RAC-Central Region
Meeting #2
October 16, 2023

- [Bekka] The meeting will come to order for the Regional Advisory Committee for the Central Region. My name is Bekka Meyer, the Designated Federal Official from the U.S. Department of Education. I would like to acknowledge that this meeting is open to members of the public, and is being recorded for the public record. I'm going to start by conducting roll call. For the members of the committee, please come off mute and indicate that you are present, once your name is called. Michele Williers?

- [Michele] Present.

- Mark Miller?

- [Mark] Present.

- Glenn Hancock? Matt Good? Dr. Allison Fleetwood?

- [Dr. Fleetwood] Present.

- Dr. Larianne Polk?

- [Dr. Polk] Present.

- Scott SchmidtBonne?

- [Scott] Present.

- Monica Waltman?

- [Monica] Present.

- Paige Fenton Hughes?

- [Paige] Here.

- Dr. Socorro Herrera?

- [Dr. Herrera] Present. Cat Palmer?

- Dr. Jacque Eidson?

- [Dr. Eidson] Present.

- Thank you all for that. We do have a quorum for this meeting, and so we can proceed with voting procedures. I'm going to pause one moment here to see if we have any attendees in the public list here that are actual committee members.

I don't see anyone. And also, I want to give Cat another chance, if you're able to come off mute? And it looks like you are off mute, but I wasn't able to hear you. I don't know if the tech team could provide some support to Cat, since she is our Chair?

- [Cat] I apologize. Can you hear me now?

- Yes, yes. Wonderful.

- All right. I am here.

- Great. Okay. All right, so a quick review of the agenda for today's meeting. We've already done our call to order, and the roll call. We're going to review the meeting agenda and objectives, also review the assessment reporting outline, or report outline, excuse me. We'll also provide an overview of the needs-sensing activities that have occurred to date. Then we will deliberate on the priorities and recommendations for the Central Region committee, vote on those priorities, discuss the assessment assignments and timeline for the next steps, vote to establish subcommittees, and then finally, adjourn.

Our meeting objectives today are to review any additional input that was received from stakeholders, and the public comments that were also received since our last meeting. Based on that information, we will finalize the assessment of the critical educational needs of each region.

Then we will deliberate on the education needs assessment for the region, and finalize recommendations to be included in the final report. And then finally, establish a subcommittee or committees to complete the final report. And I think for this, I'm going to turn it over to you, Courtney.

- [Courtney] Yes, thank you. So hello, everyone. My name is Courtney Leigh Beisel, and I am filling in for your Liaison today, as she had a prior commitment, and I'm excited to support you in this phase of the process. As mentioned, you will determine subcommittee writing assignments at the end of today's meeting. These are the questions you should have in the back of your mind as you go through the deliberation process today, as these are key questions you'll be addressing when you write your final report.

The first one is, why did the committee determine this is a priority for your region? Then, how will you justify to the U.S. Department of Education that this should be a priority for the region? Once those priorities are established, what technical assistance support can the Department provide to address this priority in your region? Finally, in addition to the priorities and the data you've collected, there may have been other concerns or issues that came up during your discussions that may not have risen quite to the level of a priority, but

you think are things that are important enough that the Department should be aware of and consider as they plan for the next five years and beyond.

You'll have the opportunity to include those types of issues within your report as well. Next slide, please. So let's quickly go over a high-level overview of what the assessment report will look like. The report will start with a general cover page and introduction, and this will be followed by an executive summary.

There will then be an introduction that will provide background information about the RAC itself, composition, and background information about the intent and purpose of the report. Beginning in section IV, you will share what your committee was able to accomplish. You'll provide an overview of the data you collected, what methods and outreach did you use from your regional educational leadership, what comments did they provide, and how did that impact the priorities in your region?

You'll also have the opportunity to include the public comments that have been available for anyone in your region to reflect on education issues that they feel are important. Then you'll go into a summary of the findings in Section V, but just an overall summary, and an introduction of the priorities that you will be voting on today. And Section VI, you'll write to your RAC recommendations.

The outline on the screen is just an example to give you an idea of the overall report structure. As you can see, under each of those headings, you'll be discussing the outcomes and findings from the data collection you were able to do over the past few weeks, what those needs look like, and then the recommendations for technical assistance provided by the Department. Next slide, please.

You'll then have the opportunity to write to the other priorities that didn't quite rise to the level of a recommended priority, but are issues the Department should be aware of, and take into consideration for the next five years. This section will be followed by the conclusion, and an appendix that will include those details about data collection that you worked on as a committee. The goal of these reports is to be concise and succinct, being able to provide that justification for why the committee has determined these topics are a priority for your region, as well as the technical assistance needs the Department may be able to provide to your state.

As you deliberate today, please keep in mind this report structure, and the goal in the back of your mind, and think about which priorities you'd like to work on drafting for the final report. We'll be voting on who will be taking a lead on those sections at the conclusion of this call. And so, with that, I'm going to turn it over to your Chairperson to lead the discussion, starting with a summary of the activities you were able to accomplish over the last weeks, and then leading into your deliberation.

- This is Cat. Sorry, everyone, again. Major technical difficulties on my end. As far as... Let me make sure I am back on my cell phone. Our needs-sensing activities, so what we've completed thus far is we had the survey open for quite a while.

We reviewed that information during our Meeting 1 time together, and at that point, we did not have very many submissions. But between Meeting 1 and Meeting 2, if you all have been tracking, we are well over a hundred submissions on that survey. So initially, we had used that information to kind of help jump-start some conversations we had during Meeting 1, thinking about what does that survey tell us, what data do we already have access to, what are the needs in our local regions, and we started brainstorming some of those priorities we really wanted to focus our report on.

We did narrow it down to about five priorities. A survey was then sent out to all of our RAC committee members to help prioritize our priorities even further. And so we were asked to then...I think it was a drag and drop, where we were asked to then select what we really wanted to focus on.

And we're here today... In our folder I believe our selections were then reviewed, and someone very nicely went ahead and just put them in order for us, and I'm guessing someone can step in here. The number one means that as a RAC, that's the number one priority that we actually said, based on our survey results.

I'm unsure if that's how those numberings were actually created. But I know that we do have a document now that has five priorities in chronological order, and that we'll spend some time today really determining if that's the path forward we want to take as a committee. I'm hearing silence.

Did you guys hear me at all?

- We did.

- Okay.

- We did, yes.

- All righty. Let me...

- And we don't know, can you see the screen at all?

- I can see the screen. It's small, but I can see the screen.

- Okay, great. No, we could hear you.

- All right, so let's pull up... Is there... Should we be sharing? Yes, there we go.

