

RAC- Midwest

September 5, 2023

- [Bryan] Well, welcome, everybody. Happy Tuesday morning, and welcome. And recognizing the time, we took 20 minutes to begin, I do not want to shortchange any particular RAC committee or meeting, so we'll, if you're okay with it, make up the time at the other end. Thank you for bearing with us as we kind of sorted through the technology, and it had its own long weekend, apparently. With that, the meeting will come to order for the Regional Advisory Committee for the Midwest Region.

Please note that this meeting is open to members of the public, and will be recorded and posted for the public record. At this time, I'll do a roll call for those who are on the call. When I say your name, please unmute, say present, and then re-mute, and we'll indicate who is present for the call.

And I'm going to go in alphabetical order, just so you know, with one exception. So again, mute, unmute. Burnham?

- [Bobbie] Present.

- Beecher? Bowen?

- [Matthew] Present.

- Also, if I mispronounce your name, please feel free to correct me. I try, but I don't always get it right. Thank you. Biryanic? Grey-Akia? Horowitz-Moore?

- [Jessica] Present.

- Klaisner?

- [Dr. Klaisner] Present.

- Murphy?

- [Joe] Present.

- Pruitt?

- [Dr. Pruitt] Present.

Transcription by www.speechpad.com

Page 1 of 30

- Ruddy?
- [Chris] Present.
- Sebastian? Tammie Sebastian, are you on?
- [Tammie] I'm sorry, my microphone was off. I said "present" but not into my microphone. Sorry.
- I'm glad I checked. Thank you. And Turner?
- [Dr. Turner] Present.
- All right. Thank you all. We have a quorum, so we can proceed. At this time if you want to make a comment at any point in time throughout the meeting please use the Raise Your Hand feature in Zoom. If you all want to put your hands up now so we know it works, and we'll put them back down. Right on.

Thank you. You can put them back down. Okay, and what I'm going to do is a really brief introduction. Like I said, we had...working through the technology times, I'll give you this time back at the end of the meeting so we don't...we allocate the agreed to and sort of published time for this RAC to continue and fulfill its meeting objectives. So, at this time, we'll go through brief introductions, and I really mean brief. Please introduce your name, and where you're from at work, and we'll move along.

And I'm going to facilitate this simply through the function of who I see in the list here, and this is only for members now, only for panelists on with the Midwest panel. I'll start. Hi, everybody. Bryan Keohane. I work at the U.S. Department of Education, and I am the Designated Federal Official for the Midwest RAC.

Bobbie, you are first on the list.

- Hello, everyone. Bobbie Burnham, Minnesota Department of Education, Assistant Commissioner over the Office of Teaching and Learning.
- Chris Ruddy?
- Hi, there. Chris Ruddy here. I am from Manhattan, Illinois. It's a suburb about an hour from Chicago.
- Thank you. Dr. LaTonya Turner?

- Good afternoon. I'm LaTonya Turner, the Dean of the Klipsch Educators College at Marian University in Indianapolis, Indiana.
- Mikkaka Overstreet, you have a role in this too. You can introduce yourself.
- [Dr. Overstreet] Yes, I'm Mikkaka Overstreet, and I am the Liaison, the RAC Liaison for the Midwest region.
- Thank you. Erick Pruitt?
- Good morning. Erick Pruitt, Superintendent, Ankeny Community School District in Ankeny, Iowa.
- Thank you. Jessica Horowitz-Moore?
- Good morning. I'm Jessica Horowitz-Moore, Senior Executive Director of the Center for Student Supports at the Ohio Department of Education.
- Thank you. Joe Murphy?
- Good morning. Joe Murphy, President of the Iowa Business Council, a business association headquartered here in Des Moines, Iowa.
- Thank you. Mark Klaisner.
- Good morning, everyone. I'm Dr. Mark Klaisner. I'm the Executive Director of the West 40 Intermediate Service Center. I oversee 40 school districts just west of Chicago.
- Thank you. Matthew Bowen?
- Good morning. Matthew Bowen, Superintendent of Campbell City Schools, located in Northeast Ohio. I've been serving there for 11 years now.
- Thank you. Shawn Smith?
- Good morning. I'm Shawn Smith. I'm Superintendent for the Metropolitan School District of Lawrence Township, here in Indianapolis, Indiana.
- Thank you. And Tammie Sebastian.
- Hi, I'm Tammie Sebastian, and I am the statewide Program Coordinator for the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities, which is

Ohio's Parent Training Information Center. And I'm also from Northeast Ohio, Matthew.

- Thank you, everybody. Are there any RAC members that I missed? Perfect. Thank you. All right. So the purposes of today's meeting, going through the objectives, we'll review educational data from each region, and in this case the Midwest region, and any public comments received.

We'll discuss initial observations regarding critical education needs within the Midwest region. We'll identify clear action steps to be completed to gather information on the critical education needs of this region, and how those needs could be most effectively addressed through technical assistance activities. At this time, I will turn it over to the Liaison.

Thank you.

- So today we will be reviewing our regional profiles. Sorry, I have a lot of screens, and I want to make sure I pull up everything. Okay.

Good morning. My name is Dr. Mikkaka Overstreet, and it is a pleasure to serve as your liaison for the Midwest region. I'm looking forward to getting to know you in the coming weeks, and providing any logistical and technical support you may need. So for this meeting, I'm going to quickly review the information that was in the regional profiles with you. This will provide you with a chance to see what's happening across the individual jurisdictions, but also give a sense of any trends or patterns you may see within your region, along with any differences.

So as mentioned in the orientation, we cannot cover every topic area, but we wanted to give you a flavor for some of the more pressing issues facing our education system. Because this is a public meeting, we will not be sharing screens today, but you can follow along with the regional profile found on the SharePoint site.

