

**North Carolina Governor’s Teacher Advisory Committee
October 6, 2017, 3-5 p.m.
Marbles Kids Museum**

Attendees:

Governor Roy Cooper
LaTanya Pattillo, Teacher Advisor and GTAC Chair

Tomika Altman-Lewis
Lara Brickhouse
Betty Brown
Deborah Brown
Christine Conley
NaShonda Cooke
LeAnna Delph
Lisa Godwin
Demetria Grissett
Mark Jewell
Tasha Martinez

Denise McCoy
Elyse Cannon McRae
Kimberly Perry-Sanderlin
Juandalynn Ray
Bradley Rhew
Mireya Ruiz
Nicole Sikes
Kimberley Strickland
Mark Townley
Keana Triplett

Absent: Michael Bonner, Bobbie Cavnar, David Diamont, Julio Morales

Representative Marcia Morey swore in the members of the committee and expressed her appreciation for the committee’s work as teachers and in service to the state.

Governor Cooper then arrived and opened the meeting. LaTanya read the Conflict of Interest statement. Governor Cooper began by asking the members of the committee to introduce themselves and introduced key members of his staff who were in attendance, including Policy Director Jenni Owen, Senior Education Policy Advisor Geoff Coltrane, and Teacher Advisor and committee chair LaTanya Pattillo.

Governor Cooper then offered reflections on public education and the role of the committee. He encouraged the committee to offer unvarnished opinions on how to improve public schools in the state. He then restated his goal to make North Carolina a “Top 10” educated state by 2025 and outlined related goals for increased access to early childhood education, increased investment in K12 education, and increased postsecondary educational attainment. Governor Cooper concluded his remarks by outlining three central areas of discussion for the meeting: student assessments, resources and working conditions, and teacher recruitment and retention.

Student Assessment

Governor Cooper began by asking about the committee’s experiences with student assessments. Governor Cooper noted that the General Assembly has adopted more standardized tests in recent years but that he has encouraged the State Board of Education and the Dept. of Public Instruction to adopt other forms of assessment. The committee offered the following insights:

- ❖ A preference for the NC Check-In system over longer tests because they are based on a shorter number of questions and readings but still provide a helpful snapshot of student performance.
- ❖ Frustration about frequently having to adapt their teaching to keep up with curriculum changes related to testing requirements.
- ❖ Concern that test outcomes often reflect differentiation in students' reading comprehension levels, rather than their understanding of the material.
- ❖ A general preference for assessments that measure growth and are formative, rather than summative.
- ❖ Emphasized the importance of credibility in assessments but were skeptical that the required state assessments were more rigorous than what teachers would create on their own.

Several committee members mentioned the state EOC and EOG tests, and Governor Cooper specifically asked how much value teachers get from these assessments. Committee members expressed concern that the tests are too long and disengaging for many students to perform well. Additionally, because the assessments are scheduled for the end of a term or year, there is no time for teachers to use the results to address gaps in student learning before students move on to their next courses or grade level.

Governor Cooper closed this discussion by stating that he wished to develop plans for the state to employ assessments that are more useful for teachers, that are validated, and that can help build confidence in students who are improving.

Resources and Working Conditions

Governor Cooper asked committee members about the legislature's policies on class size and what resources they feel they have available to them. Committee members offered the following insights:

- ❖ Agreement that the legislature's budget of \$30 per student for resources is not sufficient to cover the cost of all materials needed in the classroom. Much of the \$30 per student goes to equipment and instructional materials, so materials for classroom projects or experiential learning are often paid for out of teachers' pockets.
- ❖ Proposed that more field trips and other opportunities in the community could offer experiential learning without requiring the use of more resources in the classroom. Noted that in the past many schools were designed with parks or other spaces for experiential learning in mind, but as budgets have tightened, these features are less common.
- ❖ Expressed the difficulty of complying with regulations on classroom size and reported that one of the factors compounding this issue is reduced funding for teacher assistants. One member suggested an incentive program to attract TAs that would lead to them becoming a fully certified teacher.
- ❖ Expressed concern that the current working conditions for teachers in the state will push teachers out of the profession and make it more difficult to attract teachers in the future.

Governor Cooper then turned the conversation toward a broader discussion of the teaching profession, including recruitment and retention.