- Yeah.

- Thank you very much.

- Courtney's got it.

- Perfect. So looking at priority number one, can someone actually confirm, just so we're on the same page here, is this labeled priority number one because as a RAC, that's where we voted?

- I believe so, Cat. Our Liaison who's not in attendance is the one who did do that calculating, and so I don't have that answer exactly right now. But we can confirm with her.

- Okay. So let's move forward. So for each priority, and we're going to take this one priority at a time... So we can just take a moment, look at the first priority, educators in the pipeline, and meeting the demand of educators. Why or why not should this be a priority?

So I'm going to pull up my participant list, that I can also see on my phone. And so just like last time, if you guys can...you can take yourselves off mute, I think it'll be easier if we actually have this conversation verbally, rather than over chat. Let's discuss this.

Is this still our priority for our Central Region?

- This is Larianne. I'm just going to ask a clarifying question. The difference between priorities one and two are that one is specific to educators in the pipeline entering education, and priority two is any staff shortage in education.

Is that correct? Okay.

- I have my hand raised, just to add for a comment why this should be our priority. Just based on the educational model that we utilize in our country, it is very dependent on teachers to deliver instruction.

And so given the significant need for teachers, that would be why I would suggest it.

- I think I would chime into that. I mean, just not to jump ahead to priority two, but thinking about the discussion around shortages, the retention piece, I think, makes this a priority, right? So we want to, once we have educators in the pipeline, we also want to retain them to meet the demands for education, and for our students overall.

- I would just add that in the world of special ed, we have some large districts in South Dakota that do not have staff, and they are not meeting their federal obligation to kids on IEPs. And that is now resulting in vast amounts of parent complaints to OCR, and there's no waivers or forgiveness from the federal government for special ed.

So you have to do what you say you're going to do, and you cannot do that without the staff to do that.

- Thank you. So as you heard, we are on a timer, and we do have to vote on all of these, so I'm going to jump down to the rationale. So some of your responses actually hit on there's overlap, right? I think that we could almost copy and paste some of these.

But is there a specific piece of evidence that we can reference here, maybe that you have locally or that we have nationally, that we can pull from that says, here's where you look to highlight that this is definitely a need in our region?

- There were comments on the public input survey.

- I think...

- We also have information from the governors, and from the CSSO to that as well.

- I was also thinking, based on the special education comment, thinking the Office of Special Education Programs monitoring visits and reports to their state districts, to see how...you know, about the state complaints, and what is going on, from their recommendations.

- Okay. And then ideas for how this priority may be addressed through technical assistance activities.

- I think one of the things that came up, and we talked about as special ed directors around the state, is that working with institutes of higher ed, some of the antiquated prep programs, prepping people in special ed, I don't know, I don't pay as much attention to gen ed, but that's one that I think we, as district leaders, and even state leaders need a little hand in helping those institutes change their program models, you know, in the world of special ed for sure.

I just don't think people are being prepared for what they're facing in public ed. Probably in gen ed too, with regards to behavior and mental health needs in school.

- Thank you. Dr. Polk?

- So a technical assistance activity or support that could go along with that would be to have a collection of the various alternative teaching certificate pathways that states use across the country. So having a playbook of different types of certification, alternative certification, but also put together a technical assistance document as to maybe the best practice in grow-your-own, and pipeline processes that start in 8th grade, how to get students the right information, but to have it in a playbook so that students can...school districts can follow a bit of a guideline.

- I had some notes on homegrown as well. I think that might be an interesting route to kind of research and highlight what's actually working out there. Dr. Herrera?

- Mine is very similar to Dr. Polk's. It's really honing in on the technical assistance that we can provide for different pathways and grow-your-own, and being able to look at that alternative certification through a lens of what's possible, I think because we are antiquated.

And you know, that technical assistance also in that not all contexts are similar, so we have places that have very high populations of recent arrivals, immigrants, or children, students who are, you know, language learners. And so that technical assistance that also provides guidance on the population that you serve in that preparation of teachers.

- Okay, perfect. And so, Bekka, please, I'm looking at the order that we're supposed to do this, but because of the flow of conversation, should we go ahead and vote? Before we move to the next one, should we even...should we first just vote if the committee agrees, and then we move on to priority number two?

Would that be a fair process?

- Yes, that is how we have been doing it.

- Okay. All right, and then what...how much time do we have left for this priority?

- You have 2 minutes and 30 seconds left.

- All right, committee, if there's any other comment on the rationale why or why not this should be one of our priorities, and then ideas for technical assistance, please go ahead and speak up now.

- I would say student-teacher ratio is a rationale. It was kind of alluded to with special ed, but it also happens in other classrooms as well. So just the research behind student-teacher ratios, and decreasing those ratios would be helpful.

- Okay.

- Perhaps the request to higher ed for student teachers in specific content areas, if there are content areas, student teachers that are not available.

- This is just me. This, where it says "student teacher ratio," I think if you make sure that that looks like a ratio, not "student teacher ratio," but "student-to-teacher ratio," just so that somebody doesn't read that, and it looks like we're saying we want more student teachers.

- Put the colon, or...

- Yeah.

- Okay, I think we're ready. So let me make sure I have the... Can we put the slide up again that actually has the priority? I have it here, actually. Okay, members, as I call the vote, please use the Raise Hand function so we can accurately call the vote, and take a screenshot for the record.

I call for a vote for the Central RAC to include educators in the pipeline, and meeting the demand of educators as priority.

- I second that.

- And then let's all use our Raise Hand feature. I say that, and I don't know where mine is. I can see your hands, though. There we go.

- Oh, thank you.

- All right, educators...I counted 10, but someone might want to double-check for the screenshot of that.

Educators in the pipeline, and meeting the demand of educators is a priority determined by the RAC. So we'll move on to priority number two. So we can go ahead and go through, and remove your raised hand. Oh, 10-minute timer has started.

Man, that makes me nervous. Let's see... Priority two, staff shortages, recruitment, and retention, why or why not should this be a priority?

All right, Dr. Polk.

- For some of the same reasons as we mentioned for teachers, but when it comes to support staff, there is a lot more that has to be done in a school district than what teachers are able to do.

So we're seeing shortages in kitchen staff, paraprofessionals significantly, bus drivers... And without all of those people being a part of an educational system, we aren't able to provide the best education to our kids.

- I agree. Mark Miller?

- Yes, and I was going to just second that. Same thing, just counselors as well. The mental health piece I know we'll get to, but that includes the counselors as well. So, everything Dr. Polk said, and I would add counselors to that as well.