You can see the first section is about the region's districts and schools. Based on the most recent numbers reported on the National Center for Education Statistics website, we've listed the number of operating districts, public schools, charter schools, and private schools for each jurisdiction in your region. This is followed by the number of students enrolled in both traditional public schools

and charter schools, which is also disaggregated into pre-K through grade 8 enrollment, and then 9th through 12th grade enrollment.

The number of students reported to be enrolled in private schools is also included. Next, we have included disaggregated data for three to five-year-old enrollment, and public elementary secondary enrollment by race and ethnicity. Digging a little deeper into the region's geography, we've also provided disaggregated data that shows the number of students enrolled in public and charter schools by geographic region, such as city, suburban, town, and rural.

This is followed by information about special populations, including English language learners, students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, and students qualifying for special education services. We have also included data from the United States as a whole in these tables, so you can see how your region and jurisdictions compare to what's happening nationally. We then jump into graduation data, which includes the total adjusted cohort graduation rate, or ACGR, for four-year cohorts.

Disaggregated data are provided for students with disabilities, English learners, economically disadvantaged, homeless-enrolled, foster care, and private school. ACGR information also was available by race and ethnicity, which is provided to you. Student academic information has also been provided. To provide the best comparison data available, we included results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress, or NAEP, which is also known as the nation's report card for 4th and 8th grade mathematics and reading results.

Non-academic data, such as information related to out-of-school suspensions and expulsions are next, and then other non-academic data includes information about students who brought firearms to school, and the percent of students who reported being bullied, either on school property or electronically. Again, national data has been included as a comparison.

The next section of the regional profiles focuses on teacher information. This includes the total number of public teachers, and the pupil-teacher ratio, as well as the number of teachers in private schools. We also looked at available data regarding teacher qualifications. This included degree levels, and years of experience.

Although recent data on qualifications was not available, more recent data was available about the percentage of teacher candidates who were enrolled in or

completed a teacher preparation program, including those who enrolled in or completed traditional programs, and those who enrolled in or completed alternative programs. The alternative programs were also noted by whether the program was based in an institute of higher education or not.

The profile ends with a large table covering many financial resources of each jurisdiction, including federal, state, and local revenue sources, and current expenditures. Current expenditures were divided by total, instruction, and support services. Brief information about Title I spending and salaries, wages, and public benefits are also included. Next slide, please.

The purpose of the RAC is identifying priorities. To do so, the RAC must address the question, how can we identify the highest priority needs of this region, and how those needs maybe addressed through technical assistance activities? So questions that you may want to consider are bulleted here, how to ensure that all students achieve academic excellence, and have access to effective instruction?

How to ensure all students in a community have the educational resources they need to fully participate in their education? How to ensure an outstanding, well-paid, well-supported and diverse educator workforce, and how to support the well-being of students, teachers, and local communities. Next slide, please.

The regional profiles are provided to you to give you a sense of what is happening across your regions. We know that you have access to other data sets, or you may be aware of other areas of priority across your region. To aid in your thinking, each section of the regional profile includes reflection questions to help you think about what that data means to you, and how it can be used to support your needs assessment, and/or what other information do you need.

So at the beginning of the profile, there are a set of questions to help you think about how to use the data provided, and what may still be missing. These questions include, what is your overall reaction to the data presented? Is it what you expected? If it's not what you expected, what surprised you? What other data do you need to help you better understand the needs in your jurisdiction or region?

Are the data available at the state level, or do you have access to this data through another vehicle? And how can the needs assessment help you attain this

data? Next slide, please. So, before we open it up for discussion, we did receive quite a few public comments over the weekend.

As of September 4th, we have 37 public comments that were submitted for the Midwest region. The respondents identified in a variety of ways. We had an in of 16 administrators, 7 who identify as educators, 2 local education agencies or school districts, 4 other education stakeholders, 2 parents, 1 school, 4 state agencies, and 1 teacher.

So the public comment form has four questions, which I'll quickly review, with the responses. Again, 37 responses, 12 pages of robust comments, so I'm going to just try to give you the high level for each question. But you'll be able to review these public comments in the SharePoint folder as well, so you'll be able to look at them more in depth.

The first question was, what are one to two educational needs within your region the RAC should prioritize? And what came up repeatedly was teacher recruitment and retention, and teacher shortages, as well as supporting literacy instruction that's aligned with the latest research, thinking about social-emotional learning supports for students, but also social-emotional support for educators, which goes back to the teacher shortage, and teacher needs and recruitment and retention piece, changes to state assessments and a lot of comments about resources for underserved communities, particularly rural communities within the region.

And then, more supports, again, for students with disabilities, language learners, and facilities. Facilities came up repeatedly, about the quality of some of the school buildings, and other facilities that students and teachers are using. So those were the biggest comments that came up in that section, but again, you can review them in more detail in the SharePoint folder.

The second question, why do you believe these are the educational priorities that your region should prioritize or should address? And the comments were pretty much, it's because it's what teachers need, it's because it's what students need. We have some new realities to deal with in the post-pandemic world, according to the comments.

And so really thinking about, again, the emotional and mental well-being of students and teachers, and also meeting students' needs regarding the allocation of resources so that they're all getting the education that they need. And then,

the third question asks, what information can the RACs collect about these priorities to better understand and address the needs?

And so some of the suggestions were to use state assessment data, to have parent focus groups, to survey teachers who have left the profession anonymously to get more information on, of course, why teachers are leaving, and how we can deal with the shortages, as well as looking at trends, including compensation for educators, how that compares to compensation in other areas, as well as in other industries in thinking about how teacher compensation compares to others, that that kind of data would be useful, as well as attendance data.

