

RAC-Northeast and Islands Region
Meeting #2
October 12, 2023

- [Sarah] Welcome, everyone, to the second Regional Advisory Committee meeting for the Northeast and Islands, the RAC NEI. I'd like to call this meeting to order. This meeting is open to members of the public and will be recorded for the public record. I'm going to do a quick roll call for all the members participating, and please state present, so quickly unmute and state "present."

Thank you. And we do, again, need a quorum to have this meeting. Let's start with Karen Brown. Daniel Chuhta.

- [Daniel] Present.

- Awesome. Welcome. Danielle Colterman.

- Lauren Goldberg.

- [Lauren] Goldenberg, here.

- I'm sorry, Goldenberg. Sorry, Lauren. I actually knew that. Carolyn Kielma.

- [Karen] I'm sorry, Sarah. This is Karen Brown, and I did not have access to unmute. I've just unmuted.

- Oh, no, no, awesome. I kind of knew you were logging in, though. You wrote me a note. But I just called it again, so thank you. Thank you for telling me you're here. So Karen is present. Carolyn Kielma.

Ed Lambert.

- [Ed] Present.

- Excellent. David Little.

- [David] Present.

- Yay.

- Yeah.

- Charles "Chuck" Lloyd. Kevin McGowan.

- [Kevin] Present.

- Robert Powers.

- [Robert] Present.

- Kelvin Roldan. Dr. Nelson Soto.

- [Dr. Soto] Present.

- Donna Thompson-Bennett.

- [Donna] Present.

- Wonderful. Well, I believe we have a quorum, and I think one person is still trying to get in, so we will grab them into our mix. So we're going to go quickly through the slides, just a quick overview of the meeting today. So let's just do a quick rundown logistics of how to engage. So if you'd like to engage in a question or comment throughout this meeting, you know, please raise your hand, and Lauren Goldenberg will call upon you, so thank you for that.

So we're going to go, just again, a quick look at the outline. We're going to review sort of...let me see, is this the right...am I on the slide? I'm sorry. So quickly, we're reviewing the meeting agenda and objectives, the assessment report. We're going to provide an overview of the needs-sensing activities, we're going to have a chance to deliberate on the priorities and recommendations that we talked about in the first meeting, we're going to vote on the priorities.

It's exciting, voting time. We're actually going into voting time, so we're getting to do early voting. Yay! Discuss assessments and timeline, and then we're going to vote to establish subcommittees. We'll get into more details of what that's going to look like. And then we're going to adjourn. So just a quick overview, again, of our meeting objectives.

We're going to review the additional input that we've received from stakeholders and public comments. I know many of you have been looking at that, so thank you. And again, based on the information we're receiving, we're going to finalize the assessment of the critical education needs of each region. We're going to deliberate on educational needs assessment for the region, and we're going to, as a group, finalize some recommendations to be included in the report.

And again, as I said earlier, we're going to establish these subcommittees to work on this report. Next slide, please. And the assessments should kind of go over these questions, you know, why did you guys determine this is a priority need for the region?

How will you justify to the Department of Education that this should be a priority, that really support our understanding? What technical assistance support can the Department provide to address this priority? You know, that would be a great thought process. Are there any other educational issues that were not determined to be priorities, but the Department should be aware of and consider as they plan for the next five years and beyond?

We take this very seriously as we're thinking about the new competition, so your thoughts are very highly valued, so thank you, again, for your input. And now I believe I hand it over to Lauren. Is it your turn to take over?

- [Adrian] It's to me. Thank you. Thank you, Sarah.

- Oh, it's to Adrian? I apologize.

- Next slide, please. Good morning, everyone. Thank you all for attending and thank you all so much for all of your responsiveness as we've asked to collect information about needs-sensing throughout the Northeast and Islands RAC.

And now is a chance when we get to put all that information, we gathered together to generate a needs-sensing report to provide some recommendations for technical assistance, to adjust the priority needs that we collectively have determined. So we'll get more into the details of this, but on the screen is just a brief overview of the report outline.

This will be housed on SharePoint. It'll open up with an introduction, and the purpose of the report, as well as the data that was collected throughout this past month or so. Section V will include a summary of the findings, which is, yeah, just to provide an overview, and then in Section VI, it starts to get into the meat of the report, which is the heart of it.

That's where we provide, and where we identify the priority areas that need attention, and within each of those sections, we'll present our findings that justify why it's a priority need, as well as technical assistance recommendations. And in the report outline, we provide some general overview topics that we would customize for, like, for our RAC, but those general topics are supporting strong instruction and academic achievement, supporting specific student populations, next slide...supporting teachers, leaders, and school personnel, supporting student and educator well-being, developing an effective TA response, and then other priorities.

So most of the five priorities that we have surfaced throughout this process fall, like, under these categories, and then the report will close with a conclusion and an appendix. And now I'll pass it over to Lauren to help initiate our discussion about our priority needs.

- Thanks, Adrian. Thanks, Sarah. And thanks, everybody, who helped put this meeting together.

- I see Donna has her hand raised.

- Oh, thank you.

- Yes, and I will be a broken record on this. I do not presume, but "the teachers, leaders, and others," does that include parents, family leaders? Because I don't see them listed, and maybe I missed it when you were going through it, Adrian?

- Oh, can you go back to that slide? I think those were just examples for a report outline. This is not our report, these are examples of priorities.

- Okay.
- And I think that, Donna, you're looking at supporting teachers, leaders, and school personnel, and you're wondering...
- Right, and...right.
- And then there's student and educator well-being. Yeah, these are examples.
- Okay, and I understand that. And I'm saying based on the priorities that we've already generated; I'm just surprised that the family is not included in the examples.
- This is not specific to our region. This is something that the organization that's supporting this put together so that we know what an outline looks like. These are not our priorities.
- And I understand that, Lauren. And I think what I'm offering is technical assistance to the organization that is supporting this work, and will be supporting work, I believe, in education throughout our country at different points, please don't leave the family out.
- Noted.
- Noted. Heard and noted. Thank you for that thought.
- We'll make note of it, Donna. Thank you for that thought.
- Yeah, thank you very much. Okay, so now I'm going to spend a few minutes reminding us of what the priorities were that we surfaced as a group in our first meeting, and then what we have been working on collecting information on throughout. So I'm going to spend a couple of minutes on that, and then we're going to go into deliberations, where we're going to have a discussion about the priorities, and there's going to be some formal nomination activities.

So as a reminder, our first priority, so we had a survey about what our priorities were based on our first meeting, and then we voted to rank them. The priority number one was mental health and supports for students and educators. And noted what Donna is saying, that even though priority four, authentic parent and family engagements and partnerships, we might, as when we discuss in a moment, tweak the mental health and supports section.

Priority number two, addressing educator shortages, and diversifying the profession at all levels. Priority number three, improving literacy, both generally, and also across content areas, and for specific student groups. Priority number four, authentic parent and family engagement and partnerships.