- I think it has a vast, a great impact on students' learning, right, if we don't have the capacity to support that. I think also back to special education, services are not being provided because of lack of support staff, speech therapists, mental health clinicians for our students, which is a violation of the IDEA.

- Thank you. Dr. Herrera?

- Oftentimes, the support staff are the first line of socio-emotional support for communities, families, and students, and so, in different ways, they are essential to the learning and, you know, acculturation for students who may be culturally and linguistically diverse. And so I think oftentimes, we don't prioritize how important they are within a system, and so...

- Thank you. Scott?

- I have a two-part comment. Additionally, from a diversity of staff perspective, this is often where we get folks into our system who are more diverse, and generally meet the diversity of our student population. And that's even more critical when you think about how these non-instructional staff members feed into our instructional pipelines, and then subsequently help to diversify that pool as well.

- Is there anything from...anything that we want to pull from our first one, that you don't already see on the notes document, as far as rationale? Or specific evidence. So specific evidence that we can pull, Dr.

Polk, that we can reference here for the need?

- I was still on your question one. I'll think about that for a second.

- Okay.

- But I do want to include principals here, as the instructional leader in a district. I don't know that they really fit under teacher, and they don't really fit under support staff. But we're seeing an incredible shortage in school building leadership, and we need some...we need to make sure we include them in this one, in recruiting and retention, too.

- Okay. Let me pull this down... And then rationale, let's make sure that we have some information there. What evidence can we reference here, nationally or regionally?

Is your hand still raised, Dr. Polk? No? Okay. I don't know if you have access to this. We, in Nebraska, have gotten access to state-level CDL endorsements as it relates to bus drivers, delivery drivers, etc., which found...I think we had three in the last two years for the entire state.

Yes, three individuals seek a CDL endorsement in the entire state of Nebraska. Some of you may think that's half of our population, but it is not.

- Are there any states that have a statewide... I know that in Wyoming, our board has a web page that just lists different job openings across all of our school districts. Does anyone have a platform like that, where we could run a report that kind of shows here's what's open, this opening has been open from this month to this month?

- We may, in South Dakota. Our Associated School Boards division runs all the teacher openings across the state, and I bet...I would have to imagine that they have the listings. We all hire through them, so I would have to imagine that they probably have that.

I can check.

- Nebraska has a teacher shortage survey that gets sent out. Scott, you might know more about this, too, but I know... I don't know that it specifically identifies content areas. It may. And grade levels, I don't know. But that's a state-level survey from Nebraska.

- Okay. Paige, your hand's up?

- So some comparative salary data between people who are doing our non-certified jobs in schools, versus industry and other positions in the area. So for instance, like for us, that's our hospital, that's our county government, things like that.

And I think we have some of those data available at Wyoming state level that have been presented to our legislature.

- Okay. Mark...

- I was just going to reference the data collection board that we were...some of us put some things in. There's a few reports in there about teacher mobility, there's a couple things about teacher pay. So some of those things are on that data collection board, so if we need some more evidence, we can go back to that data collection board, and add some of those details in the writing process.

- Thanks for that reference, Mark. I think that would actually... Let's look at the ideas for how this priority may be addressed. One of those documents on that data sharing board was this report that REL Central created about levers, stairs...

I almost think a follow-up to that report would be really helpful. So now we have the percentages of teachers that are self-reporting that they're leaving to another district, or they're leaving to a different career field. Can we follow up, right? Are there more questions that we actually need to ask these...

And this report, I believe, is just educators. I know that we listed along, you know, every staff member that works for a school or district. But I think that this gives us a jumping off point, at least, for why teachers aren't staying, or why teachers are leaving. What makes other districts more attractive, you know?

Some questions around that.

- [crosstalk 00:30:45.114] and I was just going to say too, I know in Colorado, and it's on our Colorado Department of Ed website, they did an educator shortage survey that has a lot of detail not only on the results, but they have...they compared it to federal data, but then they also had some quick links around educator shortage interactive dashboards and talent policy updates.

So there might be some information in there that could be also useful.

- All right, any other ideas on how we can ask for...or support this priority through technical assistance?

- I'll just add one thing. I know LA Unified, and the superintendent at LA Unified had to do this through a strike process, and any lessons learned through that might be a conversation that we could have with the superintendent there.

So that might be some lessons learned in California, and not necessarily for Central, but at LA Unified, that might be some info we can gain.

- Think about, too, looking at other states, it may not just be in our region, but that have best practices where they're actually filling some of the shortages. I know it's a nationwide problem right now. But who's doing something right, that we could also learn from a technical assistance, that might be able to implicate some of those strategies to help improve?

- Yes. Scott?

- Considering that the solution to any shortage may depend or be moderated by any number of variables, and noting that the urban, suburban, town, rural makeup of each of our states are pretty different from one another, to some degree, it'd be helpful to learn about what these shortages look like in those different buckets of kind of locale size, if you will, for a lack of a better descriptor.

- No, I agree. I think some of the reasons will overlap, but I think we would be surprised for some of the more rural districts and schools. Dr.

Herrera?

- I think also exploring...it goes right along with this line, is that what teachers leave the urban or rural areas, and go to suburban areas. Because from Dr. [inaudible 00:33:28.034] report, that I had difficulty uploading, and then went off chasing another ball, that teachers of color have a likelihood to stay in urban areas if they went through a pathways or a pipeline high school to their own community.

So I think that that bears to be explored, is, you know, what teachers stay, and for what reason, but also how much of that is connections to the community, and the populations of the community.

- Wow, that's very interesting, yes. All right, don't want to cut us off, but we are under a timer, so I'm going to go ahead and move forward here. Members, as I call the vote, please use the Raise Hand function so we can accurately call the vote, and take a screenshot for the record.

I call a vote for the Central RAC to include staff shortages, recruitment, and retention as a priority. Please keep your hand raised as we take a final count. Staff shortages, recruitment, and retention is a priority determined by the RAC.

You guys may lower your hands.

All right, priority three, student achievement and growth. Why or why not should this be a priority? Dr.

Herrera...

- We continue to see low achievement in the same subgroup of students, and I think that this needs to be a priority because we're decades into raising this question. And I think it's time to explore different frameworks that might address some of the challenges that we continue to have, which are now really present after post-COVID.

So... See how short I'm trying to keep those so you don't have to type a lot?

- I was going to add that I think this relates directly to our first two priorities in workforce development. Student achievement, and their growth and their success in school no doubt relates to the workforce development in our region. So it should be a priority, based on our first two.

- Thank you. Mark?

- I was just going to reference the, you know, diverging trend lines, the National Assessment for Educational Progress, which I think is in our collaboration, or the Long-Term Trend Board, I think you added, Cat, talks a lot about how the students at the 90th percentile, the students at the, you know, 10th percentile, and how those lines are growing further and further apart for sure.

