

**RAC-Appalachia Region
Meeting #2
October 13, 2023**

- [Muhammad] Good morning, everybody. My name is Muhammad Kara. I'm the Designated Federal Official for the Appalachia Regional Advisory Committee meeting. This meeting will come to order for the Regional Advisory Committee for the Appalachia region. This meeting is open to members of the public, and will be recorded for public record. At this time, I will take roll call.

When I state your name, please take yourself off of mute, and say "present." On my list first is Andrea Trio. Okay. Next is Amber Nichols?

- [Amber] Present.

- Thank you. Adam Cheeseman?

- [Adam] Present.

- Thank you. Andi Webb? Okay. Shannon Grimsley?

- [Shannon] Present.

- Thank you. Cora Coefield?

- [Cora] Present.

- Thank you. Brittany Oman?

- [Brittany] Present.

- Thank you. Shanae Mosley? Angela Hargrave?

- [Angela] Present.

- Rachel White?

- [Dr. White] Present.

- Thank you. Aimee McDonald?

- [Aimee] Present.

- Sabrina McElroy?

- [Sabrina] Present.

- Robbie Fletcher?

- [Dr. Fletcher] Present.

- Brandi Hitzelberger? Mike Hogg? Rebecca Roach?

- [Rebecca] Present.

- Thank you. And Heather Crabbe? Okay. Is there anybody that I did not call on, that is present? Awesome. So at this time, a quorum has been met, so we can proceed. I just wanted to acknowledge and ask members that if they would like to be recognized, just to use the Raise Hand function, and wait for the Chair to call upon you.

At this time, we'll provide an outline of the agenda. So first we'll review the assessment framework, we'll review data collected, we'll deliberate on our priorities, we'll discuss the assessment report, and we will make assignments. You can go to the objectives.

So by the end of this meeting, you should have reviewed additional input received from stakeholders, and public comments to finalize the assessment of the critical education needs of the region, and deliberated on the education needs assessments to finalize recommendations to be included in the final assessment report. And then finally, we will establish subcommittees to complete the assessment.

And at this time, I will pass it on to our Liaison.

- [Courtney] Thank you. Hello, everyone. My name is Courtney Leigh Beisel, and I'll be taking over as your Liaison for this important work. I'm excited to support you in the last phase of this process. As mentioned, you'll determine your 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 your deliberation process as these are key questions that you'll be addressing as you write your final report.

The first one is, why did the committee determine this as a priority for your region? And 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? And finally, in addition to the priorities and the data you've collected, there may have been other issues, concerns or issues that have come up that may not have risen to the level of a priority, but they're things that you think 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. And this is just provided as an example. The report will start with a general cover page and introduction, which will be followed by an executive summary.

There'll then be an introduction which will provide background information about the RAC itself, composition, and background information, with the intent and purpose of the report. Beginning in Section IV, you'll share what your committee was able to accomplish, and you'll provide an overview of the data you collected, what methods and outreach did you use from the regional education leadership? What comments did they provide?

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 anybody in your region to reflect on the education issues that they feel are important. Then you'll go into a summary of findings in Section V, with an overall summary, and an introduction to the priorities that you'll be voting on today.

And Section VI is where you'll start writing your RAC recommendations. The outline on the screen is just an example, to give you an idea of the overall structure. As you can see, under each heading you'll be discussing the outcomes and findings from the data collection that you were able to do over your past few weeks, what the needs look like, and then the recommendations for technical assistance provided by the Department.

Next slide, please. You'll then also have the opportunity to write to the priorities that didn't quite rise to the level of a recommended priority, but are issues the Department should be aware of, and taken into consideration in the next five years. This section will be followed by the conclusion, and an appendix that will include those details about the data collection that you worked on as a committee.

The goal of these reports is to be concise and compelling, being able to provide the justification for why your committee has determined these topics as priorities for your region, as well as the technical assistance needs the Department may be able to provide for your state. And as you deliberate, just keep this report structure and goal on the back of your mind and think about which priorities you would like to work on drafting for the final report.

And as Muhammad mentioned, we'll be voting on that at the conclusion of the call. So with that, I will turn it over to your Chairperson to lead the discussion, starting with the summary of the activities that you were able to accomplish over the last few weeks, and then leading into deliberation.

