

**Arizona eLearning Task Force
Minutes of the Meeting
Monday, January 7, 2008
10:00am – 12:00pm
Arizona Department of Education
Conference Room 417**

Members Present:

Debra Lorenzen	Casey Loman
Theodore Kraver	Joseph O'Reilly via conference phone
Rod Lenniger	DJ Harper – Representing Chris Cummiskey
Mark Nichols	Cathy Poplin, Chair

Members Not Present:

Lisa Long
Rosalina Escandon
Sandy Grandberry

Handouts:

- Agenda for January 7, 2008
- December 18, 2007 Meeting Minutes
- AZ eLearning Consortium: Response to the Auditor General's performance audit of the Technology Assisted Project-Based Instruction Program (TAPBI)
- USDOE News Release: U.S. Department of Education Launches New Guide For Advanced Courses Online
- Table of Selected Variables of Highlighted Online Course Providers
- The Arizona Technology Council – print out of power point presentation
- Copy of the Arizona Department of Education Instructional Technology System Pilot Program Grant Application Directions
- Network Nebraska
- GALILEO
- Sustainability and eLearning in Arizona

Welcome and Introductions – *The meeting is recorded on tape and available for full review*

Cathy Poplin called the meeting to order at 10:06 am. Cathy wished everyone a Happy New Year and welcomed those in attendance. Cathy informed everyone that Lisa Long will be joining the meeting via conference phone once her district's budget meeting has concluded. Debra Lorenzen is running late, but will be joining the meeting shortly. Sandy Grandberry will not be in attendance due to the opening of the 2008 Legislature session. Cathy asked Theodore Kraver to begin with the introductions and include any updates he may have to share with the Task Force.

Theodore Kraver began by introducing himself and giving a brief update on a Legislature Bill that does not have any funds attached to it. However, the bill will request the eLearning Task Force to broaden and deepen its scope on what it studies over the next few years. Once this Bill becomes statute it will allow the eLearning Task Force to request grant funds and to help pass

one eLearning bill a year. Ted will provide Cathy Poplin with a copy of this Legislature Bill to pass along to the eLearning Task Force.

Rod Lenniger had the opportunity to speak with some business executives from the technology community over the holiday season. Rod noticed a lot of business executives did not know about the Arizona eLearning Task Force. Rod suggested the eLearning Task Force do some general Press Releases in regards to the eLearning Task Force to the Arizona Technology Council and GPEC (Greater Phoenix Economic Council) to spread the word about what the eLearning Task Force is doing.

DJ Harper informed Cathy that GITA is working with the Department of Education and the State Library Division in regards to the E-Rate program. The goal is to help Arizona schools claim more of the E-Rate funds available to them. Arizona schools are currently not using millions of dollars in E-Rate funds that could benefit Arizona schools. To assist schools claim more funds, it has been suggested that there be a state E-Rate liaison. GITA recommended hiring a state E-Rate coordinator which will help support GITA's goal to bring broadband to all Arizona schools. Cathy advised more details will be provided once the E-Rate committee has more information.

Mark Nichols gave the ELTF a couple of handouts on what other states are doing in eLearning. The first handout was on Network Nebraska and gave an overview of what Nebraska is doing. The second handout was on GALILEO, Georgia's Virtual Library. The last handout was Mark's points of interest pertaining to the sustainability and eLearning in Arizona.

Cathy Poplin introduced herself and acknowledged the guests in attendance from the TAPBI Charter Schools. Cathy began her update by sharing the press release: U.S. Department of Education Launches New Guide for Advanced Courses Online (Cathy will order copies for the ELTF). The separate table, also from the USDOE, shows what other states are doing in regards to online courses. A copy of the Instructional Technology System Pilot Program Grant Application (\$1 million dollar school) was given to each ELTF member. Cathy asked the ELTF to turn to page 15 of the application. Cathy asked for recommendations or suggestions of how to craft a statement to K-4 and K-5 schools pertaining to line C, page 15 of the application. Members of the ELTF discussed verbiage recommendations for Cathy's statement to K-4 and K-5 schools interested in applying to the Instructional Technology System Pilot Program Grant.