But then also, we've had the lowest scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, you know, this past, you know, cycle than we've had in decades. And so I think that's a reason enough to make this a priority.

- Thank you. So you already mentioned, Mark, some rationale, some pieces of evidence, so if we can just make sure that we drop that to that second question. Any other pieces of evidence that we can reference for why this should be a priority for the Central Region?

- Your hand is still up, Mark, so if you have...

- [inaudible 00:38:14.888] Yeah, you bet. No problem. So I think we heard from our governors, and from our, you know, state superintendents as well that this is a priority. And I think we hear it from parents, I think the feedback that we got. So when we're looking for evidence, I think we have lots of evidence showing...the school pulse survey, lots of places where we have evidence saying that this should be a priority.

- Thank you. Monica?

- Yeah, and I would add that I think you probably saw a lot of comments in the public comment section from South Dakota, which is largely...has a large Native American population, reservation land. And you know, you think about healthcare outcomes for, you

know, educated versus uneducated, and healthy choices and sense of well-being, I think are...because of a lack of some of the education opportunities, is outrageous.

At least in South Dakota, on our reservations, it's...you know, it's deleterious, to say the least.

- Thank you. I know that we're pulling...I just want to make sure that we are pulling the chats, the comments in the chat, and pulling those over to our notes document?

Okay, let me see, any other comments for pieces of evidence that we can reference?

- All right...

- I just wondered, did we talk about state report cards? I'm sure those just came...I mean, that just came out in South Dakota, and we're not achieving very high, as a whole state. So I think that's always a good [inaudible 00:40:21.938] data to look at.

- Well, and I almost think that even having state report cards, and having that growth as a measure, I mean, that is a rationale why. If we're being measured that way... And I hate thinking about things this way, but this is our system in the U.S. So if that's how resources are being allocated, then we have to focus on it.

- All right, how can this priority be addressed through technical assistance activities? Mark...

- I think one way would just be, again, looking at the NAEP scores, and it was referenced earlier, about what's working maybe outside of our region. But finding, you know, what's working in regions, what's working in states, and finding out what we can do in our region to meet some of those demands.

Whether it be looking at, you know, objectives in our standards, whether it be looking at test data, whether it be looking more, you know, deeper into the schools and classrooms, about what's being done.

- Thank you. Monica, your hand is still raised. I wasn't sure, do you have a comment on...

- Well, I do. It was an accident, but I do. So it was a lucky accident. I think too, like, curriculum development, curriculum analysis, are we keeping up with what's current? I think we could use probably some help. We're kind of left on our own in South Dakota, our DOE doesn't regulate a lot of that stuff. So I think that could be supportive, at least in our state for sure.

Maybe other states have a little more help from their DOE. Pretty hands-off in South Dakota.

- No comment. I used to work for the Wyoming Department of Education. Dr. Herrera...

- I think technical assistance that addresses, you know, that excellent research that looks at innovative practices for the population being served. Just being across the Midwest in schools, oftentimes, curricular decisions are made, and if, you know, best practices are

decided upon for a population, there's an incongruence between the population being served, and what's actually taking place there.

And so providing technical assistance for districts to really do an exploration of the population served, and what's the best curricula for that particular population, that community, t think that there's a huge gap there.

- Thank you. Dr. Polk...

- Pulling together some listing of how educational service agencies across the country can support their school districts, most specifically the more rural ones. Those of you who do not know, those are intermediate service agencies that oftentimes do support curriculum, and development, and training, and data analysis, and those sorts of things where oftentimes the Departments of Education don't dive as deeply into.

That is thing one. Thing two, I think, is providing some guidance to the states in communicating their scores with the public, and how to best do that to... You know, an example is if you're comparing or communicating ACT scores, but you're in a state that requires every student in grade 11 to take an ACT, that's going to look very different against a state who does college-ready students who are in the 11th grade.

So I think communicating growth and student achievement scores in a way that is most easily digested by their public, maybe.

- Yeah, those toolkit-type things are very helpful. Let's see... Dr. Herrera, do you...I can't tell if you guys are leaving your hands up, so... Let's see, Michele...

- Yes. So each region actually has a technical assistance grant through Office of Special Education Programs for parent centers, and I just thought this could be a great opportunity for that technical assistance and parent-centered engagement can engage with education, that parents and educator partnership that might be able to also support this work.

- Okay, we have a long list of how we can receive help through technical assistance for this one, so that's good. Let's go ahead and move... Let me just check one more time. No other hands are raised, so we're going to move forward with calling the vote. Members, as I...

- Cat?

- Oh, go for it.

- Yeah, sorry to interrupt. Do we need a second to call for a vote? Just maybe that's a Bekka question. I just don't want us to vote, and have it not count.

- None of these count...

- In my notes, I don't have that we have to have a second here. Bekka?

- Yeah, it's not required. But it's a good question. Thank you for checking.

- No... Okay, good.

- All righty, members, as I call the vote, please use the Raise Hand function so we can accurately call the vote, and take a screenshot for the record. I call a vote for the Central RAC to include student achievement and growth as a priority. Please keep your hand raised as we take a final count.

- I count 10.

- I count 10.

- We are doing that. I was waiting extra long to give you a chance. But I count 10. Student achievement and growth is a priority determined by the RAC. Moving on to priority four.

You may raise...or lower your hand. Priority four, students' mental health and well-being, why or why not should this need be a priority? Monica... Not Monica.

- Sorry, I wasn't prepared. I will come back with my hand up. Good Lord, come on.

- Dr. Polk...

- It is a foundational level of safety students have to have before they can even being to think about learning Maslow's hierarchy of care tells us that it must be in place before they can do anything else.

- Thank you. Monica is ready now.

- I am ready. I also, again, would say this is some of a direct correlation to why we have people leaving the field, or not staying very long, because of the unmet mental health needs of students at a younger age. Access to mental health care is impacting the classroom greatly.

- Scott?

- To that last point a little bit, we're also seeing, at least in many communities in Nebraska, that the need for care is very much greater than the amount of care available. And so wait lists for students, even students who are significantly ideating, can be months.

And so it's pushing a lot of people into inpatient care.

- Yep. And I don't know if this was stated, but I do just want to say that these, the top four priorities so far, evidence of the survey...of the need can be found in those survey responses.

All right, so let's jump to rationale for why this is a priority. What evidence can we reference?

- I think we should look at some of the trauma-informed studies, and ACEs, the adverse childhood effect studies, the impact of ACEs about the overall, that we want to create safe and healthy learning environments for all children, and how this correlates, given what a school day looks like.