And priority number five, access to high-quality early childhood education. So those are our five, in the order that we voted on them. Members of our group did a variety of needs-sensing activities. There were focus groups with university educators, and with parents and district educators.

People shared data, like...and other artifacts, like a New York State Rural Education memo. There was a survey, a parent and caregiver survey on what does authentic engagement mean to people, families, and caregivers.

And of course, we reviewed public comments. And I believe that there was a survey. It's not listed here, but I believe that there was also a more general survey on what people thought about the priorities, in addition to the public comments. So those are the main areas.

I invite Adrian and Sarah to add anything to that before we move into deliberations.

- I think you've captured most of the work that people have been doing.

- Yes. There was also some of the work with Donna, we also surveyed educators and community partners as well, with regards to authentic family partnerships and engagement.

We didn't get as many surveys returns in there, but that was also another needs-sensing activity that we did in this region.

- Thank you both. And I want to mention one other data source that none of us really have had a chance to read, but the national group surveyed chief state school officers, and there is a spreadsheet that has the responses that are relevant to our region.

There is one from Massachusetts, a chief state school officer from Massachusetts, one from New York, and two from Puerto Rico. And those are things that we can use for our report writing to augment and supplement the other needs-sensing activities and data that we have already reviewed. So we're going to move into the deliberations section of our meeting.

So let me say, so we established that these are our priorities, we're going to discuss the five priorities one by one. Our Liaison, Adrian, is going to take notes, and we'll be able to see his notes. And then after each, we're going to vote on whether we think that this is a priority that we want to advance to the Department of Education.

So I will invite the committee members who nominated the different priority areas to talk about why it should, or maybe it shouldn't be a priority, what kind of explanation we might give to the Department on why this is a priority, and ideas on technical assistance supports that can be provided.

Wait...sorry, I'm reading from a script, and I don't know what this is saying. "Ideas on the types of support that can be provided to the Department on how to support the priority." In other words, what our evidence is, and what we think the technical assistance should be. So our first priority, mental health and supports for students and educators, and maybe we want to expand that to community members, including parents and caregivers.

The person or persons, I believe more than one person felt very strongly about that, so if one of you that felt strongly about it can raise your hand and say a bit about why this is a priority, what kind of evidence we have about this as a priority, and what kinds of technical we might suggest to the Department.

So this is mental health supports. You can unmute, raise your hand... David, you unmuted, so I assume that you want to begin speaking about it? Thank you.

- Yeah, I can... For folks that hadn't had an opportunity to read it, I submitted a narrative based on 12 public hearings that we had throughout New York State. They were rural issues forums. And outside of school funding, continued school funding for rural areas, mental health both for students and for staff, was the top priority identified out of 10 top priorities.

So given the fact that we don't have much control over school funding, this would be the top relevant issue for us. The only question that I have about this priority, and whether or not to include families in that is whether the Department actually has authority to include families in whatever we would choose in terms of technical support for mental health programs.

I know that they could address students and staff, but I don't know whether or not they're authorized to do community mental health programs beyond the school community itself. So if somebody knows that information, I would love to know.

- Kevin.

- I don't want to repeat all the same things, but I'll just underscore and underline David's comments. Across New York State, the New York State Council of School Superintendents launches a regular survey of members in terms of concerns, both from an advocacy legislative perspective, but also a snapshot survey that just keeps track of what the greatest concerns are.

I'm also aware of an SA polling of members, and discussions that have happened in our governance board across the country, and I would just reiterate, underline again what David said, that among the top concerns each and every time is mental health support for students and educators. So it's certainly something widely felt in the field from the superintendent perspective as well.

- Thank you, Kevin. I believe, Nelson, you have your hand up?

- Good morning. I just want to just emphasize that for mental health, it's an issue that's been identified by the Centers for Disease Control, the CDC. So again, the idea that the importance of social well-being has an impact on how well students are doing in school, and then overall into adulthood. So I'm thinking of this as a crisis from the CDC.

- Thank you, Nelson. So in terms of this priority, I think we have some evidence about why it's a priority. And what ideas do we have about what the types of support that a Technical Assistance Center could give to our region?

Because remember, they're not direct to community members, although they could be, I suppose, but they give...they provide technical assistance to SEAs and LEAs, so state education agencies, local education agencies. And that includes, like for the state of New York, BOCES, these regional organizations. So what types...and you can just unmute yourself.

This is a discussion.

- Hi, Lauren. Donna has her hand raised, and I have my hand raised. So Donna can go...

- Oh, thank you. Thank you.

- I know.

- My interface is not showing up so well, so I appreciate that. So first Donna, then Karen.

- Thanks, Karen. I just wanted to share that in the parent focus group, and they ranked our priorities, this was number one, just like we had it as number one, for all of the reasons that have been shared, and also because they, as families, are impacted by all of the different things that have impacted our school communities, whether it's violence, the threat of violence, even the ongoing impact, they're saying, of the isolation that was caused by the COVID quarantine that's still impacting the mental well-being of students.

And so in terms of ideas for how the priority could be addressed, understanding its Technical Assistance Center, wonder if there were virtual trainings that could be offered to educators, parents, and students that promote and provide strategies to support their well-being, as well as tools for all three of those categories. So, you know, making it user-friendly. And I also wonder, is there a hotline, you know, possibility to access mental health supports?

Because the schools are only in session for certain times. Also, people tend to sometimes be extremely private. But if there was a way that an educator or even, you know, a student could be able to call, or a parent, to get access to the mental health, like, professional in real time, that was the other idea in terms of technical assistance.

- Thank you, Donna. Over to Karen.

- Thank you, Lauren. I think in addition to some of the things that we have heard this morning, and good morning to everyone, there is evidence on adverse childhood experiences, ACEs, and the impact on all of us that lead well into adulthood, and chronic diseases. In addition to that, related to the islands, we are still, particularly in the U.S.

Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, we're still recovering from two category five hurricanes. People may think, well, that was 2017, we are still recovering. We still have schools that are offline. And we also, like everyone else, have been dealing with COVID-19 as well. Other territories, other U.S. territories specifically are impacted by typhoons on an annual basis.

It's not just children and families, we should also continue to think about the educators and administrators who are supposed to be providing services to children and families as well. And one final thing, I did provide data, local, related to the impact of the U.S...I'm sorry, of COVID, as well as the hurricanes on community members here in the U.S.

Virgin Islands. And then recently, with regards to a small focus group with educators, they also mentioned mental health issues as a priority. Not the number one, but it was definitely a recurrent theme.

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- Rob?

- Yes. I just want to add, because I believe we had discussed last time about the very pressing issue regarding students who are new arrivals, that are migrant students and refugee students in this region in particular, I noticed it's not a particular priority area as identified today.

So I would also want to add in there that mental health supports for specific populations of students, such as migrant students who have experienced trauma before arriving in our schools, would be something that I think is important for us to consider as a priority, given that there are a whole host of experiences that they've had, that they need help unpacking, so that they can learn.

