

Arizona eLearning Task Force

Minutes of the Meeting Monday, September 8, 2008 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Arizona Department of Education Conference Room 417

Members Present:

DJ Harper – Representing Chris Cummiskey
Mark Becker – Representing Debra Lorenzen
Rosy Escandon
Ted Kraver – via conference phone
Sandi Grandberry

Joe O'Reilly
Mark Nichols
Casey Loman – via conference phone
Cathy Poplin, Chair

Members Not Present:

Lisa Long
Rod Lenniger

Handouts:

- Agenda for September 8, 2008
- August 6, 2008 Meeting Minutes
- FY 2008 Annual TAPBI Cost-effectiveness of the Program Report
- Annual Report TAPBI Program 2006-2007
- Annual Report Format for the TAPBI Program 2007-2008
- NACOL's Virtual School Symposium 2008, October 26-28, 2008
- Legislature Review Response Drafts
- Recommended Course of Action for eLearning Task Force Draft
- ELTF Plan of Action for 2008-2009 Draft
- School Finance Reform Progress Report June 2008
- Meeting Dates for the ELTF through June 2009
- High-Speed Broadband Access for All Kids: Breaking Through the Barriers – SETDA June 2008
- Evaluating Online Learning Challenges and Strategies for Success – U.S. Department of Education NCLB
- New IDEAL Brochure

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

Cathy Poplin called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. Cathy welcomed those in attendance and asked the ELTF members on the conference phone to begin by introducing themselves and give a brief update.

- Ted Kraver introduced himself and gave a brief update on his involvement with the Arizona Technology Council Workforce Committee. The committee has asked Ted to link the effects that eLearning and technology has on the work force. The committee is looking at the four content areas of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) and how technology drives eLearning.
- Casey Loman introduced herself with no new updates. Casey stated she may be asked to leave the meeting because her school is in the middle of an ADE audit with the Highly Qualified Division.
- Ruth Catalano, ADE consultant, introduced herself with no updates.
- Rosy Escandon introduced herself with no updates.

- Mark Becker representing Debra Lorenzen introduced himself and gave a brief update on an Early Learning Grant from PBS, working with in-home care providers. These providers will be in their Classroom Innovator Model where they will go out and work with other in-home care providers showing what PBS can do for the children. The in-home care providers will receive a technology package instead of a stipend for being a part of this program. Their goal is to reach those not only in the schools but those taking care of children in the home or a small business such as a home daycare.
- Joe O'Reilly introduced himself with no updates.
- DJ Harper introduced himself with no updates.
- Sandi Grandberry introduced herself and gave a brief update on the classes she is teaching online. Sandy is now teaching two classes online and has added video learning for her classes. Sandy teaches classes for San Joaquin Delta College in Stockton, California. The classes Sandy teaches are also available on her website with her company, For The Love of Software.
- Mark Nichols introduced himself with no updates.
- Hank Stabler, ADE consultant, introduced himself with no updates.
- Cathy Poplin introduced herself and gave a brief update on the Arizona Technology Standards Draft. The Technology Standards Draft is now available for public comments. Once the public comment sessions have concluded Cathy will update the ELTF. The Technology Plan Revision will be given to a writer to create the draft Technology Plan.

Approval of Minutes – August 6, 2008

Cathy asked the ELTF to review the meeting minutes from August for approval. DJ Harper noted a correction needed on the first page, last section, third bullet of the minutes. DJ stated he believes the Open Meeting Law states, for example, he can email individual members of the ELTF but he cannot email the entire task force which would constitute a quorum. Cathy suggested eliminating the last sentence of the section. DJ agreed. With no other corrections offered, Cathy asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Joe O'Reilly made a motion to accept the minutes, DJ seconded the motion, no one opposed. Cathy will have the minutes posted to the ELTF website.

Current Status of TAPBI Schools Oversight & Reporting – Vincient Yanez

Cathy informed the ELTF that since they have heard from several of the TAPBI schools and she thought it would be important to hear from the State Board of Education regarding the TAPBI program. Each ELTF member was given a copy of the TAPBI Annual Report. Vincient Yanez, Executive Director to the State Board of Education, was introduced.