So I think there's a lot of research around that.

- Thank you. Dr. Polk?

- I think simply identifying the number of students who have been accessing supports over the last five years, how it has trended upwards, how school districts and regional service centers have increased their staffing or contracts to staffing in regard to that. I think you probably could find some data about the number of federal grants that have been disseminated to educational organizations for mental health supports, and would also support how it needs to continue to be a priority.

- Thank you. Monica?

- Yeah, we have...I'm sure every state [inaudible 00:51:03.328] you know, the...ages 10 to 24 in South Dakota, suicide is the number one killer, so to speak, for that age group in South Dakota. I mean, we have that data, and that is a huge discussion for our governmental leaders and everything, because it's becoming an epidemic in South Dakota, especially on our reservations.

So that data is always readily available, and updated regularly.

- Yes, thank you. Oh, this is a hard subject, thinking about that. Scott?

- Think and talk about it we must. There have been two, to my mind, publications from the American Psychological Association over the last two to three years, one on the significant increase in rates of depression and anxiety amongst adolescent populations, and then a follow-up one in 2023, I believe, on the impact of social media use.

- What was that second one? Where was that study from?

- They're both from the American Psychological Association. I have the second one up. It was from 2023.

- Okay.

- The first one was like, 2021, I believe.

- And NASP has some similar pieces of data to it.

- Okay. Mark...

- I think it would be important, to Scott's point about the need for care is greater than the care available, it would be nice to know what's available in our region and our states, just available for kids, so that we can think about a way to get more people into that profession kind of indirectly, knowing that that's a need in our profession, and the educational system.

- Yeah, I... Okay, I'm just making sure the notes are capturing that. All right. I mean, I think we have the rationale, we have our reasons. Now, how can we get support through technical assistance?

What are we requesting here to help?

- I think alternative pathways for certification for these professionals also. And I just noticed there were three people with their hands up, and I jumped right in. Sorry about that.

- Oh [crosstalk 00:53:50.399] Oh, there's a lot. I'm going to just start from the bottom, because I didn't realize. All right, we're going to go Dr. Herrera.

- I think professional development for teachers, because...providing them professional development, you know, in this area becomes important not only for students and their families, but also for self-care for them.

- Thank you. And Scott?

- I think it would be helpful for the Department to conduct some reviews of these new applications coming out. We've seen an increasing number of them relying on artificial intelligence. I would worry that in light of staffing shortages, to include these staff, we would rely on those tools before they're fully vetted. Having been able to vet a couple myself, yeah, it's Wild West.

- Yep, it could be dangerous. Whoever's providing the support, yeah, I can see how that could go downhill quickly. Michele?

- Yes, I was also thinking as a technical assistance and dissemination center, the PBIS might have supports that would tie to this. Because I also think through the mental health, it would link to certain behaviors to support our educators and students.

- Mm-hmm. Let's see...Dr. Polk?

- Again, accessing your regional education centers, if you have them, or educational service agencies. But also getting capacity to the school districts, or those regional centers to bill health insurance so that these sessions can be done in school. And if the district does not have the resource capability to deliver that service, getting the right tools in the district's hands so they can bill health insurance, or Medicaid.

- Yep. Monica...

- I think one thing that we probably could use a little assistance is maybe some public awareness campaigns. I think we feel like mental health is something that people do talk about freely, but I feel like we do not do that here very well, in our... We need just some support in that, because I don't think it's happening at the state level.

Because again, it's a very divisive subject, especially in a primarily very red state, where its families take care of their own, and we don't need people interfering, and then you have adults and children going with unmet mental health needs. And just some public campaigns of destigmatizing mental health, I think, would be enormous for at least our area, here in South Dakota.

- Yes. And that's in direct... I mean, I think with the suicide prevention awareness, it's slowly starting to happen more and more, which is nice, but it's taken years for Wyoming to get there. I know that there are some Stop School Violence grants, where the whole focus is around, you know, getting community, getting the school, getting everyone on the same page, law enforcement, and then supporting the students, supporting the family.

I wonder for technical assistance, is if there's a way to kind of pull those systems, and pull out what's similar in these systems that are working in different districts or states that really have a robust, like, community around supporting the student, and it's not just on the school system.

- Yep. And the funding for that, how are you sustaining that? I think those floods sometimes are fine, but then, you know, with all the ARPA stuff, we've had districts that have put people in place, and did great, and now they don't have any more funding left, and those people all went away. So I would agree to that.

- Yep. Dr. Herrera?

- I think that moving away from exploring ways in which this isn't siloed. Because within the school context, mental health, there might be a campaign, but it's very superficial, and then it's siloed to a group of kids, which is... But I think often has an impact on bullying, and all sorts of challenges that arise, behavior challenges.

And so, how can this become a thread that goes across community, home, school, that's not siloed?

- Yep. Thank you. I apologize, there's some noise in my background. Mark?

- I just want to make sure we get Paige's note captured in our notes, about needing to get data from students as well. So I don't know if we got that in there, but she put something in the chat, so...and it's important.

- Thank you. All right, any other comments about how TA could be provided to support this priority, before we call a vote? Your hand is still up, Mark. Do you have more comments?

Okay. Members, as I call the vote, please use the Raise Hand function so we can accurately call the vote, and take a screenshot for the record. I call a vote for the Central RAC to include students' mental health and well-being as a priority. Please keep your hand raised as we take a final count.

I count 10?

- Good to go.

- Students' mental health and well-being is a priority determined by the RAC. You may lower your hand. Okay, priority five, building two-way partnerships for schools and families, why or why not should this be a priority?

Doctor...I don't know how to pronounce your last name, E-I-D-S-O-N? Let's see...Mark.

- Can I just ask a clarifying question about the number of priorities? And then I think on the agenda, we had talked about doing other things that didn't raise to the level of a priority.

Is five a set number, or is this an other category, and we're just maybe falling into five, or maybe moving it into other as we go into this conversation? So I was just curious if we had to have five, or if this was the fifth one, so it could be a line above or below it.

- Bekka, are you able to answer that?

- We are focusing on five priorities for each report. Courtney, I don't know if you want to add anything else on that. Because we do want a way to acknowledge that, you know, this isn't everything, and additional feedback was provided, and of course there are going to be many needs and priorities for the region.

But the structure of the report is right now to focus on five. Courtney, did you have anything to add?

- No, that's my understanding as well. I think it was up to five, but no more than five. But if there are other ones that you want to mention in the report, you can. And I believe that these were voted upon by your group.

- They were. And I do want to just reiterate, though, between Meeting 1 and Meeting 2, we received a large amount of survey responses, and I'll just leave it at that. Monica, your hand's raised?