And I failed to mention that attendance was another priority area that came up repeatedly in the public comments, in the earlier questions. And then finally, any other comments about educational needs in the region, and how they could be addressed, and our respondents were very generous in their ideas here. So again, you'll be able to review those in more detail, but they were offering thoughts about how to reallocate funds to support our areas that are in the most need, and also thinking placements for students with special needs, including social, emotional, and behavior needs, how to better place those students in areas to get what they need to be successful.

And just thinking about the big solution to our teacher shortage, retaining and recruiting those teachers. So those were the biggest ideas that came up. Again, themes around teacher recruitment and retention, social, emotional, and mental health supports, literacy and the science of reading, supporting our infrastructure, special education and interventions, school climate, early childhood, particularly early childhood access, day-long, full-day, and for everyone, and attendance concerns, and equitable funding.

So those were the largest themes that came up in those public comments. So now we'll open the meeting up for discussion. Please use the Raise Your Hand function or chat feature if you'd like to share. We'll be monitoring the chat, and getting the questions as quickly as possible. There are some questions on the slide to help us get started, but feel free to bring up any additional comments or questions.

Some things to consider include, is there a specific area of the profile you would like to review in detail? What do you believe the top priorities facing

your jurisdiction and region are? Why do you think these are the top priorities? What input would you like to hear from other stakeholders? And how will you collect that input? So some of those should help guide the conversation and discussion. I am going to open up the discussion now.

And I will be taking notes, so I'm going to mute myself so you don't hear me click-clacking while we discuss.

- Was this where I kind of lead the conversation? Or is it just open to whoever would like to comment from...

Are we working on the matrix right now?

- This is the open discussion portion.

- Okay.

- So yes, you can facilitate calling on who is raising their hands, and get that moving. Sorry, Bobbie, I was muted, and looking at my notes document.

- Hi there. I'm from Illinois, and I was looking at the region profiles, and I just wanted to comment on something that was kind of surprising to me. On page 2 of 15, it shows the percentage of our total enrollment for English language learners. In Illinois, it has 12% of our total enrollment is English language learners, and it's, you know, the highest of all of the states that are represented, you know, from Midwest.

And I think that just gives validity to some of the public comments on the teacher shortage is, you know, going to be very real with teacher recruitment. But one thing specifically we're finding a need is teachers that have the EL certification around here, so that we can support our English language learners.

I don't know if anyone else is having that same type of need.

- Hi. Bobbie, in Minnesota. Yes, absolutely, teacher retention and recruitment is like, I think one of the top priorities of our governor's office.

We were fortunate to be well-funded this last legislative session with some initiatives particularly around the grow-your-own program, and we just opened a new workforce center. So yes, teacher retention and recruitment is huge in Minnesota as well.

- Hey, this is Erick. I would agree, teacher retention and recruitment is a concern for not only in the metro here in Iowa, but I think for the entire state.

I would also say specifically with regards to our growing population here in central Des Moines, around the Metro, ESL instruction has been important, in addition to a renewed focus on early literacy is also a focus for our region.

- Jessica, you have your hand up?

- Yes, hi.

So I'm from Ohio, like two of my other colleagues on the call, and I'd say two big priorities right now, you mentioned science of reading, so I'd say literacy is definitely a big push for our state, a big focus of our governor's office, so we're doing a lot around that work. And then, also attendance. We are constantly battling chronic absenteeism, and would love to see that be potentially one of our focuses where, you know, again looking at more of, like, what are national resources, what is everyone doing around chronic absenteeism.

- Thank you. Dr. Turner?

- Yeah, thank you. One of the things that stuck out to me, or stood out to me, coming from higher ed, I looked at the number of teachers or students enrolled in EPPs and alternative programs, and then those who actually complete it. So as we talk about the teacher shortage, I think that's one of the biggest concerns for me, looking at the number who start out, but then who actually complete.

There's a huge drop as I'm looking at the numbers. So just coming from higher ed, I see that as a high need in order to address, hopefully address the teacher shortage. And like you all in your other states, we in Indiana, literacy, the science of reading is huge for us. There was a bill that was passed that requires schools and school districts to implement, and make sure it's a part of the curriculum.

And then for EPPs, we have to make sure that it's a part of our curriculum as well, that we're training teachers in the science of reading.

- Mark?

- Yeah, I'd like to concur with the other colleagues.

Our office does an annual study of educator shortage, and you know, we're calling it crisis. The overall, every year, special ed and English learners, those are the greatest number of vacancies, the highest percentage across our state.

Then it moves to math, and to science and STEM, and CTE. So it's a lot of areas, but by far EL and special ed have been the top ones. In Illinois, literacy, the science of literacy has become almost a political hotbed.

There are phrases used like "higher education is not training our teachers to teach reading." It's that kind of fervor that we're hearing. So we're seeing or hearing the same things that many of you are sharing. Last year, we're just launching this year's study, last year in Illinois, there were over 5,600 unfilled teaching positions across the state.

And in a state that has 4,200 schools, that's kind of amazing. So I would just concur with some of the comments that have already been made. We see them almost daily here in Illinois.

- Thank you, Mark. Matthew... Oh, you're on mute.

- Can you hear me now? So one of the things I think Ohio has done really well is looked at the whole child, and Ohio created a whole child framework. A lot of times we're talking about equity, and creating opportunities for young students and families, and we have to start really looking at the barriers.

And by doing so, we're also addressing climate and culture, because when we can start to improve climate and culture, we can also at that point in time start to encourage people to go into the field of education. I think there are so many barriers, and sometimes people are going into systems and right out of the gate feeling defeated, but there are opportunities, but we have to look beyond just the traditional educational approach in order to do a better job for students across the Midwest.

Thank you, Matthew. Tammie...

- Hi. I just kind of wanted to say also with the teacher shortages, this...I mean, and we've heard this across the board in Ohio, and I'm hearing from other states in the Midwest that this is certainly the case, but that will always go to affect. Eventually it's going to start affecting, and we see this as the state parent training information center, that it will have effect on FAPE, on a free appropriate public education.

