

Task Force to Study a Post-Labor Day Start Date for MD Public Schools
Minutes
April 23, 2014

Welcome: William Cappe, Chairman of the Task Force called the meeting to order at 1:07 PM when a quorum present. Mr. Cappe welcomed Task Force members and observers to the meeting.

Attendance: Nine of the nineteen members were present at the start of the meeting with a total of twelve members present by the end of the meeting.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Cappe asked if after reviewing the minutes were there any changes to the minutes as presented. A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes. There were two additions made to the minutes: Page 2 the word “be” was added before malleable in the first line of paragraph one; Page 2 under Work Group I – Education second bullet the word “jurisdiction” was replaced with “the state”. The chair called for a vote on motion to approve the minutes with the changes, and by a show of hands the members approved the minutes. The approved minutes will be posted to the MSDE website.

Review of Materials: Sarah Spross reviewed with members important materials contained in their handouts:

- Six charts were included that provided historical information about school system closures for 2008 through 2012.
- March 20, 2014 newspaper article from *The Dispatch* that discussed a poll taken concerning a post-Labor Day start date for schools. This article was brought to Ms. Spross’ attention after the March 24, 2014 Task Force meeting, that was why it was not included in the Materials of Interest at that Task Force meeting.

This will probably be the last time Materials of Interest are provided to Task Force members since the final meeting is scheduled for May 19, 2014.

Small Work Group Period: Both Mr. Cappe and Ms. Spross noted that at the March 24th Task Force meeting, they requested that each work group submit a draft of their proceedings. It was hoped that by receiving this information work could begin collating and preparing the final Task Force report so that it could be presented at today’s meeting. Since no group submitted work, such information could not be presented today.

Groups were asked to submit their findings and recommendations via email to Kris Angelis by Friday, April 25, 2014 so work can begin in organizing the report. The Task Force members will be given a draft of this information with the minutes from this meeting and the May 19 agenda before the next meeting. Members are reminded that this draft report is confidential and embargoed until it is presented to the Governor. It was suggested as the work groups collect information to formulate their findings and recommendations they should refer to the original bill that outlines the charge of the Task Force.

Members broke into small work groups at 1:20 PM and reconvened at 2:20 PM to present their findings to the whole Task Force.

Work Group 1 – Education Report

- Recommend that school systems should move forward to make sure 75% of facilities have air conditioning. Those school systems with less than 75% of their buildings with air conditioning would be exempt from the post-Labor Day start date until 2017 (Garrett County, Baltimore City and Baltimore County school systems). Garrett County may not need to air condition facilities due to the climate of their region.
- Recommend the state be able to amend the law in order to withdraw Easter Monday as a holiday.
- Recommend local school systems allow teachers obtain professional development via experiences beyond the school provided professional development that contributes to their professionalism as instructors. Teachers could demonstrate provide proof of learning in various ways as they take advantage of webinars, seminars, presentations at local, state and national venues, or online presentations. This provides more flexibility to the school system to provide less days for professional development and more days for student instruction.

Work Group 2 - Economy

- The group has developed an outline in which to present their final submission. The report will discuss opportunities for teachers, students and families.
- Recommend a start date for school systems to be no earlier than September 1. This is a fair date that maintains local school system control over their start date while taking into consideration the economic impact on the state.
- Presented a state map that demonstrates the versatility of the state and the many economic factors evident in the state. The map illustrates the diversity of the state demographically, agriculturally, entertainment venues, recreation venues, tourism, and waterman industry.
- In their report the group will include information gathered from other states as well as Maryland that demonstrates how other states have wrestled with this same problem.

Discussion: It was discussed that it appears individuals do not want earlier and earlier start dates for school systems. This recommendation gives local school systems the opportunity to start before Labor Day especially when Labor Day is later in the month. This way the state can maximize the economic impact on the state while giving local school systems flexibility for their calendar.

Work Group 3 – Tourism

- The group is looking at occupancy rates, revenues generated and taxes in the state.
- Quantitatively, the group is reviewing financial information from Garrett and Worcester Counties.
- The group indicated that at a minimum, they will probably concur with the September 1 recommendation made by Group 2, as the Task Force is working for compromise.

Other Business:

Mr. Cappe again discussed the idea of a 3-prong approach to the final Task Force report. This could include one motion from the entire Task Force or individual recommendations from the 3 work groups. Each group will have its own section in the report to present their findings. The Task Force members will receive the preliminary report findings prior to the May 19th meeting depending on the information received by the 3 work groups.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made and seconded at 3:42 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristine Angelis, Ph.D.
Administrator