- Thank you, Ms. Beisel, and welcome aboard. We appreciate your work. And I'll go through a review of our needs-sensing activities. First of all, we started with an action plan that was developed by the Liaison and the DFO. The DFO and Liaison assigned tasks, and actions required, persons responsible, and a due date.

That action plan included tasks from superintendents, student voice, parental involvement, and in particular unhoused students, and also grandparents serving as parents, executive directors was one of the tasks, teacher shortage and recruitment was another one, employers, and then attendance and truancy.

As for superintendents, the actions required was identify potential individuals to interview to determine high-quality needs, and then summarize the findings in a Word document on SharePoint. And that was the original action plan, and Dr. White and I worked on that together, and we did some changes on that action. We did a survey, with results from superintendents and state directors, and we were pretty close to the due date on 10 and 5 on that, as getting that completed.

Student voice included locating secondary publicly available data, and summarizing findings in a Word document on SharePoint, and it was also asked to include any graphs and Excel documents that outlined that. And they included Adam Cheesman and Brittany Oman. Parental involvement. Again, the action required there was to locate secondary publicly available data, and summarize findings in a Word document on SharePoint, and again, include any Excel documents or graphs.

And that was Brandi Hitzelberger and Heather Crabbe. And then with executive directors, the action plan included to identify potential individuals to interview to determine high-priority needs, and then summarize the findings again in SharePoint. And that was Shannon Grimsley and Cora Coefield. The teacher shortage and recruitment was to locate secondary publicly available data, again, and summarize the findings in a Word document, Andrea Trio and Andi Webb.

As far as employers, the actions required was to locate secondary publicly available data, again, and summarize that, and that was assigned to Shanae Mosley, Rebecca Roach, and Mike Hogg. As for attendance and truancy, locate secondary publicly available data, again, and that included Angela Hargrave and Aimee McDonald.

In looking at the data collection boards that were put into each of these tasks, they were created with folders, and at this point, the data information from sources such as research articles, state reports, studies, raw data, public comment, input from the REL Governing Board, surveys, and etc., were collected by committee members.

Topics from these data information sources included everything from, and I'm going to have a large list here, chronic absenteeism, accountability requirements, employer needs, workforce development skills, employability skills, transition readiness, CTE pathways, achievement gaps, training programs, local labor market needs, grandfamilies and kinship care, which I'll admit grandfamilies was a new topic for me.

I understood...we didn't call it that, but we have a lot of grandparents raising their kids. Student voice, school climate, survey results of school climate surveys, teacher shortages, including recruiting and retaining teachers and others. The DFO and Liaison looked at priorities that emerged, and five priorities seem to be on our topic for discussion for today, and those include chronic absenteeism, employer workforce preparation needs, family engagement, student voice, teacher shortage and recruitment.

Again number one, chronic absenteeism. Number two, employer workforce preparation needs. Number three, family engagement. Number four, student voice. And number five, teacher shortage and recruitment. Of course, today will be used to decide if we, as a group, if we feel those are the five priorities, or we need to lessen those number of priorities. But again, this is where our discussion will start, with those five.

As far as an overview, I will make one comment, and I'll ask Mr. Kara or Ms. Beisel if they'd like to make a comment, too. When I looked at the information, for example teacher recruitment and retention, or teacher shortage was mentioned by the REL Governing Board input, the RAC Governor and state officials input, and over 90% of the superintendents that Dr.

White and I, and state directors that we surveyed also made this a major concern. So as far as an overview, or maybe some high-level points, is there anything, Mr. Kara, that you'd like to add, or Ms. Beisel?

- None from me.

- Ms. Beisel?

- None from me either.

- Great. All right, so at this point, once we've gone through this portion of looking at what the five priorities are at this point, we need to start talking about those priorities. At this point, the Liaison will be taking notes and share their screen, and then I'll ask each of...the question I'll be asking you is who is nominating a priority to discuss?

And the questions that we should answer is why it should or should not be a priority, an explanation to the Department on why this is a priority, and ideas on types of support that can be provided to the Department on how to provide technical support. So that being said, would anyone like to nominate one of those priorities for the first one to be discussed?

- I'll nominate teacher retention and recruitment as a priority.

- Thank you, Dr. White. And then please move forward if you have any comments why you feel that may be a priority. Or does anyone else, for that matter?