So all those things bring layers, and then we see, you know, we see where districts are struggling to have the resources to be able even to provide those. When you don't have a teacher to provide FAPE, what do you do? So just that's something that we see consistently.

- Thank you, Tammie.

- If there aren't more comments, we could start discussing the need sensing matrix if you'd like, Bobbie.

Or I see another hand, so I'll stop.

- I just wanted to ask a question. I didn't see in the data, or one thing I would like to have seen was more information about, and maybe I missed it, about like, pre-pandemic achievement gaps when we're looking at...just definitely looking at priorities facing our district.

Like, you know, I don't know if we have that data as far as, you know, where were we before the pandemic, where are we now? Do we have that information? Do you need me to rephrase the question?

- [Tara] No. Hi, this is Tara. I took the lead on doing the profiles, and so I think we can pull that information from the NAEP. That would be the most consistent way that we have of looking across the same assessment that all states would have taken and that are reported on.

We know based on their public release events that the numbers have dropped. So if you can make a recommendation then for, you know, how many years you would like to go back, we can get that information to you.

- Okay, thank you. I'm not sure. I would probably ask everybody to, like, kind of join me in thinking about how far we would need to go back. But I think that's important, when we're looking at our top priorities.

- Absolutely. We can also pull some of their trend reports, too. That would just give a summary. Because we just focused on 4th and 8th grade, because as you know, there's multiple grade levels, and we can make these a 100-page report to you, so we wanted to kind of focus it down. But yeah, if that's an interest, we will definitely get that to you.

- Thank you.

- Hey, Tammie, I would just second that. I think that that's a really important point. I don't know if we need to go 20 years back, but I think the last NAEP scores that came out were either '18 or '20...or I'm sorry, '18 or '19. And I know that at least in our state, in Iowa, our scores were relatively consistent, but our rankings from a state perspective actually increased, because a lot of states sort of decreased in their scores.

And so, there's definitely something that's...that's definitely something that this committee needs to look at. And I think, I don't want to speak for the other...for educators on this call, but when we think about generational opportunities or generational sort of impediments to learning, that event obviously is at the top of the list.

So the sooner we can get back to baseline and improve on that, the better. Thanks for bringing that up.

- I don't see any other hands up, so we can move to the next activity, which is completing the need sensing matrix.

I'm not sure who introduces that, or if...

- So I think, Bobbie, you'll walk through that tool, but we have it available in the SharePoint folder. The biggest thing is that it's just a tool to help think about who we want...what further information do we need, who do we need to get that from, and how are we going to get it?

So if you take a look in the SharePoint folder, in the Needs Sensing folder, you'll see it's just a little template, and it includes what's the stakeholder group, what's the area of focus, or priority area, what type of data do we want to collect, what technology or platform is going to be used, the output of that, the analysis, and the interpretation to think through.

And so some ideas, for example, are thinking about the stakeholder group of teacher prep programs, and that being an area, the focus being teacher shortages, and perhaps you would want to do a focus group that you do on Zoom. The output would then be a meeting transcript, and then you can analyze it for the challenges faced, and the support needed, and then think through that interpretation, what are some of the challenges they face, and so on, that you can gather from that information.

So that's just an example of how we might use this tool to think through the needs, and where we're going to gather more information. So it's not as if we have to have the answers, but we want to know where to look, and start planning on where to gather that information from today.

- And would that information gathering be by state? So if we took your example of the teacher prep stakeholder group, would that be each state in the Midwest region doing focus groups, or as a whole?

- Bryan or Tara, correct me if I'm wrong, but it would depend on what's most useful, you know, what's most useful to you. So if we're thinking about this as a RAC team, do we want this, that particular information about teacher shortages, do we want a big picture of that around the region?

So do we want that to be a focus group that includes teacher prep programs from every every state to talk about it? Or would you prefer having a more nuanced look, and doing it state-by-state? Clearly there's the issue of, you know, time and availability, and all those things to figure out, but again, that's a decision for this group to kind of make, based on what information would be most useful.

- Any thoughts on that as a group, whether that teacher retention shortage area would be a Midwest group, or more of a state-by-state area of interest?

I think from just the initial comments we've heard from everyone, it seems like every state in the Midwest region is experiencing teacher shortages. So, would this be something that the MSG group would help us with as a Midwest region?

- We would absolutely help facilitate and set up those focus groups, brainstorm how to recruit people for the focus groups.

We are absolutely here to support that, if that is something that the team agrees upon that we need to do.

- This is Bryan. I want to just drop a comment in here for a moment, because it has relevancy. Some of you may have noticed, but the committee that's organizing the RACs, we are looking at moving that second RAC meeting to a later date, to allow for more time between the two meetings. We heard that during the orientation session.

And since it's coming up now, and we're observing what the necessary next steps are, it has relevancy. So again, looking at moving that second RAC meeting to allow more time for need sensing activities.

- Well, that's a relief. Thank you for saying that. I'll say it.

- Thanks, Bryan. So just procedure-wise, because as a group and as Chair I'm kind of new to this, so do we vote on whether or not we want teacher shortages to be a topic, or an area of focus and priority? Or how does that work?

- I will defer to one of my colleagues, if they would like to talk on this. But yeah, it is the...as part of the committee's determination, as you all talk through your knowledge of your states, and then correspondingly level it up to your region, it would be, ultimately, if that's where the committee lands in the report that it produces, yes, this would be a consensus point of discussion that would go into that report that ultimately is provided to the Department.

- So, I'm not...So was that a yes, we need to vote, or we can talk about other focus areas?

- Yes, you can talk about other focus areas, but I think there is a clear consensus so far that this is one of those areas that will probably determine additional need sensing activities.