- Yep. I think one way it's a priority is that it does build some cultural sensitivity. When you have better understanding of the needs of your community, and the cultural, like, nuances and practices, it helps build a more inclusive environment for...and a little more culturally responsive environment.

- Thank you. Dr. Herrera?

- In much the same way, I think that cultural compatibility for understanding how families prioritize learning and engagement with school, I think a movement...a partnership just connotes a two-way exchange of language and ideas and understanding.

Most of what we're doing currently is an engagement, but it's engaging one way, how do we... What can we provide you to support your students in learning, versus what can I learn from you to be able to support your students in learning socio-emotional-plus?

And so just... And the diversity that exists right now across the country, linguistic and culturally, just really asks for that to happen in a different way now.

- Yeah. You have me thinking. A lot of what I saw in the survey responses really spoke to special populations, so our English learners, our special education students, our gifted and talented students. I wonder if there's a gap in how we're communicating, this two-way communication idea.

You know, just like our learners, we need multiple modalities in communication. And are we really considering the specific needs for the different family configurations? Michele...

- Well, I was going to say two things. So one is there's definitely research that when there's parental involvement, it ties to improved academic outcomes. But it also has a positive impact on a student's social and emotional development, which correlates to everything else, once they have that. The other is through parent training and information centers, that there's over 100 throughout our United States that are also part of the IDEA for the special education populations, there is research and support that shows when parents are involved in the meaningful goal process, and in the IEP meetings for their students, the outcomes are greater when they're working together with their educators.

- Thank you. There are some chats, just highlighting that there are some chats that we just need to grab and put in the notes.

- I will say personally, I did struggle here. So thinking that we at most could focus on five for our report, I struggled... I believe that this is definitely a priority, but if we are only able to focus on five, are there other things that came up in the survey responses, or from communications with other stakeholders, that would push this down to maybe a number six?

And I'm just throwing that out there, being really honest here that I did struggle, saying that this should be part of our top five. Dr. Herrera?

- Like you, the question, you know, there is to be asked, should this be in the top five priorities? And when I step back and think about the way we view schooling across the country, there's so much with socio-emotional, you know, the whole mental health, the academic, that really falls back on families, on parents, and so much that is unknown to them, that I just...

They're almost like, pivotal. They're the linchpin to everything else that happens in schools. And so the question you asked is really an appropriate one. And yet, I think for decades, the family, although we espouse that the family is central, they're often, especially those that are culturally and linguistically diverse, and special populations, there's a lot of marginalization.

And I think in order to attend to everything we've talked about, family's going to have to become integral to the conversations and the work we do in schools, you know? There's so much to prioritize, but that's just my thought.

- Thank you. No, I need it. I needed some healthy debate. I need to see this in a different way in order for me to vote. So, thank you. Dr. Polk...

- So my question is, what would number five be, if this isn't it?

- Are you asking the group, or are you asking me?

- I'm asking everyone. Because I think that when you have so many priorities, naturally, as you get to the bottom of the list, it feels a little bit more broadly representative, rather than a specific pretty pointed item. So I just am curious, what else might there be?

And could those other priorities be even more widely spread, and it is appropriate to keep this at number five? I'm a little indifferent, because I think parents, if two-way partnership, and we're pretty open in this, it doesn't mean just schools and parents, if there's a two-way partnership for schools and families, is that also somewhere else in our priorities, in the well-being of students, for example?

So could there be other places that that fits also? I'm just curious, what would it be if it wasn't here?

- Well, that's what I was thinking, though. So remember last meeting, we were discussing this idea of, like, this is going to be overarching, and then this is that piece that we see throughout our priorities? And I almost think this two-way communication is something that we may see, and we may want to highlight throughout our priorities. Especially student achievement and growth, and student mental health and well-being, I would see this as, like, especially if a toolkit were created, then how would we engage with family members?

How would we engage with students and community members as part of the priority? Something that I did see throughout our submissions, our survey submissions, I saw a lot about absenteeism, special populations, and just things to consider there. But I did see a lot of comments on concerns from stakeholders about those two things.

Mark?

- Yes. And I asked my question originally to start this conversation because that, and then Cat, you summarized it very nicely and poignantly. But I think that building two-way partnerships is over in, like, our third question, ideas for how we can prioritize, if the reason

why we are building two-way partnerships is to create a culturally responsive community between school, and maybe that's the priority.

Or something... You know, Cat, you mentioned the survey results have a lot about special populations. Maybe we can reword the priority five to include those things, a diverse, culturally responsive, you know, community, and then the way we do that is talk about the building of two-way partnerships.

- Yeah, I was going to say something similar. I think what's lacking when we're thinking about priorities, and I think it could be rewording here, is the equity piece. I've not heard that throughout any of our priorities, and I think that is a huge factor that correlates, especially, and I think kind of Dr.

Herrera kind of kicked it off in...you know? But equity across the board, right, for bilingual families, different cultures, special education populations. So I think if we figure out a way to add that, we'd be tackling how to build the two-way partnerships. Because I would almost assume that a lack of responses, too, was also the accessibility piece for many people that didn't have, you know, an opportunity to kind of put in their feedback.

- Thank you. Dr. Herrera?

- Well, and you don't need to type this, this is just a point for conversation is, you know, if we look...without generalizing, if we look at all of the priorities, and we think about the populations that are most struggling in those areas with access to mental health, with academic achievement, with parents not feeling that they're part of the school partnership or the community, it's our special populations.

I mean, like I said, without generalizing, because I guess that goes across for all students. But however, our special populations seem to struggle with these priorities the most. And so I think that equity piece, that special population, that family coming into partnership somehow is a thread that goes throughout all of them.

It would just be a matter of how would you make it front and center, versus one of the, you know, bullets that come under each of the areas? Because that also sometimes gets lost in conversation.

- So we're kind of at a crossroads here. So we can move forward, provide rationale, provide ideas for technical assistance with the way the priority is currently written, building two-way partnerships for schools and families. Or we could take a moment and say, is there a way we could reword this?

And Bekka, let me know, do we need to first vote, and then we can maybe reword it? Or how do we need to do this so that it...we're doing it in the correct order?

- I think you could vote on a proposed language change. So if there was...somebody wanted to propose language for the priority, then you could vote on that.

- Okay. And in that case, that would be a motion, right? And we would need a second? Is...?

- I believe so, yes.

- Okay. All right. So before we get there, let's just make sure that we are...we complete our conversation on what we have right now. Dr. Polk?

- I'm just simply trying to put voice to a very sensitive conversation, that I think we need to be careful of the optics of voting down this as a priority without first changing the language. I think we need to be careful about that.

