



ALABAMA COMMISSION ON THE EVALUATION OF SERVICES

Meeting Minutes

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Date and Location

The Alabama Commission on the Evaluation of Services met on November 14, 2023, at 2:03 p.m. in room 825 of the Alabama State House, 11 S. Union Street, Montgomery, AL.

Attendance

Member	Present	Teleconference	Absent
Chairman Orr	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vice-Chair Filmore	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner Albritton	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner Allred	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner Carlton	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner Coleman-Madison	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner Green	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner Gray	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner Sawyer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner Sells	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner White	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner Whitt	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner Poole, <i>ex officio</i> (<i>Finance Director</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner Fulford, <i>ex officio</i> (<i>LSA Fiscal Division Deputy Director</i>)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



A lawful quorum of voting members was present to conduct business.

Notice of Meeting:

Sufficient notice of the meeting was posted on October 24, 2023, to the Secretary of State's Open Meeting Act Posting Board.

Approval of Minutes:

Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting on July 19, 2023.

A motion was made by Commissioner Albritton to adopt the minutes as written. Commissioner Allred seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with all those present voting.

Reports and Presentation:

Director Morgan provided opening remarks around the work previously completed on teacher workforce. Regarding that work the Commission asked the staff to follow-up on certain aspects of the teacher workforce. They requested the staff get in the field and talk to current teachers, prospective teachers, teacher prep programs and local boards of education to understand why teachers are leaving the profession and what can be done to improve the profession. Savana Griffin gave a presentation on the findings from that work, followed up by a presentation from Patrick Dean on Teacher Pay for Performance.

Teacher Workforce: Follow-up Evaluation

Questions and Answers provided following the presentation:

Commissioner White raised a question about how recent the average salary was. Savana Griffin provided the 2021 average salary from the National Education Association which includes local funding. Follow-up question asked if the number should be moved to be better aligned with the research. Patrick Dean responded and said we could offer an estimate but that national data lags approximately one year. In addition, the average salary presented does not include some of the Alabama policies that recently went into effect (TEAMS contracts, updated salary matrix, etc.).

Commissioner Albritton raised concerns that the timing of teachers leaving was not aligned with the teacher salary increases; therefore it couldn't have been linked to teacher pay. Patrick Dean responded and clarified the data saying that the data suggest that even though the two don't align, the teacher study showed teachers leaving the classroom are not going into professions that earn more money.

Commissioner Sawyer presented two questions: First question asked how many people were in the teacher labor cohort compared to the number of teachers that exited the profession during the same period. Second question referenced available data that could indicate the effectiveness of targeted salary increases with retention. Savana Griffin provided a response to the first question and indicated that the cohort included all teachers who had less than 10 years of service and exited between 2015 and 2021. In total there were 2,151 teachers in the cohort. In addition, our recommendation is to expand the study and do it annually for all teachers. Follow-up to that response from Commissioner Sawyer, did all 2,100 participate in the study was answered with an affirmative that all were included in the analysis. Director

Morgan asked that Savana expand on the explanation and why the cohort was limited to those teachers. Savana referenced teachers leaving within the first three years and the need to exclude teachers that retired. Patrick followed up with additional information regarding the limitations due to cost. The study serves as a proof case, and our recommendation is that the study be completed annually and expanded to all teachers leaving the profession.

Commission White asked if our survey of teachers was randomized. Savana's response was that the survey was statewide and voluntary. Commissioner White suggested that self-reported survey responses are often the folks that are more likely to complain and asked if the labor study looked at hours worked. Patrick answered the follow-up with an affirmative that we looked at hours worked versus contracted hours but there was not a statistically significant differentiation based on hours. Commissioner White offered an explanation that teachers may be leaving because they want a more flexible schedule and while they may work less hours, they may be getting paid a higher hourly wage. Director Morgan said the study used the best available data from the department of labor and that limits the analysis, but the staff is open to additional analysis with better information.

Commissioner White asked about our visits to the colleges of education, asking how the focus groups at these schools were assembled and how many participants there were. Savana responded that the staff visited 11 colleges around the state and spoke with students in the teacher prep programs, students not in teacher prep programs, faculty, and staff. There were an estimated 7-10 participants in each group.

Commissioner White asked if the participants were randomized, and Patrick responded that they were not.

Commissioner White said getting more data is a good idea and suggested maybe working with ALSDE to complete exit surveys with everyone who leaves and survey everyone who stays. This would determine the reasons they're actually leaving for and what is working for those that are staying. In addition, the survey should consider those teachers thinking about leaving and how they compared to those that actually left. We need to understand why they are leaving. Patrick responded that we made a recommendation to do exit interviews last year, and while that would help us compare, the responses may not be as valid. Some people are scorched; some may not want to burn bridges. Data suggests that there are more issues at the local level in administration that statewide policies and salaries cannot address.