But also, correspondingly, one of the outputs will likely be this will be one of the needs identified. And I see some hands up, too.

- Okay. I can't see who the hands are, so... Oh, Matthew, and then Tammie.

- I don't disagree that we're in a crisis right now for addressing the teacher shortage, but I think as we continue the conversation, it shouldn't be one of our highest level priorities, because I think that that's something that we can help resolve through addressing some additional student needs, and some of their outcomes.

I think obviously we're at the mercy of the General Assembly in each of our individual states. In addition to that, schools are funded whether that be by the local or the state share, and then it's also relative to the local tax basis, at least in Ohio is how it works. So because of how each state functions differently, I just don't know if that's a priority here, other than marketing that there is a teacher shortage.

Making it a priority throughout the Midwest and throughout the nation I think is relevant and meaningful, but I think it's going to require some more states, as far as to get creative with their General Assemblies and their governors on how to resolve the funding issue in order to recruit and retain more teachers in the profession.

It still needs to be a priority. Don't get me wrong. I just think that there's other student issues we need to still address in this group.

- That's a good point. Thank you, Matthew. Tammie?

- Well, that's not what I was originally going to say, but after hearing Matthew, I would agree with that, too. I'm hearing it's more of a legislative move, and things have to be thought about. But what I was more curious about is how long we have to look at public comments. So are there going to be more public comments coming in that might change our priority?

I guess that's what I was thinking about. Or is that it? Are we done looking at public comments?

- There will be more public comments before Meeting 2. I would say that it would be difficult to let the next set of comments drive the priorities, since we'll probably get them right before, like this. But yes, there has to be a period for public comments for each of these, so...

- Okay. Thank you.

- Yeah, they have up to two business days before a meeting. And as of Friday, there weren't any, so all these came in over the weekend, so that's why you're just getting them before this meeting. We'll keep those updated, but you also have the opportunity to explore public comments on your own, and we can help you set that up through another Smartsheet-type form, where you might target particular groups or particular organizations, and that we would just set up that Smartform for you, work with you on forming those questions, and disseminate that to the target groups that you want to get that information from, and then we would supply you with it.

We would set a due date, and then give you that information prior to the next meeting.

- Okay. Is it okay that I've already sent out...? Like, as soon as I received that link, I was sending that out to whoever I can think of.
- That's perfect.
- Okay. Okay.
- Yep, that was for the general one. But you know, if you do decide that teacher shortage is an area you want to prioritize...
- Gotcha.
- ...if there's a specific group that you think can really answer some questions that you're interested in exploring more, we'll work with you on getting that disseminated, and creating that form.
- Okay, perfect. Thank you.
- So you can have different layers of public comment I guess is what we're saying, based on the general one, and then specific for the needs that you want to explore further in your region.
- Makes sense. Thank you.
- [crosstalk] I'm sorry. I didn't mean to interrupt. Can I bring up maybe another topic other than teacher shortage, and maybe just for some thoughts from this group? I know we talked about equity, we talk about attendance, we talk about students and English language learners, I think there's a lot of topics that could be addressed that we need to identify how we could fund through the federal programs.

ESSER monies are falling off. ESSER has provided opportunities for extended school day services. It's also provided opportunities, especially in areas of greater poverty, food, for food insecurities, and also year-round school through summer enrichment in order to close the achievement gap.

With those ESSER monies falling off, I think a lot of schools have now seen the benefit of creating more of a year-round and extended day solution, but with those year-round and extended day solutions falling off, with ESSER also expiring, I think there is a lot of potentially really good data that we could probably pull from to say that our efforts really worked, and how could we now

look at new federal funds in order to continue some of these services, especially in areas of high need.

You could identify a number of barriers by looking at whole child and whole child frameworks, and then at the same time you could look at the literacy and the science of reading, and looking at the gap that is created by the absence of year-round school opportunities and extended day opportunities. So just as a consideration, instead of reinventing the wheel, how do we continue some of the great work that came out of the pandemic into the future, with new considerations of how we appropriate those funds?

Thank you.

- Thank you, Matthew. Any thoughts on that from others?

- My feelings aren't hurt if you don't like any of those ideas.

- I see Jessica's hand, and Marks.

- Jessica?

- Sure. No, I would definitely, you know, support what...and not just because he's from Ohio, what Matt said. But just thinking about that, you know, with those funds expiring, I do think that there's been a lot of work created, but I think that there's also this, you know, as I'm looking at the public comment, and thank you for helping me access that, but I think about a lot of these things, whether it's teacher retention or mental health or attendance, there's been a lot of funds that have been pushed into the system over the past few years, that are going to drop off for everyone.

So I think thinking about that is really important as we move forward, because I think that all schools and districts, no matter what state you're in, are going to be facing the end of that funding stream, and how do we support that? And I think that places are going to need help, because we don't want to see... I mean, I know in Ohio, and I believe some of my colleagues from the other Midwest have seen an influx of, you know, worse behaviors for students, major mental health needs, and schools and districts have been able to fund these positions through those dollars, and that's going to go away.

So, how do we continue to support that, and let that still, you know, provide students the support they need?

- Thank you, Jessica. Mark?

- Yeah, I want to agree with Jessica and Matt. Illinois set up a system of SEL hubs. There were seven hubs across the state. And as Jessica talked about behavior, mental health in general has been a huge issue, both for the adults and the students.

And those hubs were funded for two years, and the idea of sustainability of mental health coaches, additional social workers, counselors, it's a heavy burden. I don't really like how that sounds, but it's been a heavy burden on public ed to find ways to address those issues post-COVID.

And in Illinois, we were only guaranteed two years, but people are already clamoring for ways to sustain those efforts. And as Matt said, we have a lot of our districts are looking at things like extended school day, summer bridge programs.