- Thank You, Rob. David...

- I just wanted to mention that for rural areas throughout the region, they're experiencing a real dearth of mental health availability. They just don't have it in many instances. Even county agencies aren't finding people to be able to provide it, let alone be able to rate it and choose among really high-quality programs.

And so many have gone to trying to get mental health services through telehealth, and New York State currently doesn't authorize that. And so while they have federal money, they're able to access this, but at the expiration of that at the end of the year, they won't have that anymore.

And so I'm thinking that for the Centers to act as a gatherer and disseminator of programming so that these areas could contact them and find out what's available would be a big help, because they're really not succeeding right now in finding services.

- Thank you, David. I'm going to call on Danielle, and Danielle, you will be the final comment for this topic area.

- Sure. Thank you. I just really, as David was...before he even started speaking, that is exactly where my mind went. We have families who are reaching out for support, and oftentimes they're waiting at least six months to even get an appointment to initiate services.

So the lack of providers and availability is just really difficult. We did have support within the school through Citizens Advocates, and they ended up, their counselor left to go somewhere else, and they were unable to fill that position. So I think people are trying, it's just truly a lack of providers or people who are certified in that area.

So I'm not sure what the answer is, but it is definitely, speaking on behalf of rural regions, it is definitely a critical need.

- From somebody who's in an urban region, we have different issues, but similar along this priority. And I wanted to mention, somebody had said, and talked about this idea that didn't rise up into a priority, about the specific needs of asylum seekers not only for mental health, also for other things.

And there is an opportunity in the report to talk about other priorities that we want to raise up, and I think that that might be an area where we can say, you need to be responsive to...or the Center, the Comprehensive Center needs to be responsive to emerging needs. This is an emergent need, right, the asylum seekers that are coming to our region, and how to support them wherever they are.

So I am going to now, we have a formal voting process, and I have the power, I'm in charge of it, so I am going to call for the vote on this priority. Members, as I call the vote, please use the Raise Hand function so we can accurately call the vote, and we're going to take a screenshot for the record.

So I call for a vote for the Northeast and Islands Regional Advisory Committee to include mental health supports as one of the priorities. Can I see a show of hands, please? And I am a member here, I've got to find my Raise Hand. Please keep your hand raised as we take a final count.

- Ed is visually raising his hand.

- Visual... Yes, please [crosstalk]

- I want to catch you, Ed. We want to pull you into the vote.

- [Anne] Screenshot taken.

- Okay. Thank you. Thank you, everybody. For the next priorities, we're going to have 10 minutes to just... So you can lower your hands now, and we're going to move to the second priority. And I want to note that I'm going to be a strict timekeeper, we're going to have 10 minutes to discuss each priority. The second priority is addressing educator shortages and diversifying the profession at all levels.

Can the person that feels very strongly about this raise their hand? And the first person who raises their hand can introduce this priority, and why it's a priority for the region, any evidence that we have about it. I am scanning my...I'm not seeing any hands raised.

- I raised my hand.

- Oh, sorry. I'm sorry, it's [crosstalk]

- No, I just did it. That's okay. That's okay.

- Okay. Go ahead, Karen. Thank you.

- For those who don't know, I am the Dean of the School of Education at the University of the Virgin Islands. I've been in education for 30 years. And it's considered a crisis now, where we don't have teachers in classrooms to teach. We're scrambling.

Here in the Virgin Islands, the local school district has brought in individuals outside the country, from the Philippines for example, that's one example, to assist. We have students

who are graduating, but choosing not to go into education, students in education, majoring in education.

We have... And it's not isolated to the U.S. Virgin Islands. I have school districts from the U.S. mainland contacting me so that we can...so that they can recruit our students to teach. Now as you can imagine, we're in the Caribbean, we're over 70% African Caribbean, but we have others from outside of that population who are here as well, U.S.

mainland, as well as the neighboring islands, Caribbean nations, and it seems as if there is a crisis to put teachers into the classrooms.

Now here, the issue may not be Black teachers or Caribbean teachers, right? But we also have a growing Haitian Creole population. And so then the issue would be language, meeting the needs of students who speak a different language as well, Haitian Creole.

We have a large population from St. Lucia, and those languages, although they are both French or French Creole, they're not the same. The same thing would be for families coming from Puerto Rico or Santo Domingo, right? All Spanish is not the same.

So trying to meet the needs, so that's where the part... So I guess part two of what I'm trying to say is representation also matters, and being able to have a strong teaching English as a second language support for our families that are coming into the U.S. territory.

- Thank you, Karen. I know that this, people talked about this being an issue in other areas of the region, so Donna...Nelson, and then Donna.

- Good morning again. And just, I have to follow Dr. Brown just because of the connection with the islands. I'm 100% in agreement with what she just said, but I want to add that if we don't address the mental health crisis for teachers, that adds to the shortage. Because we know the literature shows that teachers usually step out between five to seven years, and part of that is just the overwhelming weight that they feel as they are in the classroom, and we know they're two times more than other adults to cite mental health crisis due to their profession.

So again, I just want to tag along addressing shortages because we have to link in mental health within that shortages. And then the second piece would be then the disparity of how we fund and pay our teachers. What we pay our teachers on the islands, it's different from what we pay in the...I hate saying on the mainland, but in the States, so it's something that we need to address.

And I don't know how we do that, but I just want to make sure that that is mentioned. I'll leave the conditions also of the classrooms out of this too, but that's a different...the actual infrastructure of the classrooms. It's something that's real for us on the island. Here in Puerto Rico, we have classrooms that don't have air conditioning, teachers passing out, temperatures at 100 degrees in their classroom.

And so that's something that, especially post the hurricanes and the earthquakes, has been an issue.

- So, if I can... Thank you, Nelson. Before we go to you, Donna, I'm going to ask our notetaker to note that we have these emerging needs, and one is infrastructure, and climate change I heard, and I know we recently experienced that here in New York City a couple of weekends ago, a couple of weeks ago in our schools.

So the impact of climate change on our infrastructure is an emerging need, so I want to make sure that we note that for that extra section. And then, I'm hearing from what Karen and Nelson said, an emerging need for technical assistance on how to... Like, what are the practices for paying teachers, pay disparities, working conditions?

All of that is part of the recruiting and retaining educators, so I just want to note that for our notetaker, the theme that I'm hearing. Donna, over to you.

- Thank you. Plus one to everything that's already been shared by all three of you. Another issue that rose up in the parent focus group, but also in some parent leadership work we're doing actually with Rochester, New York Parent Leadership Training Institute alum. They have a project that they're doing that's funded with a collaborative by Kellogg on dealing with racial equity issues, and they chose the issue of teacher diversity in the greater Rochester school system.

They have been in partnership with some of the superintendents in that area, they've done the research in terms of the data, and they've also been able to interview and have focus groups with educators. And one of the things that they've learned is really around that cost debt issue of actually being able to go to college, focus with an education major, and then the debt that follows them after graduating compared to the initial salaries they receive in the profession.

