

Virtual Education Advisory Committee (VEAC)

Meeting Information

Date: 8/8/18

Location: Online Video Conference

Time: 2 pm - 4 pm

Committee Members: Angelique Littlejohn, Jamie Christensen, Jeff Verosky, Katie Swistowicz, Laurie Davis, Nancy Johnson, **Nish Goicolea**, Representative Freeman, **Richard Parker, R.J. Kost, Shannon Siebert**, Steve Hopkins, **Tanya Sisneros**, Zeta Anderson

WDE: **Shelley Hamel, Kim Morrow**, Laurel Ballard, **Robin Grandpre, Lori Thilmany**

Guests: **Bob Jensen**, Mary Billiter, Josh Daniels, **Jody Rakness**

Agenda

1. Roll Call and Updates
 - a. 2018-19 Program Applications and Course Approvals
 - b. 2018-19 DEG Award Announcements
 - c. Digital Learning Guidelines Development
 - d. 2017-18 [Digital Learning Plan](#) Report
 - e. Draft Language for 2019 Legislative Change
 - f. August 2018 - July 2019 PTSB Approved Workshops Tracking
2. Attorney General Opinion on Virtual Education Teachers
3. Virtual Education Program Student Enrollments
4. Virtual Education Program and Course Approval Survey

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Notes

2018-19 Program Applications and Course Approvals

- All application documents are due Friday 8/10/18.
- Districts are still working to get the WDE638 with virtual education classes submitted. The collection with VE classes is also due 8/10/18.
- The standards team members have blocked out their calendars for next week to review all syllabi after the Aug. 10 review window closes. They will approve/deny syllabi during this time.
- Districts will receive a list of approved or denied courses for 2018-19 school year with the program approval letter.

2018-19 DEG Award Announcements

- Six applications were received and have been reviewed.
- Recommendations for the awards have been sent to Superintendent Balow for review and approval.
- The award announcements will be made 8/15/18.

Digital Learning Guidelines Development

- A work group was formed and met on July 17 & 18 in Cheyenne.
- Digital Learning Guidelines were developed during those two days using the ISTE Standards for Students and corresponding indicators.
- Guidelines were written for each indicator under the standards with grade level mapping provided per guideline indicating introduction, reinforcement and working on mastery timeframes.
- We will be working with the WDE standards team for the first review and strategic planning the release of the Digital Learning Guidelines to be cohesive with the release of the computer science standards which are also currently being developed.

2017-18 [Digital Learning Plan](#) Annual Report

- The report provides an update on the statewide digital learning plan progress.
- The annual report is due to the legislators by 1/10/18 but it will be ready Sept. 2018.
- Virtual 307 and virtual education recommendations are included in the plan and updates on both are included in the annual report.

Draft Language for 2019 Legislative Change

- The WDE Chief Policy Officer has the draft language for the minor revisions to virtual education statutes we will be seeking and will be working to get that finalized and approved by WDE leadership.
- Once approved by WDE leadership, the Chief Policy Officer will be working with LSO to get a bill drafted for Representative Freeman to introduce to the JEIC.

August 2018 - July 2019 PTSB Approved Workshops Tracking

- Virtual education workshops and webinars have been submitted for Professional Teaching Standards Board (PTSB) credit as of 8/1/18.
- PTSB has updated the workshop request form for this year with a virtual education checkbox to indicate the professional development which falls under this category.
- PTSB is working on all documents being online including the workshop request form.
- The WDE will work with PTSB to track who the virtual education teachers are to ensure they receive seven hours of credit between 8/1/18 and 7/31/19.
- There was a question about if there is a difference between submitting all of the PD workshops individually or as a series for PTSB credit.
 - Series are for different target audiences with a few general sessions.
 - PTSB thinks that these can be submitted for credit all together. Nish will work with Shannon to make sure they get the workshops set up correctly.

Attorney General Opinion on Virtual Education Teachers

- The Attorney General has provided a formal opinion to Superintendent Balow and the WDE regarding the teacher certification exception in Wyoming Statute § 21-7-303(b) which allows postsecondary faculty members to teach classes when a certified teacher isn't available. The AG has determined this certification exception does not apply to virtual education teachers due to the wording in Wyoming Statute § 21-2-202(a)(xxxi)(A) specifying virtual education classes be taught by Wyoming certified teachers.
- The group discussed the opinion and the implications for virtual education programs.
 - The information from the AG's Opinion will be shared with educators during the webinar which will cover virtual education teacher certification.