- Yes. And that's why I'm thinking... It sounds like we want to keep it, but is there a way, based on the conversation so far, that we can just reword it so that it's very clear what we're prioritizing here? And so if anyone has a proposed language change, either put it in the chat, or raise your hand.

Okay, so in the chat it says... [crosstalk 01:15:54.848] Oh.

- Go ahead, Cat.

- "Any member can move to propose a separate priority, or to amend an existing priority. Another member would second, and the committee can vote." Okay. So we'll just give this some space, and if there's no proposed amendment to the current language, then we will just move forward with voting...or finishing our thoughts on this one, and then we'll move forward to vote.

So I'm going to give another minute, if there is any proposal or motion to amend this language? Paige...

- So Cat, it sounds... So I've just been listening, so maybe I'm not summarizing this appropriately. But I think there's support for the two-way partnership piece, but that the focus of that should be on...I don't know what the word is.

But I think what we're [inaudible 01:17:10.422] like marginalized populations. So I'm looking at the notes that we have under why it should be a priority, so maybe we just need to figure out that language. But we're looking at English learners, students, special education, I'm reading students that might be struggling emotionally...

So maybe it's just changing the wording a little bit, in that you're still developing the two-way partnerships, but it's more specific after that point.

- Thank you for starting the conversation, Paige. Can everyone look at the chat, and see if... Michele put some draft language in there, and if someone would like to actually bring forth a motion, we can move forward there.

And Paige, your hand is still up. I don't know if you left it up, or if...

- Sorry, I did.

- Okay. Because this is recorded, I'm wondering, Michele, if you would like to just say your statement out loud? And then if we get a second, then we can move forward on the vote.

If we do not get a second, then we're going to just give it a moment.

- Sure.

- Cat? Cat, quick clarification before we go too far. I think we need to move to amend the priority, and agree to amend, and then we can have Michele share her amendment.

- Sounds good. Does anyone want to move to...

- So, I will. I move we amend priority number five. Do I...

- And I second. [crosstalk 01:19:30.193]

- Okay. Who [crosstalk 01:19:32.772]

- Socorro...Socorro.

- Okay.

- I put the little hand up.

- Yes, thank you. All right, so now we're in the space where we can actually amend the priority. Michele, are you able to come off mute?

- Yeah, sure. So I was suggesting not to overly complicate the language, right, and to change it to, "Building culturally diverse and equitable two-way partnerships for schools and families."

- So at this point, we're looking for another motion.

- We might need some discussion on that first.

- All right. Any feedback? The language is also on the notes document. It's in the chat, and on the notes document. No discussion?

Okay. I don't see anything in the chat, I don't see hands raised, so at this point...

Oh, go ahead, Mark.

- I was just going to say that I move to vote on the amended priority number five.

- I second to move to vote on priority amendment number five.

- Okay. Members, as I call the vote, please use the Raise Hand function so we can accurately call the vote, and take a screenshot for the record.

- I call a vote for the Central RAC to include building culturally diverse and equitable two-way partnerships for schools and families as a priority. Please keep hand raised as we take a final count. I have 10.

- Yes, I confirm.

- Building culturally diverse and equitable two-way partnerships for schools and families is a priority determined by the RAC. So before we move on from this, we can go ahead and lower your hands, I want to ensure that we actually finish the rest of the conversation around this last priority.

So if we can circle back to rationale for why this is a priority, and then the technical assistance that we can request to help support this. Scott...

- One thing I was thinking of is, you know, I think in our polarized society, one thing that is common amongst multitudes of groups is the perspective they're not being heard. And so if this creates a reality where we are doing it as it's written, and creating an opportunity for everyone to feel heard, I think that is very important.

- Okay. Can we get the... Really quick, we are running out of time, so I'm just going to open the floor. Thanks, Scott, for that comment.

Any ideas of technical assistance that are just on the tip of your tongue, that we can get down? Your hand's still up, Scott. No?

Okay.

- Again, Cat, I will offer that the parent centers have technical assistance centers, and equity is a number one priority in this recent technical assistance center iteration of our five-year grant proposal. So I think there's going to be a lot that comes down the pike for our region TA centers, for the parent centers to work collaboratively with school districts.

So that might be a resource we can tap into.

- Okay. Thank you. All right, so we did that one a little out of order, but we did already vote for that fifth priority, the amended version to be part of our five priorities, so our next step here is to really discuss writing this report.

Bekka, is there any...I believe there's a slide that needs to be shared, possibly?

- Yep. Courtney's going to pull up the slide. And this does require a vote, to establish a subcommittee, or multiple subcommittees.

- To establish a subcommittee, or multiple subcommittees.

- And I'm just going to state a couple things really quickly, as you think about this, since we are so short on time. But you know, we do have resources to help with this report. So there's a template that will be provided. We're not looking for anything, you know, really extensive, we've talked about it, about three pages per priority.

So just consider that, because I know you are all very busy people, you have a lot of other things going on, we're not trying to make this a dissertation.

- Okay. So I guess before I call a vote...

- May I...

- Oh, go ahead.

- May I also ask too, so we have made some references in here as to some data that need to be collected. Would those data be just referenced in these sections, or would our subcommittees have to access those data, and attach them here?

- That could be something that the subcommittee discusses. You can also look to see if there's any overlap with data that's already been provided. But that would be something to discuss as a subcommittee.

- Okay, Bekka. So at this point, the motion is to establish either one subcommittee, or is it to establish multiple subcommittees?

- And you can decide how you want to basically divide the report, if you wanted... A subcommittee cannot have more than quorum, which is seven people. But you could decide it could be one subcommittee, and the tasks for the five priorities are divided amongst those less than seven people.

Or you could establish smaller committees, and divvy up the priorities that way.

- Discussion on the approach, before I make the motion to vote? Does anyone want to write the entire report? I don't see any hands raised. Am I able to make the motion myself, Bekka, or does that need to come from the...

- Yes, you can make it yourself.

- Okay. So I move to establish multiple subcommittees to write the report.

- And this does require a second.

- Second, Monica Waltman.

- And then we vote, Bekka?

- Yes.

- Members, as I call the vote, please use the Raise Hand function so we can accurately call the vote, and take a screenshot for the record. I call the vote for the Central RAC to establish multiple subcommittees. I count nine. Please keep your hand raised.

I count ten. Could someone confirm? I apologize.

It was between nine and ten. What does the screenshot show?

- Tina, were you able to get that?

- [Tina] Yes, I'm sorry. It's ten. My apologies.

- Okay. All right. So now we are to establish these subcommittees. Do we have time, or was this the end of the meeting?