And so something needs to be done. I am with Dr. Soto. I don't know exactly what the solution is. I have some ideas about what Technical Assistance could do, but that's a real gap. The other thing that's happening is that... So you have people saying, and particularly Black and Latine and Indigenous graduates saying they can't afford a teaching career because it takes so long to get what really would be considered the salary that could pay back student loans, and unfortunately, we haven't gotten to the place of loan-free yet.

Also, it's a real issue because right now there's research that says that 80% of our public school educators, I think teachers in the classroom, are white women. And so the need for there to be diversity across race, culture, and gender, and other forms of identity is clear. Because there's research that shows that all students, all students learn and perform better in education systems where there's diverse representation, where they not only see themselves, but they see others leading on their behalf.

In terms of technical assistance around that, I don't know if the Comprehensive Centers could be like a think tank, you know, technical assistance resource hub to provide seminars for districts or regions on how to partner with foundations, colleges and universities, and the

school district to create a scholarship-supported pipeline program to recruit, educate, and eventually place diverse educators.

So that's the ideas that kind of generated, one from parent focus groups, and other work that we're doing. And then, the only last thing I would say, when there are districts, because we know of this in the greater Rochester work, that have sought to diversify and bring in and do recruitment, and bring in people of color into classroom positions as well as other positions, I am all about unions, so I don't want anyone to take this the wrong way, but there are union laws that protect hiring practices.

So oftentimes, the last hired are the first fired when there's an impact in terms of budget, and money is lost to the district. It is not that the district does not want to diversify their educating staff, it's that they don't have the resource to maintain even when they do that. They lose.

So it's that, like, double-edged sword where you have a shortage, and then you have to make a cut, even though you don't even have all of the teachers and educators you need really to provide the high-quality, you know, education you'd like to in your schools. So I don't know what we can do to address that, but that's the other side of that.

- Thank you, Donna. I'm going to read something that Carolyn put in the chat that's related to what you said, Donna, where Carolyn agrees, and had written this before you said it. "We need teachers of all races, ethnicities, religious groups, cultures, gender identities, physical abilities, and other groups in our schools, leading our schools. Students need to feel they're represented in education, and that the career is a vital and valuable one so that we can continue to serve all Americans equitably."

So I wanted to make sure that that gets into the meeting. Rob, and then David, final words. If you can make it concise and brief, we'd appreciate it so we can move on to the next priority. Thank you.

- Sure. So just one quick thing is if we're looking for more data and points, Massachusetts, 45.6% of teachers are...or students, rather, are nonwhite, and only 7.8% of our educators are. So just another point for that first category. But I just wanted to add, under the technical assistance activities is that there has been an increase in Massachusetts in the diversification of our teacher workforce since the pandemic, and there's emerging research that shows that that's due to emergency licensure and alternate pathways modifications due to the pandemic.

So technical assistance around how those policies have helped that, and what the next step could be I think could be very helpful.

- Thanks, Rob. Last word to David.

- Very quickly, just want to make sure that this is kind of recorded, that in rural areas, one of the main reasons for not being able to get new staff at all levels, including educators, is the fact that affordable housing doesn't exist in our rural areas. We have very expensive housing, and then we have unlivable housing, and there doesn't seem to be much in between where a

young person who's also paying student loans in New York, also trying to get a master's degree, to get permanent certification, would be able to live.

Research will tell us that people are living in their homes much longer than they used to, and that's created a dynamic in rural areas, when combined with the fact that multifamily housing units are not popular in rural communities to put those up, and they often meet local community opposition.

We have some other rural states that are being very creative in this, having their equivalent of BOCES, their regional CTI centers, that type of thing, building educator housing, new educator housing, that type of thing, four-day school weeks, things that would allow for longer commutes on fewer days.

All of those things I think need to be explored. But this is certainly a priority, and I appreciate the committee putting it in.

- Thank you. And I would echo that in our urban area, cost of living and rent is a huge issue for our educator workforce as well. So we're going to put this to a vote. Members, as I call the vote, please use the Raise Hand function on Zoom so we can accurately call the vote and take a screenshot for the record.

I call for a vote for the Northeast and Islands Regional Advisory Committee to include addressing educator shortages and diversifying the profession at all levels as a technical assistance priority. Members, please raise your hands, and keep them up as the vote is counted. Our technical people, is our vote counted?

- Screenshot taken.

- Okay. Thank you. Before we transition to the next, you can raise your hands before we transition to the next priority, I am going to have to keep time. If you could be as concise as possible in your comments so we can hear from as many people as possible in the eight or nine minutes we have left for each priority. Donna asked, "Are we limited to how many priorities?"

Yes. I believe we can put in a maximum of five, we have five priorities here. There's a section where we can add some other things, emerging priorities, and we've already named a few that have come out in discussing the first two priorities. So the third priority, improving literacy, there are two people who want to speak to this. I'm going to call on Ed first, then Carolyn to say why this should be a priority, what evidence do we have, and what technical assistance it could be.

If you could be as concise as possible, I'm going to move us to a vote in about eight minutes.

- I am sorry, I had my...I had not lowered my hand yet, so that's why you saw it raised.

- Okay.

- Same here. That was same for me. Sorry.

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- Okay. All right. Well, I'm going to raise my hand to talk about literacy, because it is something that I work a lot on here in New York City public schools. I think it's a very important priority because we now know from the research literature more about how people learn to read, and that has not yet been translated into our schools of education, and into our teaching workforce, and into our classrooms.

And it's a very difficult transition for everybody in public schools to think differently about how to teach kids to read and how to develop their literacy skills from pre-K to 12. It's a priority, obviously. There are wide swaths of our students that are not reading at grade level.

It was happening before the pandemic, and when you look at the data between different student populations, whether it be race and ethnicity, or whether it be students with disabilities, or English learners. We have a lot of our students that are not adequately learning to read. And we need...I believe technical assistance can help the leaders of our school districts decide on the change management strategies, and how to support educators who are in the frontline trenches, how to adopt and implement high-quality instructional materials, how to support principals in knowing what to look for in these transitions, to using evidence-based instructional methods and materials, and helping all educators in a school building be on board with teaching students how to read, and how to develop their literacy, critical thinking skills, expression, etc.

I invite my colleagues to add. I don't think it's only an issue in our district. Rob?

- Yeah, I'm going to kind of build on that. Thank you, Lauren. And it probably blends between the priority-wise priority, but also technical assistance. So I think part of this issue as well is that the field is a little paralyzed by the polarization of the conversation around science of reading, and so I think it's important that we focus on this as a priority to help the field move forward in a very, like, tangible and dynamic way. In particular, I think technical assistance around the efficacy of certain curricular programs, certain training programs, and how they're implemented would be extremely helpful, because I think there's a science of reading literature that's valuable.