- Someone asked why it is okay for postsecondary staff to teach distance dual enrollment classes. To clarify, dual enrollment does not fall under K-12 virtual education statutes and therefore this is allowable.
- Unless there is an exception per statute, for brick and mortar classes and virtual education classes, a Wyoming Certified teacher with appropriate endorsement must teach all courses or districts are at risk of a financial penalty. For virtual education classes, if a postsecondary staff member is used to teach a class because a certified teacher is not available, even though this isn't an allowable exception per the AG's Opinion, there will not be a penalty to districts.
 - The reason for this is there isn't statute that would require a penalty since the exception is allowable by law.
 - It is a programmatic decision to not seek or enforce a penalty should a district need to utilize a postsecondary staff member to teach a virtual education class.
- At least one district is struggling to get Wyoming Certified teachers in place to offer courses for this year and wanted to use a postsecondary staff member.
- Not having the option to use postsecondary faculty could be challenging for districts when trying to provide unique courses as there may not be any teachers available with Wyoming certification in that content area and teachers employed by vendors may not see it worth their time to obtain Wyoming certification when the student count in those courses is low.
- There is concern that this could negatively impact the virtual education offerings which by nature should be flexible and able to provide the unique courses not readily available in smaller districts.
- The statute and rules regarding teacher certification must be followed but wherever there is room for improvement, the WDE would like to make those recommendation as much as possible.
- PTSB has been able to make some changes recently with ESSA. There maybe be some other things that PTSB could look at for the qualifications for virtual education. Maybe address VE cases individually.

Virtual Education Program Student Enrollments

- This is a policy issue that has been coming up and showing that there is a barrier for full-time online students who want to take one or two brick and mortar classes from their district of residence.
- About half of the school districts in the state will allow students into their local schools to take part-time brick and mortar classes. They don't charge any tuition for these classes nor do they collect average daily membership fees for the student's attendance.
- Since two districts can't claim membership for the same student at the same time, the only way for the district offering part-time classes to receive payment is to collect tuition from the district the student is enrolled in.
- Some of the full-time virtual education programs aren't willing to pay tuition to other districts for brick and mortar classes because they believe they offer a full education and the classes are seen as "extras" that aren't necessary.
- So the barriers for students exist in two ways, either from a brick-and-mortar district not allowing them into classes or their district of enrollment not agreeing to pay for part-time classes.
- The legislative changes in 2017 included the removal of tuition for brick and mortar classes counting as additional revenue within the district. This was done in an attempt to remove one of the perceived barriers to this issue but it hasn't made an impact on district decisions in regard to allowing full-time virtual education students to take classes.
- Is there any advice/recommendation that we can offer to districts to make this process better?
 - A problem is that preference is going to be given to the students enrolled full-time in the school over virtual education part-time students so there may not be room for additional, part-time students.
 - Another problem is that there will need to be clear definition of who is responsible for the student when they are taking these additional courses.
 - It was suggested that districts could agree to exchange part-time brick and mortar courses for part-time virtual education courses to benefit the students in their district.
 - In the policy guidelines, we could develop some examples of how these types of exchanges could work with visual aids outlining the steps and responsibilities of each district to help increase awareness and understanding of these possibilities.

- We can also look at ways to help districts understand that we are here for the students and what is going to be best for them.

Virtual Education Program and Course Approval Survey

- Letters will be sent to the districts that have applied to be a VE provider this school year.
- We would like feedback on the course approval process in order to improve for next year
- What solution oriented questions could be included on the survey?
 - How can the syllabus approval process be improved?
 - Is there a better way to get classes reviewed?
 - How is the timeline working?
 - How could the timeline be improved?
 - How could this process be streamlined?
 - What could be adjusted on the template to make it work better?
 - What worked well?
 - Would guidance documents on the syllabus process be helpful?
- There has been a concern about the consistency between standards reviews. For some of the content areas, the reviewers want all the standards listed but for other areas, the reviewers just want the standards listed that apply to the content.
 - We can work with the standards team to develop some written guidance on what they are looking for to help this process.
 - We'll also provide content specific information on the syllabus template instructions.