Trust Advisory Committee

Draft Minutes

October 29, 2018

In attendance: Jay Blain, Sarah Thomas, Carolyn White, Cade Douglas, Nancy Kennedy, Steve Davis, Jennifer Meyer-Glenn, Susan Edwards, Paula Plant, Natalie Gordon, Karen Rupp.

Excused: Tyler Slack, Shawn McLeod, Jason Theler, Angie Stallings, Scott Jones.

Karen Rupp welcomed the committee.

Sarah Thomas made a motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. Carolyn White seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Information updates were given.

Paula Plant answered committee questions regarding the SITLA Fall Land Auction.

Paula also presented the intent of two bills being proposed by Representative Stratton in the 2019 General Session. The first bill would make NetSmartz more available to students across the state, but would also add accountability measures to ensure it is meeting its intended purpose. The second would require SCCs to address school safety. Paula hoped that any suggestions on School LAND Trust program funding for safety could be addressed in USBE Board Rule and not state code. Representative Stratton would like TAC feedback on the proposal and may present in a future meeting.

ASSIGNMENT: Paula will send a summary of her discussion with Representative Stratton regarding school safety and the School LAND Trust program to TAC members.

The Retirement and Independent Entities committee will discuss Representative Moss’s SITFO bill in committee on Monday, November 26th at 1:15.

Year-end carry-over of School LAND Trust program funds was discussed.

Cade Douglas stated that at the USSA meeting, there was a discussion on carry-over. Some schools are using the funds for personnel and saving it to protect programs from future funding changes. He would like additional training offered on how to prepare a plan that allows saving the funds for a future purpose. He also stated that the current 10% allowable carry-over is acceptable to the superintendents.

Susan Edwards noted that in the district where she is employed, the councils have been trained to review the plan and budget at every SCC meeting. No schools in this district exceed 10% carry-over.

Jay Blain noted that scarcity in education funding drives schools to hoard discretionary funds. He would like more training provided, and to learn more about what Canyons District is doing, because it seems to work.

Sarah Thomas feels like 10% carry-over is low for districts in rural areas, and that they need to be better trained on how to plan and report saving for future expenditures.

Carolyn White believes the funds should be used for students that are generating them, and that if a school cannot find an academic need, they are not looking. She would also like a minimum number of meetings required for SCCs to make sure they are completing a data review, following the budget, and that decisions are not made without parent input. State Code does not require a minimum number of meetings, but individual districts may.

Nancy Kennedy would like to see better training of School Boards so they understand and own their responsibilities with this program.

Susan Edwards pointed out that training should include the necessity to amend a school plan if test results show different needs than anticipated. She believes that some schools are not comfortable amending their plans.

Some **best practices** that were discussed include having principals and SCC chairs present to school boards during a work session to improve the relationship, having local boards oversee and participate in SCC training, having districts prepare timelines for the SCCs so they know how often they need to meet, and having school board members regularly visit SCC meetings.

Susan also believes that saving for a purpose is appropriate if it is planned by the SCC to meet a critical academic need, and is approved by the school board. All should be reminded to manage this program with integrity.

Steve Davis would like to see more training, and realizes that some schools with a smaller distribution may need to save for larger projects. He is supportive of the >10% rollover cap.

Jennifer Meyer-Glenn feels that if the funds are being saved, it should be for a stated purpose, and that a letter to the board/principal could be sent if it seems that a council may have >10% carry-over for 3 years. The letter could refer to the law, include best practices, support and not punish and mention that in allocating carry-over it may be important to contact underrepresented populations to see if needs are being met.

This idea was discussed in greater depth, and it was decided that staff would work on a letter/procedure that could be reviewed by the committee in the next meeting and sent as a recommendation to the USBE.

There would be two communications. The first is a list of all schools carrying over >10% in a year. This list would only go to district contacts.

The second communication would go to any principal with a school that has >20% carry-over for two or more years. District contacts, superintendents, school board members and SCC chairs would also be copied on this letter. It would reference R277-477 which requires an explanation for excessive carry-over, and outlines possible consequences, including a corrective action plan, required reimbursement of funds, or reduced or withheld distributions in the future.

The letter would also provide best practices, including regular review of the budget, amending the current plan if a large carry-over is anticipated, talking with underrepresented populations to insure needs are being met, and re-reviewing school wide assessment data to see if there are places achievement gaps could be improved. The letter would also refer councils to their local school board for recommendations.

ASSIGNMENT: Staff will compose a letter and procedure for this process to be discussed and decided on at the next meeting, referred to the USBE Audit Committee, and ready for distribution the beginning of January.

The committee discussed the proposed draft of the recommendation to USBE regarding proposed legislation by Senator Fillmore that would allow non-custodial grandparents to serve as parent/guardian members of councils. The language was reviewed, and referred to November’s agenda as an action item.

The next meeting will be November 26th at 11:00 at USBE.

* Discuss eSchool carry-over, with staff providing access to School LAND Trust program final reports for review. Cade Douglas will lead this discussion
* Finalize the recommendation to USBE regarding non-custodial grandparents on councils
* Review and make final recommendation to the USBE Audit Committee on carry-over procedures/drafted letter
* Discuss job descriptions on the SchoolLANDTrust.org website
* Follow-up on the proposed Stratton SCC and school safety bill.

There will be no meeting in December.

In January, the committee will meet on the 28th at the Capitol.

ASSIGNMENT: Staff reserve room at USBE for November and State Capitol for January.