the responsibility of teaching back with the teachers. She commented that teachers had been used to opening a text book or program and teaching that, and now struggle with the idea of writing their own lesson plans or assessments. Audrey K agreed with Joanne’s observations, commenting that in many Lost in Transition events there is always someone pleading, “Just tell me what to do.”

Marty Wood added that sometimes the challenge of changing pedagogy has to do with people, as some refuse to consider changing their education style.

Leslie wrapped up the grounding discussion and thanked everyone for their participation.

Diana asked for updates about recent activities. Audrey K highlighted Mark Stock’s document in the governing board packet about ECHO, and Brent Young contributed that Mark is considering expanding and possibly adding a program just for principals. She also updated the group about the *Just in Time: Excellence in ESL Teaching* conference, April 29-30, in Casper, as well as the League of Democratic School’s next conference call, Thursday, April 21.

Diana asked Ray Reutzel for any updates about UW’s Board of Trustees’ Education Initiative. Ray said the search for an executive director is underway. Also he and Jillian Balow are considering having a superintendents’ retreat to better explain the initiative to Wyoming school district superintendents.

Andrea informed the group that the PTSB is in-between its busy times, and by the second week of May, activity will start to pick up again. She informed the group the online licensure program was not available, so the application process would be the same as last season. She said the PTSB was aware of the difficulty of not knowing if an applicant would be licensed, and urged superintendents or their designees to call and ask the PTSB to screen for any red flags.

Ron Sniffin informed the group that the WEA just finished its annual assembly and is gearing up for the political season. Also, he said the Student Learning Objectives (SLO) initiative is still in the works.

Paige reminded the group of a number of meetings coming up in the next few weeks in the state, one of them a Wyoming State Board of Education meeting in Worland, April 28-29.

Diana closed the meeting by reminding everyone to invite other school districts to join the Partnership. She asked everyone to complete the meeting’s evaluation (see the transcribed responses below). She adjourned the meeting at 1:50 pm.

**Minutes transcribed by Kara Duggan, April 22, 2016**

**Wyoming School-University Partnership**

**April 14, 2016**

**N = 9 responses**

All responses were transcribed as written, with minor grammatical changes. Not all respondents answered every question.

1. **What one or two things from today’s meeting did you value?**

* Full participation by participants.
* The panel discussion about the SSoS was informative. Thanks for presenting a balanced perspective of both strengths and weaknesses.
* SSoS discussion very helpful.
* Knowledge gained from the discussion of the SSoS. Wrote down some great quotes! I appreciate the diversity of positions represented in this group!
* Discussion of Statewide System of Support. Discussion of change as illustrated by the punctuation article.
* Appreciate the value of conversation around the topics. SSoS update was valuable. Good to reflect on evolution of communication and formal language… very insightful.
* Good, open communication. Professional dialogue around a classic topic (Safe space for learning).
* The opportunity to get reacquainted with members. Open and honest discussion. Punctuation discussion was fun.
* Lots of people involved/lots of people shared and contributed.

1. **What can we do to improve the quality of the governing board meeting?**

* Great job!
* Just more school district people attending.
* Work toward a group agenda or project that is jointly decided and implemented.
* Continue to invite other districts to participate.
* A lot of people couldn’t make it. Perhaps increase attendance.

1. **Reactions, suggestions, recommendations, or anything else you’d like meeting planners to know?**

* It’d be great to have a teacher from one of the Lost in Transition to tell us what he/she observed about the process and the outcomes.
* Nice meeting.
* I didn’t receive the packet prior to this meeting. It’s a convenience to have it prior to the meeting, but it worked out.
* Good meeting – thank you! #DONE ☺
* Information in the packet helpful, well organized, easy to access.

**Transcribed by Kara Duggan, April 15, 2016**