But the policymaking, the data has not caught up to the policymaking. So policies seem to be being made without the data about effectiveness of the actual intervention. So any data that could be provided around the effectiveness of literacy interventions I think would be a huge technical assistance boost.

- Thank you. Anybody else want to weigh in?

- I would like to add that particularly here in the U.S. Virgin Islands, we have many high school students who are coming to college having to take skills courses. And there's an issue when it comes to...and when I say skills, it's not just reading, it's math, it's, you know, writing.

And I think that there is an issue with regards to their preparation, and it could also stem from the fact, if you tie in the shortage of teachers, the shortage of that particular subspecialty, it is a subspecialty area.

In addition to that, not just learning to read, you know the first three years you are learning to read, and then you are reading to learn, but there's a language of math, there's a language of science. And so to be able to have students to not just know phonics and phonemic awareness, but to be able to be successful across the content area is important.

- Thank you. Donna is adding that, "Multilingual parents and caregivers want and need resources to support their children's literacy development." So I think it's this whole, like, taking a system-wide view of how do we implement evidence-based literacy instruction in pre-K to 12, including families, including the school community, including a multi-tiered system of support model?

It came out in the public comments, students with dyslexia are overrepresented in some populations, and not getting the support they need. So I'm going to move this to a vote. We have some strong chat going amongst the panelists that we will capture in the chat, and we'll capture at the end.

That will help move us towards writing our report. So I'm going to ask members, as I call the vote, please use your Raise Hand function so we can accurately count the vote and take a screenshot for the record. I call for a vote for the Northeast and Islands RAC to include improving literacy instruction, teaching and learning as a priority.

Please raise your hand and keep it up. And technical assistance people, please let us know when you have counted the vote. Anne, do you have the screenshot?

- Screenshot taken.

- Okay. The majority of members have voted for this to be a priority. Not everybody, it wasn't a universal vote, but I believe we have a majority. Okay, next priority, and again, I will keep us to time. Priority number four, authentic parent and family engagement and partnerships.

And let's see, I didn't lower my hand. If you lower your hands, then Donna, I'm going to call on you as our resident expert to kick us off on this one, please.

- Okay. There's research that shows that when families are engaged and partner with educators, students actually achieve and do better in their learning and their development across, you know, different grades. There's particular research that even talks about the role of fathers in supporting their child or their children in education, and how the students thrive.

And so the data supports the need for the partnership, but I think one of the things that we want to emphasize is the authenticity of the partnership, that it can't be just performative. It can't be that parents aren't seen as, you know, shared thought leaders and decision makers on behalf of their children, with their educators.

And I think that parents want to not only support their students, but our parent focus group also clearly indicate that they want to support educators. They believe that one, you are in this together. They also believe that you are in one of the toughest but most important professions of our, you know, world, not just, you know, their district.

And so they recognize that they want to be engaged as a partner to not only support their students, but also educators who are thriving, to give their best each and every day. Some of the things that came up for the technical assistance is to be able to have those virtual trainings that create opportunities for educators and parents to come together, and even in some instances to include students who are of a certain age and grade to be a part of the conversation on how do we effectively partner?

How do we do things that would improve our school environment? Because school safety was definitely a concern, as well as how do we create an atmosphere where all children have a sense of belonging, and people can learn across difference. Neurodiversity was raised, that parents want to be able to not only have the resources, but they want teaching staff to receive that professional development that really allows them to do what used to be known as that differential learning in a classroom space.

And also that there are supports put in place, and maybe partnership with community would get other resources where you could find either a funding source or a community partner who could provide some of that additional support where an educator is not having to be all things to diverse students, whether that's though, you know, some...how can I say it, asset-building mentoring pieces, whatever it is that a community partner might provide.

But it is all of those things are priority, but having effective communication was one of the other things that was really highlighted where schools could probably improve. And so if there's a resource that the Technical Assistance Center could provide to all districts in a region, if they could get on board...

People try different things. Email still, you know, works. It's not always the most effective. But then there's this issue of privacy issues in terms of texts, and doing group texts and all of that, so is there a particular app that would provide the information that parents need to know how their student is doing, as well as have a connection to directly communicate with the educator?

So those are the types of things that were generated in terms of ideas to consider. But it's definitely all the research that in our experience, in my experience personally as a parent of school-age children, I have found that my young people have done best when it is not just their teacher, or me in isolation, but me and their dad and their teachers working together to figure out what's the best plan for them to learn and be successful.

I'll pause there, and I really want to hear others, because though I'm the only parent representative, I hope that there are education partners who have experienced or see the value of when you have families engaged.

- Thanks, Donna. I'm going to ask Nelson to speak, and then Daniel, and then we'll call a vote. There's a lot more to say on this, of course, and we will have short responses from Nelson, and then Daniel, and then I'll call. Thanks.

- I'll be very brief. I just want to focus on the part where what is your evidence for this priority? So in a study in 2022 called The Importance of Anti-Racism in Trauma-Informed Family Engagement, the piece that they highlight at the end was that in which those families that feel that they are heard and part of the community are most likely engaged with those families also felt like they were disproportionately affected by the microaggressions that occurred in the schools.

So I will put the study in the chat so you can have that as part of the evidence.

- Thank you, Dr. Soto. I think there's compelling evidence here, I just wanted to clarify that based on a question that was raised earlier, that the Comp Center would be able to provide technical assistance to schools to help build the partnerships.

I guess I'm just clarifying, and maybe Sarah, you can clarify on behalf of the Department or not, but I think we just want to be clear on the outcome of this priority, and who the intended audience is. Because it was my understanding too that the Comp Center works to support SEAs and LEAs, but the goal could still be partnership development.

- Sarah? I think, Daniel, you're right, and I will... Oh, there's Sarah. You're back on camera.

- Yeah, sorry. I had a little cough, and I didn't want to torture all of you. Yeah, so you're right, the goal of the Comp Center is to directly...the main client, the person they're supporting is the SEA. But that doesn't mean that they're, like kind of what Donna was saying, they can create partnerships.

You know, it's not it's they don't isolate, you know? If there's something that's going on, like literacy, you know, they could work with parent coaches. There's all different ways of engagement with parents and families, but it's more about from that higher level, like how do you create the systems that Lauren has mentioned to support that kind of effort? So just...

- So can it be, Sarah, sorry to interrupt, can it be that our RAC recommends that the Technical Assistance Center work with LEAs? Because I feel like we need more... Like, the SEA is too far removed. LEAs and regional centers, like the BOCES in New York, or other regional education support centers, because I do believe that the SEA is too far removed from schools.

Is that a possibility?

- Yeah, I would say that you could recommend that. Yeah.

- Okay. Well, members, my fellow members, we hear it. I'm going to call Donna, quick last word, unless your hand is up from before. It was up from before? Okay, so you can put it down because now I'm going to call the official vote, so that we'll know you'll go down, and

then you'll put it back up. Members, as I call the vote, please use the Raise Hand function so we can accurately count the vote and take a screenshot for the record.