And I recognize the answer can't just be more money, but we're going to hit the cliff here pretty quick, and people are very concerned about it in my experience in Illinois, just like Ohio.

- Thanks, Mark. Tammie?

- Well, I'm going to go ahead and agree. I feel like it's a very proactive approach, instead of waiting. And especially if we have data to support... I know I was looking at our numbers. I'm not shocked. In Ohio, I'd like to stay more positive, but it looks like we have the highest number out of the Midwest of out-of-school suspensions and expulsions.

And if we have data to support that those funds actually helped that, I would definitely like to see that money be allocated to those...you know, to continuing on with those programs. Again, data, if there's data there to support it, I truly believe that we need, especially in those areas, we need to be able to sustain.

I think that's the name of the game, sustainability, especially when we're talking about funding, and it's always the problem. And I know Matthew spoke about it, and at least in Ohio, with local control and how things are funded, it's always going back to the taxpayers. Unfortunately, I think superintendents now are just levy campaigning, you know, spiraling on from one levy campaign to another.

And I don't know how that is in other states, but that all feeds into it. So I just, I wanted to say that. Thank you.

- Thanks, Tammie. Mark, one last comment, and then I think we have to kind of look at our matrix, and land on a couple additional focus areas.

- I think Erick also had his hand up, but sorry.

- Oh [crosstalk]

- ...the last two.

- Matthew, and then Erick.

- I was just saying instead of making it one more thing, I think there's a lot of things we could just look at with equity-based federal funds, year-round opportunities, because then that also addresses the food for summer feeding, and you know, the free and reduced, and a lot of these things could be resolved.

The other thing we look at is career-tech opportunities. And in the world of career-tech, there's a lot of opportunities in summer with summer enrichment, and I think career-tech is another avenue to explore through summer enrichment opportunities as maybe a carrot to dangle for, you know, a justification or rationale of why summer or after-school opportunities should exist. Because there's not enough hours in the day currently to do what we need to do, but if we want to expand and offer new opportunities, it could be through enrichment.

- Thank you, Matthew. Erick?

- And this is just maybe an add-on, but I think Mark had mentioned learning from COVID. I think one of the things that I learned is that many of our families, students chose not to go to four-year universities, and selected other pathways. And so I think that, you know, from a federal funding standpoint, there may be opportunities to expand post-secondary readiness for districts across our region with regards to emphasizing skilled trades, internships, externships for our kids.

In some of the public comments, they talked about credit-bearing courses in 8th grade, high school credit-bearing courses in 8th grade, college credit courses in high school. And so, I would be...I guess I am adding on that I would be

interested in looking at post-secondary readiness from a standpoint of enhanced funding, or innovative funding for districts.

- Thank you, Erick. Matthew? You're on mute.

- Erick, I like what you had to say. We do have opportunities in Ohio. Ohio has College Credit Plus, so for a lot of students in Ohio, they can earn associate's degrees, and they could actually embrace those advanced coursework while in high school.

So to see more of that across the Midwest, and across the nation would be really, really great.

- Thanks, Matthew. So we have about 17 minutes left, and I think our goal is to land on some final thoughts on our stakeholder matrix template. We've landed the teacher prep in...or teacher shortages would be an area of focus, kind of had a flurry of additional thoughts there at the end.

I also heard in the beginning of the conversation around with the public comments, and some of the comments just wondering for an area of focus if you feel in agreement around the whole literacy piece.

And that could go toward the teacher prep piece for structured literacy, as well as teacher training, curriculum, instructional practices. So, any thoughts on one, the science of reading piece? And I'm just wondering if those last flurry of thoughts around post-secondary readiness and career-tech could be a focus area, and tie in attendance with that?

So just looking for some input and thoughts on a couple other areas of focus, as we come to a close for Meeting 1.

- Erick?

- So, I like the idea of the teacher shortage, but more so from how all of our states in this particular region are able to do a better job with our reciprocity and recruitment across states, not only within our state.

I also would be in favor of... The science of reading is real big now, but like everything in education it's cyclical, and many of us who have been in this for a while, this isn't new. And so I would love to see a balance between both literacy and, you know, math, science areas. I know that that's not a topic now, but I'm

willing to bet within the next few years, math and science is going to come back up as an issue.

And so, although I would support literacy, the science of reading, I would like balance to some of those core areas in our field.

- I would totally agree with Erick on that. I think, you know, the teacher shortage opportunity is obviously critical, but focusing on those student outcomes and proficiencies in both math and science and literacy from a business perspective, definitely something that our members continue to talk about.

So making sure that we focus on that, I would definitely agree with.

- Tammie?

- I'm not disagreeing that that's not a need, but I guess what is the need where... Like, are we being specific about exactly what that need is in those areas in literacy? What is the need, to increase?

I guess I need to know, like, specifically, are we looking to increase their scores? Are we looking to increase graduation rates with that? I guess I'm...maybe it's just me, maybe I need to know more specifically.

- My perspective would be that we're increasing proficiency, whether that's through NAEP or some other, you know, standardized metric. You know, and just from Iowa's perspective, I think it's 33%, and Dr. Pruitt probably knows better than I, but 33% proficient, I think, in 4th-grade reading as of now.

So that means, you know, 77%...or I'm sorry, 67% are not proficient. So, just increasing that. I don't know if we need to set a goal... You know, from a regional perspective, perhaps we could combine all of those scores together and set a regional goal.

I'm not quite clear as to, you know, what our jurisdiction is on that. But perhaps that would be a way that we could provide some clear markers and goals towards achievement.

- And I agree with Joe. I would be interested in increasing proficiency on those national assessments, but then also looking at gaps in performance between our different student groups. There have been historic persistent gaps in our

different student groups across all of our regions, that haven't successfully been addressed nationally.