- We are over time. However, we...if people can stay on just a couple more minutes, should go ahead and do it.

- Yeah.

- Okay, so we have the five priorities. You guys can nominate yourselves, you can self-nominate, you guys can nominate each other, and then we can second to see who would like to lead the writing. Knowing that there are, you know, other people can help.

Is there a motion to nominate...either a self-nomination, or nominate someone else to lead one of the five priorities? Dr. Herrera...

- That was a raised hand from before, but I will be glad to support or lead the building culturally diverse and equitable two-way partnerships for schools ls and families.

- I second [crosstalk 01:32:24.638]

- Oh, you second [crosstalk 01:32:26.459]

- I second that. This is Cat Palmer.

- Okay, Cat. So anyone who wants to join me, that would be great, you know? Because I was here like on pause, like I'll support... But we were so silent, I thought I'll just jump into the...just jump in.

- I'm happy to support you on that one, Dr. Herrera. And this is Michele Williers.

- Thanks, Michele.

- Monica Waltman would be happy to do the same.

- Thank you, Monica. We'll make a great team, the three or four of us, in case somebody jumps in, but the three of us.

- I don't see... Jacqueline Eidson. Unless your hand is still raised? Because that's what I did. I don't show that my hand is raised, nor did I intend it to be.

- Okay. We'll move...Dr. Polk?

- I promised my secretary I wouldn't do this, but I am happy to lead or support priority four, students' mental health and well-being. And I'll beg for forgiveness tomorrow, when she's back.

- I would love to support that. This is Jacque Eidson.

- I think we need a second first, and then we'll add Jacque. I can second. I'll second Dr. Polk leading priority four.

- I just need to keep my mouth shut. That's what my secretary would tell me.

- Is there anyone else on the committee that would like to work on priority four? All right, we have three more priorities. Any self-nominations, anyone that wants to nominate someone else?

- Sorry, Cat, if you're supporting, can you support on more than one? Or do you have to stick to one?

- Bekka can correct me if I'm wrong, but I think you can work on all of them. It's just we have a... Our timeline, right? So just consider our timeline on this as well. But...

- I would be happy to support four and five. Because it's just a priority in our state anyway, and that would be easy.

- Okay. Anyone else willing to chair one of the first three? Scott, your hand's raised.

- Though my admin has gone so far as to give me a no button, I will gladly chair...number three is fine.

- This is Mark. I'll support Scott on number three.

- Are you going to second his self-nomination, Mark?

- I will second, and support, yes. I will do both.

- Okay. All right, now we're down to one and two. I will nominate myself for number two, staff shortages, and recruitment, and retention. I will chair that subcommittee. If someone will second.

- I second, and support, Allison Fleetwood.

- Cat, this is Paige. I'll support on that.

- Perfect. All right, that leaves us with number one, educators in the pipeline, and meeting the demand of educators.

- I just want to nominate Mark, because he has been so articulate about everything. So Mark, you can turn down the nomination if you want.

- Writing is definitely not my superpower. So if somebody wants to jump on board with me to help write it, I'm happy to support with number one.

- Chat GPT will help you, too. Not to bring up a sore subject.

- I see Scott's hand raised as well. Is someone... It sounds like Mark doesn't want to be the subcommittee chairman, but...Scott, are you raising your hand because you also want to chair that committee?

- I was going to back Mark up, if he'd be so willing to take it on. But if he doesn't want to, I'm happy to back up anybody.

- Mark, we don't want to put you in a corner... So I'm going to go ahead and second that Mark chair that first committee, but I think that he can say no.

- So Cat, this is Paige. You can take me off priority two, and put me with Mark. Mark, I can help on the writing. You do the thinking, I can do the writing.

- There we go.

- That's what I need, Paige, that's what I need. Sounds good. Thank you.

- I'm all about it. I'm all about it, my friend.

- All right...

- How about we co-lead? Can we co-lead?

- Oh, Cat, I want Mark to lead. I do [inaudible 01:38:49.524] and I'll shore up the writing. I'm happy to do that.

- Okay. Thanks Paige.

- All right.

- It sounds like Scott's backing me on that one, too, if I heard correctly.

- Okay...

- I'd be happy to crank out a first draft, and run it past Paige, and then Mark, you can provide editorial zeal.

- Sounds like a plan. Thank you. Appreciate that.

- Yeah.

- Okay. So it looks like I can do this in one vote, Bekka? I can just nominate our chair leads, our subcommittee leads.

- Yes.

- Okay.

- Yep, just one vote for the...you could say for the slate of subcommittee members.

- All right. I nominate... Oh, no, that's not what I'm doing. I am not in the correct place. Okay.

I nominate Mark Miller, Cat Palmer, Scott Schmidt, Dr. Larianne Polk, and Dr. Socorro Herrera to lead identified report sections on behalf of the Central RAC.

Members, please use the Raise Hand chat function if you approve these nominations for the report writing subcommittees. And please keep your hand raised. Okay, I count nine.

- I have nine.

- Okay.

- Bekka, I think this is a question for all five leads, or Cat. Do we schedule our own subcommittee meetings, or will that be done through the Doodle poll, or something else?

- We will be reaching out, either the Liaisons or myself, and we will be scheduling those. So for the immediate future, sit tight, and then you'll get some communication to get them scheduled.

- Thank you.

- This is the schedule that we're looking at for the next few days, or weeks, I should say. I'm glad you brought up Doodle, because we are waiting on a few RAC members to respond to the Doodle for the third meeting that we're looking at having the 14th through the 16th. I believe right now, the preferred date of those who have responded is the 14th, but we are not able to schedule that until we get a response from everyone.

So go back to your emails. I sent them...I think I sent a reminder on Friday. So if you could respond to that poll, that would be excellent. But you'll see how this is laid out in terms of when the drafts will be due, and then that final meeting will be to accept the report. I think we can go to the next slide, unless you have anything else to add, Courtney?

- Nothing for me. Just be on the lookout for some Doodle polls to get your availability to start scheduling out those subcommittee meetings.

- Yes, thank you. Are there any final questions before we adjourn? Are the hands raised for questions, or for voting? Okay. All right, so I move to adjourn this meeting of the Regional Advisory Committee for the Central Region.

Oh, hi, Cat. I see you now. And I ask that you concur by saying aye.

- Aye.

- Thank you all, again, for your time, especially extra time today. It is very appreciated. We look forward to our third meeting, which you will hear about shortly. And with that, I will officially adjourn this meeting on October 16th, 2023, at 3:47 Eastern time. Thanks again.

- Bye. Thank you.

- Bye. Thanks, everyone.

- Bye. Thanks, everybody.

- Bye-bye.