I call a vote for authentic parent and family engagement and partnerships for the Northeast and Islands RAC, to include the parent stuff as a priority. And tech support person, Anne, let us know when you have taken the screenshot, and counted the votes.

- Screenshot taken.

- Thank you. So this is a priority for our RAC. We have one final priority to discuss, access to high-quality early childhood education. I saw it a little bit in the public comments, I don't know if we took any...if we had any data collection specifically on this.

But I see Ed and Kevin both have your hands raised, I just...my eyes now are up. If your hands are raised because...and I see Karen. So, who would like to kick us off for access to early high-quality early childhood education as a priority for our region, why it should be a priority? What's the evidence, and what could the technical assistance be?

Karen, you can kick us off, and then Rob, you can go after Karen.

- So very briefly, there is research that suggests that early childhood education provides a strong quality, let me add the word quality, early childhood education provides a strong foundation for young children well into their adulthood, and that there are disparities in that quality education, again related to the shortage of early childhood care and education providers, and their pay as well.

And so we don't have many of those strong personnel in those classrooms either, and then they're not equal across in terms of the kind of support that these young children are getting early on, which can impact, again, later on as they enter school. Many children entering public kindergarten for the first time in the U.S.

Virgin Islands, and you can look at the Kids Count data that I just supplied, they are below, and they are not kindergarten-ready in terms of their abilities. And when it comes to supporting these individuals who may be at risk for a disability, they're not identified until they get into school.

So that's something else when we're thinking about special education and providing those kinds of services. Thank you.

- Thank you, Karen. Rob, you had had your hand up, and then you put it down.

- Yeah, sorry. I just wanted to kind of streamline the hands.

- That's okay. So you'll go next, and then Danielle.

- Great. So you know, I echo everything that was just said by Karen. I would just say under the rationale for the priority, building on that is it supports other priority areas that have emerged in this report, early literacy, for example, mental health supports. But I also just

think that we have a gap in data under the needs-sensing activities so far, in the sense that we haven't heard from as many folks in that field.

So I just wanted to make sure that this stays a priority, given all those reasons, despite the fact we may not have as much stakeholder engagement at this time. Under technical assistance activities, I think there are two things that we should probably look at based on data that is emerging from...at least from Massachusetts, for example. One is infrastructure support, so how do you support the viability and the access to, like, a brick-and-mortar situation, you know, seats and availability?

And then also how to promote and proliferate high-quality early education across a very scattered landscape of private and public providers.

- Thanks, Rob. Danielle, over to you.

- Thank you. I guess, you know, I agree with the things that have already been said with regard to this priority. I think, you know, developmentally, kids are coming with, like, an inability to...I mean, I know it's developmentally appropriate at certain levels, but the emotional regulation that they should have at certain times, they're not coming with that.

And you know, we've talked about all of the things that contribute to that. And I really appreciate Rob's addition, about the connection to like, the mental health and the other areas we've discussed, but the lack of early interventions... And I don't even think it's... You know, in our region anyway, we've supported these interventions to a certain extent, but I think a lot of these things go undetected.

Like, the need for early intervention is not identified. So I think that's difficult. I feel like we refer to early childhood education as, you know, like, the preschool, and the Head Start, and all those programs that are available, but I just feel like there's even more at home, you know?

The parental support with parenting, and having some boundaries at home, and getting them ready for hearing the word no when they get to school and being able to thrive in a structured environment. I think for a lot of kids, that is a huge adjustment. I've been referring to them as, like, raw material, right?

Like they come to us, and we have to do what we can with them. But they're coming at such... I just feel like the discrepancy with, like, the readiness levels are...it's growing wider. And so I don't know what the answer is, I just wish there was more that we could do even before they become part of the education system, for providing that support to parents.

I think it's beyond us, it's a bigger social thing that needs to be addressed.

- Thank you, Danielle. I am going to take a vote on this. Members, as I call the vote, again please use the Raise Hand function so that we can take a screenshot for the record.

I call for a vote for the Northeast and Islands RAC to include access to high-quality early childhood education as one of the priorities. Please raise your hand and keep it up. Tech support, Anne, let us know when we can move on.

- Screenshot taken.

- Thank you. Okay, everybody, you can lower your hands. Thank you for that really thoughtful deliberation and discussion on our priorities. We're going to move now to figure out how we're going to write this report, because one of the responsibilities of us members is to write the report.

I'm going to ask that we form subcommittees for each priority so that we write up each priority. Adrian has taken fabulous notes that can form the basis for each priority. If you could go to the next slide, because we already voted for each priority...thank you. So...oh, I have to call for a vote to establish the priorities.

Sorry, did I miss that in my script here? Okay. So, we're going to...I see that I guess I highlighted, but I didn't bold what I needed to say about establishing the committees. So I want to move that we have subcommittees to divide the work of writing, that each subcommittee, we have five priorities, that there be two people for each priority.

And then there are also other parts of the report template, the introduction, data collection, summary of findings, and conclusion, and we can figure out how to...we need a subcommittee to write those sections as well. So, let's see, I want to move to establish subcommittees to write the report.

Do I have a second for that? Can somebody second me?

- Second.

- Thank you. So now let's talk about who's going to do what, and then I think I have to do, like, a nomination and a seconding. So can somebody self-nominate to participate as a member of the mental health, I'm just using shorthand, the first priority around mental health?

We would like two people to be responsible for writing that section, that recommendation section.

- Nelson will participate, self-nominate, whatever.

- I second that. And can one other person nominate themselves? A lot of people felt very passionately for that. Let's table that, let's go on to the other priorities, and then we'll come back to mental health.

So Nelson is one person for that. Educator shortages, and diversifying the profession, priority number two. Kevin, are you nominating yourself for that? Can you unmute? Or are you having trouble unmuting?

- I'm sorry, yes, I am nominating myself for that. Sorry, I needed a minute to [crosstalk]

- No problem. I'm seconding that. And Carolyn, can you unmute yourself? Are you nominating yourself for that as well?

- Yes, please.

- I second that. So Kevin and Carolyn are our writers for priority number two. And we'll get into the details in just a moment about that. I'm going to hang back, and I'll fill in whatever gaps there are. I'm passionate about literacy though, so I am happy to nominate myself, but I'll see if there are two other people who want to nominate themselves first.

I'll work with whomever else might be willing to do work on that issue.

- Okay, I second you, Ed, for that. And does anybody else feel passionately about it, or can I nominate myself? I'll nominate myself.

Can somebody second me?

- Second.

- Second.

- Thank you. Parent and caregiver engagement.

- I'll nominate myself, and welcome anyone to join me.

- Thank you, Donna. Who will be working with Donna on that? I second that. Okay, we'll put that aside for the moment, and then we have early childhood education.

- This is Karen, I nominate myself. And again, as well, welcome anyone who'd like to join me.

- I could second Karen and nominate myself as well.