So proficiency I think is an indicator of success post-secondary that will allow our kids to be post-secondary ready, no matter what pathway they choose.

- So I'd just like to be clear, and maybe I'm along the same lines as Tammie, is that the need that we're addressing? What's the need? I'm trying to understand the need.

- This is Bryan. I just want to acknowledge, coming back to our objectives for today's meeting, and thinking through looking at the data, thinking through what those needs are that jump out to you, and then thinking through what gaps still exist in that data and that information to determine the stakeholder groups, or whom we still need to reach out to to help fulfill those.

So right now, we have a list that I've been trying to capture of about maybe 10 to 12 things of needs that kind of seem to jump out to us from the need sensing activities. And then from there, based on that, what information is still incomplete to say, yes, this is absolutely a need, or no, this can be tabled? Or alternatively, yes, this can be a need that can be fulfilled with technical assistance activities in the future, which is part of what we're doing.

So it's kind of looking through these needs, and then determining what is still outstanding, and then, relatedly, who we need to reach out to to answer those outstanding questions. And I will be quiet now.

- You don't need to be quiet, Bryan. Thank you. So thinking about those questions just around, you know, the science of reading, and math, what data is still needed, and how do we want to collect that data? I mean, both of those areas you could go the teacher prep route, you could go professional development, curriculum, standards, assessments, multi-tiered systems of support.

Any additional thoughts on those? A couple questions around the math and science topic.

- I can speak on the literacy aspect of it. I think that for the most part...well, not for the most part. From what I know, and my experience, we really don't get a good sense of how our kids are doing until 3rd grade, which, you know, the

majority of our states I think end up doing a state test, or for national purposes, NAEP in 4th grade.

And so for me, a need would be if we look at our entire region, you know, how are we assessing literacy in pre-K2, and what support federally are we able to potentially get to to bring more alignment between how we're looking at literacy across our region is an idea.

- So Erick, so the type of data that we would need on that is just a potential survey of our states on what data they do collect in pre-K2, and what method they use, or...I don't want to put words in your mouth, I'm just...

- No, that's exactly it, Bobbie. I think that if we were to survey our districts in our own states, let alone across our states, I think we would find that we're assessing literacy probably in some similar ways, but very different ways in coming to conclusions as to how proficient our kids are going to be by the time they take that state or national assessment.

- Thanks, Erick. Another thought is the legislation piece of that. I know in Minnesota, we just passed the READ Act, where we're requiring universal screening in kindergarten, 1st and 2nd. So maybe getting a landscape of our states in the Midwest, and what legislative requirements exist, and for how long, and have they worked, potentially?

So as Bryan mentioned, we each have about 10 to 12 on our list, and we've kind of landed on potentially 2 areas.

The other areas were multilingual learner instruction, that whole idea around social-emotional learning, mental health supports...and the sustainability of ESSER-funded programming.

Matthew?

- Yes. Just I know there's a lot of topics, and a lot of things we were bringing up, but as far as with multi-tier systems of supports, talking about the science of reading, talking about specific subgroups, I think that's one thing we need to really look at. There are student populations that really do not have access to early opportunities prior to really entering kindergarten.

And I know it's not necessarily blatant on this topic as one of our priorities, but is there a consideration of creating some early opportunities for students, even

through some preschool experiences, or how funding may flow? Because if we could enter students in with kindergarten readiness assessments, you know, in more of a median rate, I think we're going to far better serve our students long term.

And I think it's a good use of money, early interventions. The earlier we intervene, I think it could be some of the best use of dollars.

- Thanks, Matthew. So, what kind of data would we want to get from stakeholders to help us inform what we will include in our report around early care and education?

- We have... You know, kindergarten screeners I think are very telling. So when you look at a kindergarten screener, you can look at your kindergarten screeners based on whether you're a suburban, urban, or rural district, and then you could also look at those kindergarten screeners specific to individual subgroups. I think it's very telling to where the supports are then needed, and it would really help us point those funds, if we could fund maybe some early literacy-type opportunities for youth, and I think it would really help determine where those funds need to be appropriated.

- So are you thinking maybe again another survey-type instrument, around what states are doing in the P1, 2...grades 1, 2, and 3, or...?

I mean, access is one thing, and kindergarten entry assessments are another. P3 alignment is another. You know, transitions from early care and education to kindergarten, all those have a pretty large impact on school readiness.

- You know, over the years is one thing, and I don't have an answer. I'll just be candid with you. What I will tell you is just doing this for multiple years, you know, the gap's already there, before they enter kindergarten, for a lot of our kiddos. And trying to create some additional supports early, and the earlier the better, again, I think it could make a monumental difference for a lot of young people.

And especially for students that we're talking about in specific, you know, groups that may not have the same access that other students have. I serve a small urban district, so we do have high poverty. We're one of the poorest districts in the state of Ohio.

That's something we don't typically tell too many people, it's a very proud community. But we see how crucial early intervention is for our young people.

- Well, I couldn't agree more. I mean, literacy and early learning are my two areas of experience, so I appreciate that. So we're coming up on about 11:30. I think we need to shift, because the last two agenda items take 10 and 5 minutes.

And I don't know, as far as landing the plane, we had a lot of good feedback and ideas, and so I'm assuming that we will work to put some thoughts down on paper in this matrix, and share back with you to get your feedback here soon, much prior to the second meeting so we can get whatever type of data collection up and running, and work with the partners at MSG around what those might look like.

Is that kind of on target, Bryan? Okay.

- That works. One thing I might offer. We've heard a lot of ideas, so as you all have shared these ideas today, based on your experience and what you see in your region, I'll offer who are the stakeholder groups from that you need to reach out to to say yes, this is a priority that has meaning beyond just the intent of this group?

And then, relatedly, what data points are missing or do we need to still gather?