- I would just say amongst superintendents, the part that I led with you, Dr. Fletcher, that was, I think, probably the most common education needs that superintendents indicated, as well as one of their top educational challenges. And I'll just note that not all of them said that they need necessarily funding.

A lot of them did say funding, that's a big part of it. But folks also saw it more as sort of a broad issue that needs to be addressed, sort of coming at it from a lot of different angles.

- And I'll add to what Dr. White said. If you look at input from the REL Governing Boards from Appalachia, the very first thing was mentioned was teacher recruitment and retention. If you look at our superintendent data, funding wasn't always the top priority, or as long as a supporting...to help with that support, but it was always mentioned.

It seemed like it was mentioned quite often. Again, over 90% of the superintendents that were asked mentioned teacher retention and recruitment. I do believe also the information that we had from the Executive Officer, one of the mentions that they had was addressing the teacher and school employee shortage crisis, and it says, "The number one indicator of a child's educational success is his or her teacher. Yet we have teacher and school employee vacancies well into the school year that forces schools to scramble to find fillers and long-term subs."

Again, that's from our from our Governor, or our state school officials. And in particular, it was mentioned about Kentucky, and one of the contributing factors that was mentioned by this individual was that Kentucky ranks number 40 in average pay, and number 44 in average teacher pay among all the states, and number 48 in support personnel pay in the country.

So, our information from our governor's office, and/or CC, CSSO came from Kentucky, and they did mention pay as a supporting factor for our shortage crisis. Would anyone like to add to the teacher shortage or retention?

Ms. Roach?

- I would just like to add my own observations. In higher education and talking to other professors at other universities that are part of the teacher pipeline, we have seen a marked decrease in the number of students who are majoring in education.

And so that is definitely going to have an impact on the pipeline.

- Andi Webb...

- [Dr. Webb] Good morning. I worked on this portion, and some of our data is from prior to the pandemic, and we were already, as we all know, we were already struggling with the teacher shortage and recruitment, it's just amplified since then.

So it definitely does need to be a priority.

- Committee member Webb, was it... Am I correct in saying I think there was... Did you include research, your own research into some of our needs-sensing activities? Was that correct?

- You are correct, Dr. Fletcher. That was my dissertation research.

- Thank you for that.

- Thank you.

- And also, thank you too, Committee member Roach. Any others that would like to add about the teacher recruitment and/or shortage? Mr. Cheeseman...

- Thank you, Dr.

Fletcher. Just from West Virginia's viewpoint, we certainly feel like teacher retention and shortage needs to be probably the top priority, you know, from our state. I was mentioning it earlier, not only are we seeing in our 55 districts teacher shortage, but even service personnel, substitute personnel, just in general a lack of bodies.

And while that's concerning to... You know, obviously we have to have bodies to operate, to supervise, another layer to that is, you know, districts are getting to the place we've got to be very careful as to who we hire, you know?

And so we've got to pay attention to the quality of...we've got to do our background checks, and all those types of things. And so I really think that this, at least from our perspective, I've talked with our state superintendent, I've talked with all the city, my colleagues, this is an area that's a dire need in our state.

So I would say, yes, this needs to be a top priority for this committee. Thank you.

- I would agree. Thank you. Thank you, sir. Ms. Shannon Grimsley?

- Yes, sir, Mr. Chair. Thank you. I'm so glad that Mr. Cheeseman brought up the support staffing issue as well, because it's bigger than just the teacher pipeline. We're looking at specifically bus drivers is a huge area of need and in our region as well, and that keeps coming up as a major priority among the groups we spoke with.

So much so that it's really causing havoc with the disruption of the school day, with the number of double-runs that are being...that are having to be put in place, and kids are on the bus way too long, which is a safety issue and behavior issue as well. So if we can include that, because there's not much at the regional or state level that can be done about some of the root causes of that that we've looked into, but I guess we can go into that with rationale.

But it will likely take, if there was a streamlined process for bus driver training to be done, that has to be done at the federal level.

- Would anyone like to add why this should be a priority? I think we provide some explanation, if we could scroll up, some rationale for why this is a priority.

Would anyone else like to... If we could scroll up to the next question, please? I'm sorry, down. Thank you. Any more rationale why this is a priority? And what type of evidence do you have? I think...Ms.

Webb?