Mr. Yanez discussed the various aspects of the TAPBI schools. Arizona Law created fourteen TAPBI schools; seven of those schools are sponsored by the State Board for Charter Schools, and seven of those schools are sponsored by the State Board of Education. Starting in 2006 the Auditor General began looking at the performance of the various TAPBI schools. The Auditor General's staff met individually with the three state agency participants as well as the TAPBI schools. Mr. Yanez met with representatives from the Auditor General, half of the State Board of Education, his counterpart with the Charter School Board and numerous representatives from the Department of Education to review the audit. The findings were fair. Mr. Yanez encouraged the ELTF members to review the Auditor General's report, the executive summary and the responses which are available online. Cathy stated she will send the link for the report to the ELTF members.

Mr. Yanez reviewed the major findings of the report with the ELTF. The first finding and the main focus of the report is regarding finances. Issues were found in terms of the ADM allowances for each of the TAPBI schools. Generally speaking, one student equals one ADM, and with the way the TAPBI students are enrolled, it becomes complicated and confusing to the Department of Education's computer system to actually determine concurrently enrolled students. For example, a student is enrolled in the Mesa TAPBI

school but is a physical student at another district within the state. This occurs quite frequently, some students were counted twice. For the last three years, the TAPBI programs were over funded by \$6.4 million dollars. The Department of Education is now doing manual counts for all of the TAPBI schools to ensure that this does not happen again.

The report also takes a compares the cost between the district TAPBI schools and the charter TAPBI schools. It is really important to understand that the district TAPBI and charter TAPBI operate differently. When you read the statute, TAPBI is a program. Seven TAPBI school districts operate as programs. Meaning they are “within” or “part of” the administrative process in the school district. Most of the charter TAPBI schools operate as independent schools. For example for a TAPBI’s charter, administrative costs are much higher than a district TAPBI. The reason for the difference is the district TAPBI schools have economy scales within the school district. Mr. Yanez informed the ELTF that when they read the report they will notice a very big difference in the administrative costs due to the way the TAPBI schools are set up. District TAPBI schools operate as a program inside the school district. Few of the charter TAPBI schools have an actual “brick and mortar” setting. Most of the TAPBI schools operate their program as a virtual school.

The portion of the report that deals with academic performance was not unexpected. Mr. Yanez gave each ELTF member a copy of the new annual report format the TAPBI schools are required to submit to the Charter Board and to the State Board every year. Every year there are significant challenges in analyzing the academic performance of TAPBI students. This is particularly difficult for the district TAPBI schools due to the part-time nature of their students. In a charter TAPBI, the students are generally enrolled fulltime. In district TAPBI, they are used more for credit recovery, or used as a supplement in terms of a student’s high school program.

The challenge the State Board of Education faces every year is obtaining good AIMS data on the TAPBI students. The Auditor General’s report acknowledged obtaining good data will be difficult, at least in the way the annual report is currently structured. The reporting format given to each ELTF member is in a new uniformed version. The law requires it to be uniformed between the district and charter TAPBI schools. Currently, there isn’t a way to measure for some of the other aspects of the TAPBI schools, such as influencing the graduation rate, credit recovery, and the motivation for students who would normally drop out of school choose to stay in school through the TAPBI program. Mr. Yanez informed the ELTF that the next TAPBI school report for 2007-08 will be available November 1, 2008. Once it has been presented to the State Board of Education, Mr. Yanez will post it to the State Board website.

The ELTF reviewed the TAPBI School new reporting format and discussed the information the TAPBI schools provide to the State Board. The ELTF also discussed student enrollment, part-time, full-time and concurrent. Mr. Yanez referred to page 2 of the 2006-2007 report, where the concurrency issue is addressed. For example, a student may be enrolled in a traditional school part-time but enrolled in the TAPBI school fulltime, taking more than one class with the TAPBI would constitute concurrent enrollment. Hank Stabler asked Mr. Yanez what is needed for the TAPBI pilot program to move forward and include additional districts and schools. Mr. Yanez stated there needs to be a comparison of the data between a TAPBI schools versus a traditional “brick and mortar” school and unfortunately, there currently is not enough data on the district side to compare at this time. DJ Harper asked a question regarding how money is split between a district and a TAPBI program. For example, a full-time student in Tempe decided to enroll in a credit recovery class at a TAPBI school in Mesa. How does each school receive funding? Does Tempe have to provide funds to Mesa? Mr. Yanez stated, it is based on fractions, if a student is enrolled $\frac{1}{4}$ of the time at a TAPBI school, then $\frac{1}{4}$ of that ADM should go to that program. The remaining ADM should go where the student is enrolled. For example, a student is enrolled $\frac{1}{4}$ of the time at Mesa and the remaining $\frac{3}{4}$ should go to Tempe. The ELTF discussed the various aspects of funding regarding the TAPBI schools.