- Thanks, Rob. Seconding you. So we need a partner for Nelson on mental health issues, and a partner for Donna on parents.

- I will nominate myself for the mental health.

- Thank you, Danielle. Second. Okay, we'll come back to that. Does anybody want to nominate themselves for the fun sections of introduction, data collection, summary of findings, and conclusion? I just kind of put them all together.

And those, I guess, we'll probably write at the end, when we know what the recommendations are. So, I'll nominate myself for that, as chair. I'm just a masochist, I will do it. Does somebody want to help me? Please? Don't all jump at once.

- I will help you, Lauren. I'm sorry, I thought I had unmuted. This is Donna.

- Thank you, Donna. I welcome your help. And anybody else who wants to join in, but we'll take the lead on it. So...
- I can also help with coordinating some of the information and whatnot.
- Thank you.
- I know that there will be some boilerplate language for the introduction, and...and yes. I'll be working across the RAC, so I'll also help with some of that front material.
- Thank you. Thank you, Adrian. So I want to come back to parent engagement. Donna, we don't want Donna to be writing this on her own. We want somebody to collaborate on it. Maybe it could be... Can I ask, Adrian and Sarah, could it be somebody who wasn't able to make the meeting, perhaps?
- Yeah, we can reach out to...though most people are here. But yeah, we can ask a couple of other members too, if they're interested in participating. Or maybe some people can just marinate about it a little bit, and then hop off this call, and be...and say, you know what? I want to help with that.
- Yeah, I just want to see if everybody...
- We'll accept late self-nominations. Also, everyone on the committee, even if you're not a lead or a sub, will be able to, you know, offer comments and thoughts.
- Yes. Yes, absolutely.
- Obviously, don't feel like you can't be a part of this amazing project.
- No, we're not excluding anybody from the writing.
- No one's excluded.
- But David, I want to... Sorry to call you out. I don't know if I missed writing it down, but did you volunteer yourself for any writing? Or do you feel like you can't take this on right now?
- I just, I'm gone for the next week-and-a-half, and then I'm off and on the road for the two weeks after that, and I didn't want to hold people up while I'm doing that. If it's...
- Okay. So maybe we'll tap you in for...you know, to the extent that you can be tapped in. But are you offline for a week-and-a-half?
- Well, I'm gone right now. I'm in the Florida Keys as we talk, as we speak.
- Thank you for being here. Appreciate it.

- My long-awaited vacation, and I'll be gone for another week, and then... But when I'm back, I'll be in and out of the office, and could theoretically work on some things with people.

- Okay. Thank you, David.

- [crosstalk] but I also don't want to hold up progress.

- Appreciate that. And we have a comment from Daniel, that he can support educator workforce, but can't lead, so I'm just going to put you in parentheses there, Daniel. So Donna, we'll see if we can tap somebody in who wasn't able to make it, and we'll see if, as Sarah said, maybe people will marinate, and maybe they'll move themselves around, maybe they'll volunteer to help.

That would be great. And I could always back you up on that. I feel, as chair, a responsibility for this report, what can I say? All right, so it's 12:14, and let me see what the next part of the agenda is. So, I don't think we need to review the accepted priorities. I think we are pretty clear on that.

I think we moved around some pieces. Do we have subcommittee assignments? Let's see what this... Everybody take a moment to look at this slide. We have the five accepted priorities that we've gone over, we have committee members that have volunteered to lead and support the writing of the accepted priorities, and we also...the penultimate bullet, "The subcommittee may include additional education issues that are not considered priorities at this time, but may warrant consideration from the Department."

Maybe we can all contribute to a section where we say something about emergent priorities that the Technical Assistance Centers should consider, including some of the emergent priorities that we have named, infrastructure and climate change, and the asylum seeker crisis, and how that plays into our priorities, or doesn't need to be addressed.

And our Liaison, Adrian, will support writing the assessment, and will be helping us with the editing for making it into one. Now, in terms of some of these details, I think that, is there one...is there a next slide with some of the details of the timeline?

Okay. So, is this me? I am overseeing this... Am I talking about this? Or Adrian or Sarah, do you want to talk about this timeline? All right, you're not unmuting, so everybody can look at this, this is the timeline. So we're going to draft...

We have a, they've given us...they listened to us. We the members, and members of other Regional Advisory Committees spoke about our dissatisfaction about the short timeline, and so the U.S. Department of Education extended the timeline. So now we have between now and November 2nd to draft our report, and then the Liaison, Adrian, will get in on November 3rd.

Adrian is going to make it into one report, and then he will share it back to us for review, and then we're going to have one more meeting. What I've done is before... Sorry, Adrian, I just

want to say what I've done to make it easier. I've worked on a lot of collaborative writing assignments in my life and in my work life. So we have a folder that's called...it's in our Northeast and Islands folder.

I don't know if you can share your screen, Adrian, to show the folder so that we can show people where the writing is actually taking place? There's a report folder...

- I can do that.

- Thank you.

- Sorry, go ahead, which folder?

- It's 06 report, if you can show that folder so that everybody knows where we're looking, and where we're going to be writing. So it might look a little small, but you can move, make the video... You guys, I'm sure after three years of COVID know how to organize your Zoom screen.

If you could go...you see 06 report? You can go in there. And then in 02 report draft, what I did last...yesterday, was thinking about this meeting, there's... Sorry, I will put in the fifth priority.

I don't know why I didn't have five priorities. There will be a document for each priority, so priority one, mental health supports, etc. So each group, the lead writers will work in the different priorities just so that it's not overwhelming about where you're working. And then there's the other priorities, those emergent priorities, and then there's the introduction, data collection, findings and summary, etc.

So this is where we will be working collaboratively. Now I'm going to turn it over to Sarah and Adrian. What I don't understand is how we can communicate with each other while we're working.

- That was going to be...yes [crosstalk]

- And Carolyn, I will drop the link into the chat for the folder.

- So I understand that we'll be sending out some Doodle polls to the subcommittees following this meeting, to help set up some meeting time starting next week. I believe Sarah and I will be coordinating that. So that will at least help people organize and coordinate, and make those writing assignments that we can't do right now, like in this call.

- Also, if you want... Sorry, Adrian. If you want, the lead and the sub-lead, the two people, the partners, you guys can communicate together. That's no problem if you want to, like, brainstorm together via email. Just if you wouldn't mind, just for the record keeping of this Regional Advisory Committee, CC me, and I'll make sure to share it with the appropriate tracking folders, so to make sure we have all of you...

You know, we have to create a strong sense of transparency around all of this, which is great for this effort. So yeah, so feel free, you know, whoever is partnering together, and thank you for doing that, you know, get together via email, call... You know, as long as you are communicating with me on it, that would be wonderful. Does that sound good?

I thumbs up myself, so I'm hoping you guys all agree. Rob [crosstalk]

- Yeah, so can you say more about how we're going to know our email addresses to communicate with each other?