Cathy informed the ELTF that due to potential state budget cuts pending legislative and gubernatorial decision, funds may be reduced or eliminated during the 2008 Legislative session.

Cathy asked the ELTF members to review the minutes from the December ELTF meeting; the minutes will be approved at the next ELTF meeting in February.

Pinnacle Education Charter TAPBI Overview – *Michael R. Matwick, Pinnacle Education*

Cathy Poplin introduced Michael Matwick from Pinnacle Education; a TAPBI Charter school. Michael began by introducing himself and his team; Kristen Boilini with ADEA - the legislative liaison for the association of TAPBI charter schools. Also joining Michael from the Sequoia TAPBI schools was Jerry Lewis, Patrick Groom and Superintendent Ron Neil. Michael explained to the ELTF how the TAPBI charter schools operate. Pinnacle Education was

one of the first charter schools in the state to be presented to the Arizona State Education of Board for approval as a charter school. Pinnacle was the first newly charter to be accredited by NCA in 1996. Pinnacle Education has six high schools with 600 Average Daily Attendance, one elementary school with approximately 125 ADA, one TAPBI school with about 650 to 700 maybe as high as 1,000 ADA this year. They currently have about 135 employees and 10,000 student enrollments projected for this year.

In 1999 Pinnacle Education started distance learning. Currently they have 3 different programmatic offerings. The first area is a Fulltime Virtual Enrollment; the students in this program take two courses at a time for six weeks. At the conclusion of the six weeks they will receive five high school credit hours. The second area is known as Concurrent Enrollment where the student chooses to take a course formatted for six or twelve weeks. Concurrent Enrollment students are also enrolled fulltime in a traditional high school at the same time and need these courses for credit recovery. The third area is I.Q. Academy, a partnership with KC Distance Learning out of Portland. I.Q. Academy is the standard two semesters, six courses a day. Pinnacle has expanded their I.Q. Academy to offer it as a Fulltime Virtual Enrollment for six weeks, Concurrent Enrollment and as the traditional I.Q. Academy format.

Michael shared with the ELTF that 30% of all high school students will fail one course. The TAPBI charter schools noticed that a large number of their enrolled students are enrolled for credit recovery. Other problems the TAPBI schools are noticing are many of their students are having difficulty in transferring their credits to another school. Many traditional school districts lose a portion of their funding if a student chooses Distance Learning. Since the districts lose some of their funding, many districts are discouraging students to enroll in Distance Learning.

Superintendent Ron Neil introduced himself and shared with the ELTF that distance learning is growing in Arizona. Credit recovery is just a small part of distance learning. Supt. Neil has noticed a growing trend in partnership development with other schools. Ron stated that if you remove the big school districts in Arizona, you will find that half or more of the remaining schools have a limited course offering. And due to the federal requirement to provide a highly qualified teacher, it is becoming more challenging to offer a variety of courses in every school. Developing a partnership with these schools will help them offer courses they normally wouldn't be able to offer. Funding is a major issue that hinders a school from suggesting their students take a distance learning course.

Cathy Poplin interjected that many students have taken a distance learning course but now the school districts will not accept their credits. Cathy asked if the reason for the district backlash is a funding issue or is it a quality issue. Michael answered by stating they have district partners that use the same content that the distance education uses. One of the Pinnacle's district partners came about as a result of the fact that a district was losing many students to distance education. Michael suggested to the district that they form a partnership and the partnership went smoothly for several years. However, when the district lost additional students due to other reasons, it appeared that the district no longer valued the partnership and did not accept some of the credits the district students tried to transfer. Michael believes it is a funding issue more than a quality issue.

Theodore Kraver asked if the ELTF needed to study the funding issues around eLearning. Mike answered by stating if the growth of eLearning is going to continue it cannot face the same kind of barriers that Pinnacle Education is facing. Michael used I.Q. Academy as an example because it is used in other states. Wisconsin has a statewide system to deliver content; but because of the push back that is driven by the funding issue, districts are denying the acceptance of the credits. This causes the students to not take the courses, which means their being denied the opportunity to have distance learning as an option.