Teacher Recruitment and Retention

Governor Cooper asked the committee what North Carolina could do to attract and retain teachers. Committee members offered the following insights:

- ❖ Agreed that the decision to discontinue the Teaching Fellows program was detrimental to the teaching profession in the state. Many members noted their own positive experiences as Teaching Fellows themselves or working alongside Fellows in their schools.
- ❖ Expressed that Teaching Fellows are excellent classroom teachers, that assessment measures prove the effectiveness of Teaching Fellows, and that Fellows also serve a role as mentors to other teachers in their schools.
- ❖ Expressed adjustments to state policy on teachers' health benefits, retirement benefits, longevity, and supplemental pay for Master's degrees and National Board certifications have made teaching in North Carolina a less economically viable career option for many.

Governor Cooper then began to wrap up the discussion. He emphasized his commitment to improving the state's educational environment for teachers and students. He also detailed his meetings with many Chambers of Commerce across North Carolina to encourage them to make private contributions to their local schools and to lobby the General Assembly. Governor Cooper has encouraged private organizations to make two commitments: 1) to make education their top business priority and 2) to lobby the General Assembly to preserve corporate taxes and funding for public schools.

Governor Cooper called a brief break, participated in photos with the committee members, and departed.

Committee Next Steps

After the break, Ms. Pattillo reconvened the meeting to discuss tasks and logistical items for the committee.

Ms. Pattillo stated that the committee needed to select a Vice Chair. She suggested that if a single candidate volunteered, he or she could be nominated or elected at that meeting, but if there were multiple candidates, she would distribute information about each via email before an election at the next meeting. Ms. NaShonda Cooke was the sole volunteer. Mr. Jewell motioned to nominate her, and the committee elected Ms. Cooke unanimously.

Ms. Pattillo then restated that the committee would be responsible for providing the Governor's staff with ideas for improving assessments, providing resources that support teachers, and increasing the state's capacity for recruiting and retaining teachers. She noted that in the process of this work, the committee will frequently need to share information via email. She reminded the committee members that they are allowed to send information that is not confidential but encouraged them to be thoughtful in what they communicated because their messages might be subject to public records acts.

Ms. Pattillo then welcomed input on the scheduling of future meetings. Committee members encouraged Ms. Pattillo to choose dates herself but announce them well in advance, rather than trying to account for committee members' schedules. The committee agreed that full-day meetings would be most productive and recommended Mondays as a day that would be easiest logistically. Committee members also suggested that an early end time around 3 p.m. would make travel easier after meetings.

Ms. Pattillo then asked the committee members to suggest issues of interest to them or subjects about which more information would be useful. Committee members suggested the following topics:

- ❖ Policy background and context
 - Differences between state-driven and local-driven education issues

- Change over time in regards to North Carolina’s education policy, demographics, and the teaching profession
- ❖ Teaching practice and profession
 - Academic supports for specific populations (e.g. low-income, high-achieving students, youth without stable housing or family life)
 - Preparing students for different postsecondary paths (e.g. trades/vocational vs. 4-year college)
 - Teacher leadership paths that do not involve leaving the classroom
 - How to change public perceptions of “broken” school system and highlight successes
- ❖ Successful models for partnership and community engagement
 - Business partnerships with schools
 - Advisory councils
 - Rural/urban partnerships
 - Engagement through STEAM projects

Finally, Ms. Pattillo encouraged committee members to reach out to the Office of the Governor if they receive invitations to participate in any opportunities because of their position on the Committee.

Action Items and Adjournment

Ms. Pattillo stated her intention to schedule dates for the next three committee meetings, with the next meeting likely to occur in December 2017 or January 2018, and distributed meeting information to the committee. She noted that the committee may also hold a conference call before the next in-person meeting. At the committee’s suggestion, Ms. Pattillo will also look into scheduling a committee retreat for deeper work in the summer of 2018.

Ms. Pattillo also outlined the procedure for committee members to receive reimbursement for their travel expenses. Committee members must collect their travel receipts (parking, hotel, and subsistence) and submit them within 15 days. They should receive reimbursements within around 30 days of submission.

With no more announcements, questions, or concerns, Ms. Pattillo then adjourned the meeting.