- There is a folder within the RAC folder, there is all of your emails, I believe. But if not, I will share it. I will send out an email following up with all the logistical details, you know? Some of you have asked me for the past RAC report, you know, the one they did, I don't know, many years ago, and we can share it to you. I mean, it's just an example.

But a lot of you thought, hey, I'll take a look and see what was in there... So I'll send a bunch of hopefully helpful... I know we send you a lot of emails, but this is going to be a good one. So check it and use some of the resources I'll share with you guys, so you have each other's emails, minimally. Okay? Sound good? Rob, did I answer...was that your question?

I'm sorry.

- No, I just have a super quick question. I know the turnaround is going to be a huge lift for Adrian, but will there be an opportunity for folks to review the parts of...like, the drafted parts before the 13th? Because that only leaves, like, 24, 48 hours turnaround before a final up or down vote. So like, the parts that you're not writing, but might want to give feedback on.

- Yes. So providing ongoing, like, feedback, like, as the report writing is going on [crosstalk]

- Yeah. Or like, you know, like when we hand it off on like, the 2nd or 3rd, is there a chance to look at it and give feedback before the 13th?

- Yes. Yeah, if I understand you, yeah, correctly... And also, like, if there are questions about, like, editing and making the report writing into one voice, like, feel free to reach out to me at any point so I can, like, help with that process. And like, from what I understand, once the report is turned into us on the 3rd, MSG will then take it through copy editing and graphics, and then there'll be some time to look at the report again to make any final comments before meeting number three.

Thank you.

- Danielle has her hand raised.

- [Danielle S.] Hi, everyone. This is Danielle Smith from the Department, and I just wanted to clarify for the timeline. Rob, in response to your question, if the subcommittees want to finish their writing before November 3rd, then you are absolutely welcome to do that. We

know that our team with Manhattan Strategy Group needs five business days to turn around the edits for the final report, so that's part of the timing that we're working in.

And then the full report needs to be discussed in the full committee forum, so we won't be able to do any full committee review and deliberation prior to the report being available and discussing it during the third meeting. So that's the purpose of the third meeting, is to review the report as a committee, and to deliberate on any recommendations that you have for edits to the report before it's finalized and submitted to the Department.

So we want to give you as much time as we can to review. We also wanted to maximize the time that subcommittees have to write. So if subcommittees finish their work sooner, we can get that turned around to you all sooner, before the third meeting. But you won't have access to the full report until it's all put together, other than what you can see in draft in the folders.

But that's when we'll be asking you all to review it, and prepare comments for the third meeting. So that can happen in the full committee, in the public forum, per our Federal Advisory Committee requirements. So thanks for your understanding about the process.

- Nelson, you have a question?

- I have a quick question. Just double checking, the parameters of the report, was that what was discussed at the beginning of the meeting, or the structure, how many pages, those details? Or is that going to be sent out?

Maybe I misunderstood that part.

- Oh yeah, I might have glossed over it. Yeah, I think that Adrian... This was an information-packed meeting, and I believe Adrian went over that at the beginning. It's also in that report folder, 06 Staff Report on our SharePoint, it has a report template. So that has the entire report template, and what we did was break it up into the different subcommittees, but in each document, it has kind of the outline of what we're supposed to do in that section.

- Okay. Thank you.

- So does that address your question?

- Yeah, yeah. Yeah, that's right.

- Yeah. I had the advantage of getting this information yesterday, so I was able to, you know, internalize it a little more. Other questions? Danielle Smith, do you have more that you want to add, or is your hand up from before? Donna, I'm going to prioritize you as a member, and Danielle Smith put her hand down. Yes...

- I keep still having the SharePoint access issue. I put in the email that's associated, and it says it's not there. They send me the code, all of that, and I'm still not able to gain access. Like, I've had to get assistance every time to gain access. So just wondering, is there something that can be done on your end so I don't have to keep doing that, particularly as I get into the writing mode?

- Hi, Donna. Yeah, we've noticed different things. So some suggestions, and we might have already talked about this, but going back to that original email that was sent to you, that seems to be getting people in. Also, if you have a personal email, sometimes what we've noticed is some organizations have created these strange blocks, you know? Like today I helped someone get in, but we had to use his Gmail, you know?

There's different...

- That's what I have. I have...

- Yeah, there's different strategies. But I will, I'll work with...

- So, I think... Wait, Sarah. Just to be clear, so Donna, I think what Sarah is suggesting is that at the very beginning of this, Sarah, I believe it was from Sarah, she shared the main Northeast and Islands folder with us, and that's actually what I use every time to get in. Because I can't get into, like, an individual document directly. So that's probably what you're referencing.

I don't know if... I've had that issue as well. Not the same issues as you perhaps. But I go back to the original email to access the main folder, and I get into the main folder, and then I'm able to access everything else. And I'd recommend that for everybody, and I think that that's what Sarah's saying.

- Okay. I'll try that again. All right. Thanks.

- Thanks, Donna. Keep me posted, though. I can help. You're not alone.

- Other questions before we adjourn?

- I do have one more comment.

- Yes.

- Like Nelson was asking earlier about, like, guidelines in terms of, like, parameters for, like, the recommendations in those sections, one, I mean this is not like a hard and fast rule, but one suggestion that I've heard is to try and limit each recommendation to, like, say within three pages so that it's not like you're writing a full-blown research report for each possible...for each of these priority areas.

But like, focus in on, you know, why is this a priority? What is the evidence? And what's the suggested technical assistance?

- Thank you.

- Yeah, that's good. Helpful, so that we don't go off on a huge writing project, and then you have to edit us down, or come back to us.

- Yeah. And as a researcher, I know myself, I have a tendency to, like, overwrite, and I think sometimes those parameters just help with the focusing and the writing process.

- Yes. So...yes, so then in the... There are three areas, outcomes and findings, priority needs and technical assistance recommendations, and if we write long, let's try to edit ourselves, to make it easier for everybody.

Okay, it's 12:29. Members, any final quick questions for Sarah and Adrian, or other technical assistance providers?

- All right, I guess it's time. I'll move to adjourn the meeting for the Regional Advisory Committee for the NEA RAC, and I ask members to concur.

- Concur.

- Before you concur, Sarah, what about meeting three?

- Oh, we sent out a Doodle poll, so...

- Please, everybody, complete your Doodle poll for meeting three. That includes me, a reminder.

- Yes. Yes.

- Okay, sorry to interrupt.

- We have a leaning, but we will send it out to you once we get the final numbers. So thank you all for filling that out. And if you haven't, as Lauren said, please do so. Anyway, so did I get my concurs? Concur, concur, concur...

- Concur.

- Well, thank you, everybody, for your time. Thank you, Lauren, for being an amazing chair, and Adrian, and all of your participation. It was a great discussion, and we really value your time in this. So thank you, again.

- Thank you. Goodbye.

- Goodbye, everybody.

- Take care.

- Thank you, everyone. Take care.