Cathy Poplin thanked the TAPBI schools for coming and invited Sequoia TAPBI Schools back to the ELTF meeting in February.

The ELTF members discussed possible recommendations for a statewide data warehouse to assist districts and charters with the transference of student transcripts from one school to another.

Arizona Technology Council Overview – Ron Schott, Executive Emeritus

Cathy Poplin introduced Ron Schott, the Executive Emeritus for the Arizona Technology Council. Ron began by giving a brief overview of the Arizona Technology Council's mission and vision statement. The vision of the Arizona Technology Council is to assist Arizona with being recognized as a top-tier Technology State. The mission of the organization is to support their members and unify their partners to grow Arizona's economy with technology and innovation.

The Technology Council has a membership of around 500 Corporations. 60% of their memberships are industries within the technology field and 12% are other organizations (such as academia). Almost all of the Universities are part of the council. Service providers that supply services to the technology industry make up 28% of the remaining membership.

The Technology Council hosts a large number of events -- 70 to 80 a year. The biggest event of the year is what is known as the "Technology Oscars for Arizona." This is the Governor's celebration for innovation. Ron shared two magazines the Technology Council publishes. The magazines cover a variety of technology issues and innovations within the state of Arizona.

For the 2006 elections, the Technology Council sent out a survey before the legislative election with the legislative agenda that they were trying to propose. They sent it out pre-primary to all of the candidates that have a good track record with the Technology Council. For those that do not have a good track record, they call them in for an interview. After the interviews, the public policy committee gets together to make their recommendations. Then they get together as a whole group and take it to the executive committee of the Arizona Technology Council for endorsement. The Technology Council does not mandate or endorse candidates from any particular district. The Council may even skip a district; endorse candidates from the same party or even endorse opposing candidates. If asked why they are endorsing a candidate's opposition, the reply is the Technology Council will support those that support the initiatives the Technology Council is interested in.

At the end of the legislative session, the Technology Council sends to the legislatures a report card that relates to the technology industry and technology education. The report card shows how the Technology Council perceives the legislatures end product on the various technology initiatives. The first year the report card is sent, they inform the legislatures it is for their eyes only. However, the next year they publish the report on the back of their agenda. The council has received very positive comments from the legislatures regarding the report card. For the last three legislative years, the Technology Council plus another group of organizations, has gotten fifteen legislatures technology bills passed.

The Technology Council has also has a public policy committee, a financial services committee, a law and technology committee and an ambassador committee that helps provide business values to members. One of the Technology Council purpose is to help businesses promote their business and interact with other businesses and the Arizona community at large.

District/School Application for Middle School Math Pilot – Ruth Catalano

Cathy Poplin asked Ruth Catalano to explain how the application process will work in relationship to awarding the Math RFP. At the December ELTF meeting, the consensus was to hold the release of the application for the schools until the awarded of the contract. Ruth proposed to the ELTF that if they hold the application for the schools until after the RFP was awarded, that they will very likely not get any answers to those schools of the final analysis until April or May. Ruth requested the ELTF start the final consensus on the RFP on January 24, 2008; with the release of the application that week with a caveat. Nothing will be screened until the applicant's schools have seen the final results. Ruth suggested that with the complexity of the application and the amount of thought the schools will have to put into the application and the creation of the application; the schools will not have enough time without some overlap.

Theodore Kraver made a motion for the ELTF to put the application out at the same time the ELTF does their final recommendation at the end of January. Rod seconded the motion. The release of the application was unanimously approved; Joe O'Reilly abstained from voting.

iTunes U

Cathy Poplin informed the ELTF due to time restraint she will discuss the agenda item not covered in today's meeting; iTunes K-12, will be discussed at the next ELTF meeting

Next Meeting Date

The next ELTF meeting will be February 8, 2008. Cathy hopes to have the results from the RFP review by the JLBC for the next ELTF meeting. The next JLBC hearing will be Thursday, January 10, 2008.

Public Testimony

No one requested to speak.

Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned 12:06PM