Commissioner White asked about the 10 lowest and 10 highest turnover districts. Is the turnover due to societal issues? Also suggested that we interview superintendents to determine why teachers are leaving. Savana responded that we did interview superintendents from a cohort of 55 local boards of education. The cohort was a representative sample consisting of different subject areas. Within that cohort were some of the 10 highest and 10 lowest districts. Many cited societal issues such as parent and child behavior. Commissioner White noted that child behavior in the classroom could be something the staff looks into, more directly, are the school detention centers working.

Commissioner Sawyer asked how the universities were selected for the focus groups. She was particularly surprised that Alabama State University did not participate and that it was one of the oldest colleges of education. Savana responded that the staff reached out to every public college of education in the state. Those that didn't participate cited scheduling issues or simply not wanting to participate. Director Morgan

also offered the IRB process is difficult to navigate in a short period of time. Those constraints prevented some from participating. In total there are 14 public colleges of education and we spoke to 10, including one private. Commissioner Sawyer reiterated that she was surprised that ASU didn't reach out or participate.

Teacher Workforce: Pay for Performance

Patrick presented results from the Pay for Performance study and Q&A followed.

Commissioner White asked about the study and how it would differ over time with the cost-of-living adjustments. He said it would be good to see the results of the study over a seven-year period. He was curious about the change in effect size as it relates to the number of years included in the study looking at the cumulative student gains. Patrick responded and commented on the meta-analysis of over 47 studies. The longer the study went on, the smaller the effect size.

Commissioner Fulford suggested the study should consider a longer period of time and looking at average growth on revenue. You may have great learners one year and the next year you may not. If teacher pay is going to be based on performance of their class's, we need to look at multiple years so good teachers don't get penalized for having a bad class and vice versa. Patrick responded with information on studies that completed assessments at the beginning of the year and projected the growth through the end of the year. Then they would look at it after the fact to see if student performance was where it was projected to be and based it on that. Others looked at student beginning performance for their class compared to a statewide distribution to see where they would fall in that rank.

Commissioner Sawyer had another comment. Based on data, there was a common thread in why teachers exit: the classroom, students, behavior—we saw all that in a couple of data sets, but we focused on salary. But salary didn't make a difference because they stayed. In your research, did you find a state that introduced a variable to address student behavior with a performance reward? Requirement of attendance works in reverse—expel a student, funding they get because of attendance days. Was there a state that did something out of the box to reward student behavior performance? Savana noted the research didn't point to a state that had a creative approach to reward good behavior, but what did make a difference was a localized approach. She provided the example of the Elmore County Task force to create a better working environment for teachers. Although that example doesn't address student behavior it does suggest that a local solution might be the best approach rather than statewide policies.

Commissioner Sawyer agreed and said it may be a good strategy to not go down the path of a one size fits all.

Commissioner Fulford talked about the learning loss through COVID and classroom environment changing. Seasoned teachers can't be replaced because the teacher pipeline isn't producing what it used to. Our focus moving forward should be on listening to what the teachers are telling us. Where we have failed teachers as a whole is by not listening to what their needs are. They walk away at the end of the year because they are asked to do more and more. Getting into teaching isn't about the money, it's a calling. Policy has created more paperwork and less student interaction as a result. They are asked to do everything except what they were hired to do and what they are called to do.

Vice Chair Filmore noted that salary is not an issue and reminded the Commission that the Governor and Legislature have given pay raises to teacher for many years, north of five. Pay may not be the reason they leave, but the pay is being addressed. Patrick provided some additional information on what teachers cited as the top reasons for wanting to leave the classroom. Across the board, work environment and workload were most cited and major issues. Nearly 95% said their passion for teaching is why they became teachers. Although salary was not a reason for leaving, they cited salary as enough reason to stay and put up with classroom behavior. Policies, perhaps not statewide, to decrease workload could remove some additional barriers. Removing barriers so that policies can be implemented at the local level could be just as impactful.



Commissioner White offered some suggestions for moving forward and potential studies. Patrick mentioned several taskforces and study groups over the years come up with recommendations. Some of the biggest behavioral issues are related to the federal government and other legal barriers that can't be removed.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

None

Adjournment:

There being no further business, at 3:05 p.m. Commissioner Sawyer made a motion to adjourn, and it was seconded by Commissioner White. Motion passed unanimously with all those present voting.