The AIMS test scores data used to compile the reports on the TAPBI schools was pulled straight from SAIS. Mr. Yanez informed the ELTF that on the report where it says “no data available”, SAIS was unable to pull those numbers. The detailed report will help make sense of the numbers and provide definitions for common terminology within the report, such as concurrent. Mr. Yanez shared with the ELTF that in terms of Best Practices, the district TAPBI schools have a group that meets once a month. The group is very honest when it comes to what works and what doesn't work.

Hank Stabler informed Mr. Yanez that one of the Legislative duties of the ELTF is to look at funding issues in the area of technology; then Hank asked Mr. Yanez if the State Board Education would like the ELTF to collaborate with them when it comes to discussing the TAPBI schools funding issues. Mr. Yanez stated there is always room for more integration. The State Board meets once a month and the ELTF should be involved at least on an advisory basis to provide recommendations. Cathy asked Mr. Yanez how does he see the integration happening. The State Board would be open for suggestions on Best Practices in eLearning and the renewal time for the TAPBI schools is approaching. Cathy stated the ELTF can make recommendations to the State Board. Should the ELTF wait to receive a request or should the ELTF get on the State Board agenda. Mr. Yanez advised that due to the TAPBI school law, there has to be a uniform process. Therefore, there has to be a meeting with the State Board along with the Charter Board to discuss this issue. Mr. Yanez feels there is a possibility in the ELTF being able to offer their assistance.

NACOL's Virtual School Symposium 2008– Hank Stabler October 26-28, 2008 Phoenix, AZ

Hank contacted Allison Powell with NACOL and was informed that ELFT member interested in attending could help stuff bags, assist with the registration table and other duties they would be able to receive for free admission. Hank Stabler asked what members were interested in attending the NACOL symposium. Cathy asked those in attendance who was interested in going. Sandi Grandberry, Ted Kraver, Rosy Escandon, Mark Nichols, Ruth Catalano, Hank Stabler and Nan Williams stated their interest in going and offered their services. Unfortunately, Cathy will be out of town on personal business and will not be able to attend.

Discussion of Response to Review Letter Received from Sen. Karen Johnson – Cathy Poplin

Cathy informed the ELTF that she received a letter from Sen. Karen Johnson regarding the ELTF Legislature Review Response scheduled for December 2008. Cathy asked Hank Stabler and Ruth Catalano to begin a draft response for the ELTF. Each ELFT was given a copy to review. Cathy asked Hank to summarize how the ELTF needs to respond and then Ruth to add what her approach would be and then input from the ELTF members.

Hank began by giving a brief overview of his draft response. The areas Hank covered are listed below as listed on the draft given to each ELTF member.

1. Objectives and purpose in establishing the ELTF.
2. Effectiveness and efficiency, is the ELTF doing the right thing and are we doing it well.
3. Extent to which the ELTF has operated within the public interest.
4. The extent to which the ELTF has encouraged input from the public.
5. Deficiencies in its enabling statues which prevent the ELTF from fulfilling its mandate.
6. The extent to which changes are necessary in the laws of the ELTF to adequately comply with factors listed in this subsection.
7. The problem or the needs the ELTF is intended to address.
8. The extent practicable, in quantitatively and qualitatively terms, the objectives of the ELTF and its anticipated accomplishments.

9. Addressed other agencies with duplicating or conflicting objectives and how the ELTF avoids duplication and conflict.
10. Consequences of eliminating or consolidation with another task force.

Hank informed the ELTF that this is just a draft and he is open to suggestions and changes as needed. The ELTF discussed various revisions to Hank's draft version of the Legislature Review Response.