- So if we're talking about teacher recruitment, and we're focusing on educator preparation programs, if that's a stakeholder that we'd like to focus on, each of the states should have an American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. So in Indiana, it's the Indiana Association for, and I'm sure in Illinois and Ohio, and so forth.

And so, I would recommend that that be a stakeholder group that we can connect with, and they can disseminate the information out to the various educator preparation programs.

- Any thoughts on those stakeholder groups who might provide that input for the science of reading and math focus area, and the early care and education focus area?

Possibly what we could do is just put some ideas in the matrix, and then when we send it out to get your feedback, you can kind of yea or nay, or provide additional feedback at that point.

- I think that would be helpful, Bobbie.

- Okay, great. Thanks, Jessica. So with that, I think we turn back to walk through the SharePoint files?

- That's me, so I will walk us through our resources. Next slide, please. Oh, next again.

There we are. You should all have received access to the SharePoint files last week. This will be our key communication hub. We're leaving files as Word documents on the SharePoint site so that you can insert comments and questions into the documents.

Since you'll only be meeting twice, this will be the best way to facilitate continued discussion between Meetings 1 and 2. We'll be reviewing the comments, and putting together a synthesized version of the end results to help prepare you for Meeting 2. We also will continue to finalize and upload various documents over the next couple of days. We wanted to hear your initial discussions, and make sure everyone was on the same page before getting too far ahead, but we'll quickly review what SharePoint contains.

So on this slide, you can see the list of folders you have access to. These include information about the orientation, profiles, Meetings 1 and 2, need sensing materials, the report, and other resources. Next slide, please. For the orientation meeting, you have access to the agenda, presentation slides, and recording, along with a full transcript and summary.

Next slide. The ethics primers that were shared during the ethics training are also available. Next slide. For the profiles, you already have the regional profile. The National Disaggregated folder includes data that were disaggregated at the federal level.

You may have access to disaggregated data at the state level, but we wanted to give you an overview of what the national data shows for English learners, mental health, and teachers of color. After today's meeting, we will also post profiles for each individual jurisdiction, which will include all the information included in the regional profiles, but displayed a little differently because only one state will be covered in those.

Next slide, please. This will be similar to the Orientation folder, with agendas, presentation slides, and recordings once they're available. Next slide.

- This is the folder where most of the work will be completed. The completed need sensing matrix will live here. Next slide.

- For the folders related to surveys, focus groups, and public comments, additional guidance is provided for each of these potential activities. For example, communication documents, including outreach templates to stakeholders, will be under the Communication Documents folder. Checklists that provide guidance for surveys, focus groups, and public comments are in the second folder.

Sample instruments that you can pull from will be in the Instruments folder. Right now, we're focused on general questions focused on overall priorities, but if you want to include an additional stakeholder group, or focus on a specific area, the Liaison, that's me, will help you create content for that instrument. Once the data are collected, all information will be stored in the data file. Next slide.

Within the Communications Document folder, there is a subfolder for communication materials. Communication documents, including outreach templates to stakeholders will be under the Communication Documents folder. This is also where you will track all stakeholders that you communicate with, and how you communicate with them. Next slide. Once you've collected data, this is where you'll save the files.

We'll also include any analysis conducted, as well as a summary of the data to prepare for the report. Next slide.

- The report template, draft, and final report will be saved here. Next slide.

- So the Resource folder includes the contact information for the DFO and the Liaison, and the list of RAC members. This is also where we will continue to share resources. Our team has started a list, and we encourage you to add resources that you find helpful. As the Liaisons review, these may also be included or shared with other RACs so everybody has access to the same materials and resources.

So we, as Liaisons, may share across regions to include more resources here for you. All right, I will hand it back over to Bryan.

- Thanks, Mikkaka. Thank you, everybody, for your participation today. If you have any additional needs from here, you of course can reach out to me. My

info is already in the contact worksheet. That said, most of you already reached out to me, and you should know how to get to me. I will copy the RAC inbox on all replies. Just so you know, as was said during the orientation session, this is subject to Freedom of Information Act guidance, so we copy that as a matter of the public record to retain the information.

That's not to dissuade you, it's just to say what I'll do, and why I do it. So reach out if you do have additional questions. After this meeting, we'll kind of put together a summary, fill out that worksheet in the needs sensing assessment, and we'll add some of the discussion points we had today, add additional activities, and let you all know when it is ready.

And I think from here, I'm going to pass it back over to the Chairperson.

- Thank you, Bryan. So, we will...I think Bryan and I have a recap meeting here shortly, and so we will determine these next steps, and action plans, as well as talk about the thoughts that we've all had a discussion about, the stakeholder matrix template, and get a draft out to you for your feedback.

As we know, timelines are tight. It was nice to hear that the next meeting is able to be pushed out a little bit, given that it's the first week of school, and many of us are overwhelmed at the moment with all things school-related and legislative-related.

So just really appreciate all of your time and all your thoughts, and look forward to working with you, and pulling together I think something that will well represent our Midwest stakeholders. So with that, I'll move to adjourn the meeting.

- Do we have a second for moving to adjourn the meeting?

- Second.

- Thank you. All right, the move to adjourn is... Oh, do we have a concurrence? I'm sorry, it's a vote. You can all raise your hands, I see them going up...all right. Everyone's hungry, I think. Thank you all for your participation today.

We really appreciate the conversation. Like I said, we'll follow up with next steps as we complete the needs assessment matrix, and share that out for additional feedback. Think through those groups that we still need to reach out to, and think through those data points that we still need. And as another

reminder, the next meeting will be rescheduled. It will be published in the Federal Register, and you'll see updates on our website. But just, again, you'll get additional time between this meeting and the next one.

I don't see any disagreements there. Thank you for your participation today, and I look forward to working with you again in the future. The meeting for 05 September for the Midwest RAC is now adjourned.