- Well, I don't have evidence to share right now as far as the research to give, but it is the number one indicator of student achievement, is having a highly effective, highly qualified teacher in the classroom.

And we can submit evidence really quickly if we need to.

- I'll add to this, as far as I agree wholeheartedly about the teacher, high-quality teacher in the classroom, highly effective teacher in the classroom, because if you don't have a... I think some of the research I've read is if you have I'll say a subpar teacher one year, it'll take you two years, it takes that student two years to actually overcome the effects of having a subpar teacher one year.

Also, to add to the support staff, in a lot of conversations I've had with superintendents, it's really hard to compete with industry. For example, bus drivers who have CDLs can go work at a much higher pay scale at Amazon or other areas. We have in Kentucky, like in Hardin County, which is on the other end of the state, the Ford company is moving in and taking a lot of her support staff as a superintendent.

The same thing for Amazon in Northern Kentucky. Again, we're glad to have those businesses in industry, but just for our... A lot of times the pay, and what's available for our support staff is an obstacle for us. So again, I think that would be some evidence that we could really find quickly on our support staff.

Ms. Roach...

- Thank you, Dr. Fletcher. Another consideration is teacher shortages specifically in small rural school districts. Some of the larger urban school districts in Kentucky have increased their starting salary for teachers right out of college.

For example, Fayette County Schools pays \$50,000 for a first-year teacher right out of college. Smaller rural school districts cannot compete with that. And so we are beginning, in Kentucky, to see a drain from smaller rural school districts that are in close proximity to the larger school districts that can pay more.

In terms of...someone mentioned teacher quality. We have to keep in mind because of the...I'm assuming because of the teacher shortage, expectations on the Praxis scores to enter the teacher education program in Kentucky, those cutoff scores were lowered.

The same thing for the Praxis, what we call the Praxis II, to get your teaching certificate, the cutoff scores have been lowered, too. So the teaching... Correlation is not the same as causation, but we might be able to make an assumption that with the teacher shortage, we may lower expectations in teacher quality.

Thank you.

- And I'll add to Ms. Roach's comment, I think there's even research, even though I'm from Kentucky, some of the research or some of the information that we took in from Tennessee was talking about the discrepancy of urban districts pay versus rural was also an issue. Now, we're coming to a close, and I see Ms.

Coefield, I think you have your hand up, if you'd like to make a comment, please?

- Yes. One of the things that I've noticed across the Central Virginia area is not necessarily an effort to lower the quality of expectation, but to look at how do we kind of make some adjustments to that, looking at alternative pathways to licensure.

There is a consistent working with higher education organizations, there appears to be teachers who are teachers of record, paraprofessionals that are seeking additional endorsements as far as some of those hard to staff areas.

And so divisions have been supporting in that capacity, to kind of also retain staff, as opposed to just having to recruit staff. So looking at how they can support personnel in being dual-endorsed, and the non-traditional pathway to licensure is one of the things that has definitely been coming across.

- To add to Ms. Coefield, I think Kentucky now offers nine different options, or nine different pathways for certification for teachers. So, you know, that's something our state legislators tackled, is trying to open up that pathway. But we are getting some teachers that are not going through the traditional training for pedagogy, and so there's a lot of effort that has to be done by the school district to train these teachers.

Since we are at a close here, let's have one other comment, and then we'll move forward. I think, Ms. Webb, I think you have your hand up? Do you have an additional comment?

- Yes. Since we were talking previously about evidence, I was thinking there's significant evidence with National Board Certification research that can back up why a highly qualified, highly effective teacher needs to be in the classroom, particularly National Board Certified teachers, and that could be an idea for how to prioritize, or how to address the priority. I'm not sure about the other states, but Virginia, for instance, funds National Board Certified certified teachers who work with students 50%, minimally 50% of the time, and there are other qualifiers.

If we could focus on providing funding for all National Board Certified Teachers, and including incentives to have NBCTs work in rural districts, that's definitely a way that we could help improve the teacher pipeline, or getting highly effective teachers in the classroom.

- Dr. Coefield, do you have your hand still up? Is there anything you'd like to add before we move on?

- No, sir. My error. Thank you.

- Oh, not a problem. Not a problem at all. At this point, I think there are some areas where we can glean some technical assistance activities from what's been mentioned so far, and so I think for the sake of time, Mr. Kara, would you think we need to move on to the second topic? Or do you feel like we need to address this a little bit more with technical assistance activities?