Ruth Catalano gave an overview of her draft of the Legislature review response. Ruth's letter is more in a letter format and her approach was more on what we have accomplished thus far in relation to the ELTF Legislation. DJ Harper suggested using Ruth's draft as a cover letter or an executive summary of what the ELTF has accomplished and what the ELTF will accomplish in the coming years. DJ made the following suggestions:

- eLearning is growing, it is a growing reality in the nation and AZ needs to take advantage of the opportunity for its young people to learn & grow ahead.
- ELTF has been established to help the state meet some goals, so far, we have done some things and mention A, B, C and we will be doing X, Y, Z.

Cathy asked Hank and Ruth to continue to work on their draft responses. The ELTF agreed to allow Cathy, Hank, Ruth and DF to complete the final response. The completed response will be shared at the October meeting.

Finalize Plan of action for the ELTF through December 2010 – Cathy Poplin & All Members

Cathy asked the ELTF what will be the ELTF approach for the year. Cathy gave each member a draft spreadsheet she created to help the task force address their areas of focus. The areas of focus are the major topics the ELTF has discussed in past meetings. The spreadsheet covers the following areas:

- Definition of technology terminology
- Identify Best Practices in other States and in Arizona
- Transformation
 - The transformation of traditional instruction programs to eLearning programs
- Teachers
 - Options to equip teachers with the most effective technology and training
- Funding
 - Revise school funding as it applies to eLearning programs
- Data
 - Use of the ADE data warehouse system support data for the school system
- IDEAL
 - Enhancement and expansion of IDEAL
- Barriers to Implementation
- Policies Need to Move Forward

Cathy assigned each ELTF member to an area of his or her expertise. The assignments are as follows:

- Definitions – Ruth Catalano
- Identify Best Practices – Casey Loman, Lisa Long and Debra Lorenzen
- Transformation – Ted Kraver and Sandi Grandberry
- Teachers – Debra Lorenzen, Rosy Escandon and Lisa Long
- Funding – Ted Kraver and Rod Lenniger
- Data – Joe O'Reilly and Hank Stabler
- IDEAL – Cathy Poplin and Mark Nichols
- Barriers to Implementation – All Taskforce members

- Policies Need to Move Forward – DJ Harper, Ruth Catalano and Hank Stabler

The ELTF discussed their assignments. DJ recommended changing **Barriers to Implementation** to **Issues to Implementation** on the spreadsheet. Cathy asked each member to report at each meeting on their assigned area findings. DJ recommended doing a set of definition in the three areas the ELTF agreed upon.

1. Develop a definition (and Vision) for eLearning
2. Creating Matrix of areas of focus and task members' responsibilities
3. Review Digital Content Available and its alignment to State standards

DJ also recommended creating an actual plan of action. Sandi Grandberry suggested each ELTF member take their area of assignment and create a preliminary report not a comprehensive report. Cathy agreed. Rosie suggested using Google Docs to share their work. Cathy agreed and will create the spreadsheet as a Word Document so the ELTF can add to it.

Meeting through June 2009

Cathy provided each ELTF member a handout with the future meeting dates for the ELTF, October 2008 through June 2009. They are as follows:

Wednesday, 10/8/08 at ADE in Rm 417
 Monday, 11/3/08 at ADE in Rm 417
 Monday, 12/15/08 at ADE in Rm 417
 Monday, 1/5/09 at ADE in Rm 417

Thursday, 2/5/09 at ADE in Rm 417
 Friday, 3/6/09 at ADE in Rm 417
 Wednesday, 4/8/09 at ADE in Rm 417
 Wednesday, 5/6/09 at ADE in Rm 417

One date the ELTF elected to have for October was October 13th. Unfortunately, the 13th is a Federal holiday which is observed by the State thus all state employees will be off. Cathy suggested October 8th for the October meeting. The ELTF agreed. Cathy encouraged the members to add the dates to their calendars.

Next Meeting:

The next ELTF meeting will be October 8, 2008. The agenda item *6. IDEAL Implementation Update* will be saved for the next ELTF meeting.

Review Publication and Articles

Cathy referred to the two articles given to each ELTF member. The *NCLB U.S. Department of Education Evaluating Online Learning* features the Arizona Virtual Academy TAPBI school. Members also received a copy of *High-Speed Broadband Access for All Kids: Breaking Through the Barriers* published by SETDA. ELTF members also received the latest IDEAL brochure.

Public Testimony

No public testimony given

Adjourn

Cathy adjourned the meeting at 12:05 p.m.