- I would prefer if you all would address the technical assistance activities. That's something we would use for our grants and whatnot. So if you all could take...just make it relatively quick, or quickly, and then vote on this priority, and then we can move on.

- Okay. So with that being said, any... If we go back and look at some of the information, how may it be addressed with technical assistance activities? Ms. Grimsley...

- Yes, sir. Thank you. A lot of the feedback that we've been getting for addressing some of this is a heavy and hardy investment, of course, not just in salaries, but benefits and fringe benefits for teachers.

Retirement system, health benefits, student loan forgiveness, relocation bonuses, retention bonuses, things like that, that there could be additional support given for those items that we already know that some of the rural districts, like a previous panelist said, have a very difficult time.

Even when the threshold for salaries are mitigated by a state distribution, it still is unequal because the rural district still cannot compete with the amount of funding they receive. So it'd be nice to have a more equalized investment in those other fringe benefits that are very important to teachers.

- Thank you very much, Ms. Grimsley. I think if you look in the chat, we also have Ms. Webb talked about providing funding for states to pay for National Board-Certified Teachers, stipends in each state, particularly in rural areas. And then also, too, Dr.

White brought out something from our research is possibly looking at superintendents did mention affordable housing for teachers was an issue. So is there some type of support that we could provide, or grant for affordable housing for teachers? Any other ideas on technical assistance? Ms.

Roach...

- Thank you, Dr. Fletcher. I think grants to help pay for students' educations. Because so many of our students go into debt, and when they go...on their educations, higher educations. And when they go to teach in a small rural school, it's very difficult to pay those off. I do agree with housing.

We have housing shortages in our rural areas. I think superintendents also need technical assistance in marketing their place, that I think sometimes superintendents feel that there's a deficit in their communities, when there are assets in their communities that they need help marketing.

- That's a great point. Great point.

- Thank you.

- Ms. Grimsley also put in separate licensing requirements for CDL, so that bus drivers only... rather they could do this, as opposed to the full VDOT training. I think that's a great point. And Ms. Webb also talked about, I think she affirmed looking at student loan forgiveness for people that are currently teachers.

Ms. Oman, I see your hand is up.

- I wanted to second what Andi Webb was saying. Just as a teacher on this panel who has been working for almost 10 years, I understand the incentive to provide that loan forgiveness for new teachers, but some sort of incentive, too, for those that are still working in the field. Because there are many of us who have come to the 10 or 15-year point, and are deciding should we continue in education?

Or sort of like you were saying, should we look to Amazon, should we look to EdTech? Can I sustain this? I have a passion for this, but I do have to pay off the student loan. So if there was some kind of loan forgiveness, or grant opportunity that could keep us in the classroom, that's where we want to be. So not only focusing on those new teachers, but also those veteran teachers who want to stay teaching, but need to make sure there's competitive, you know, monetary stipends or other availabilities to keep us in the classroom with that expertise that we've already gained over those years.

- Thank you so much, Ms. Oman. And again, Dr. Webb has put in here that she fully concurs with your points. Okay, at this point, are all minds cleared on potential other technical assistance activities? If so, do we need to, Mr.

Kara, do we need to vote on these individually, or do we go through all five?

- You would vote on them individually.

- Okay. So members, as I call for a 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 Appalachian RAC to include teacher shortage, and let's see, what was the actual heading there, teacher shortage and retention, as one of our priorities.

Okay. Again, please use your Raise Hand feature. It would appear...everyone's taken a vote. I think...Ms.

Boswell, are you taking a screenshot of this?

- [Anne] Screenshot taken.

- Okay. And I assume that it will be included as one of our priorities.

- Yes, it passed.

- Okay. Thank you. So teacher retention and recruitment has been included as one of our priorities. Would anyone like to nominate a second priority for discussion?

- Yes. This is Angela Hargrave. I'd like to nominate chronic absenteeism as a priority.

- Ms. Hargrave, thank you for that nomination. And I'll open the floor, why or why not should this be a priority?

- And I'll just add that chronic absenteeism, as we know, research has shown, is a very strong indicator of student success. Students who miss 10% or more of the school year are at risk for dropping out or not completing high school on time, and so we know that this is a very strong indicator of student success, and therefore should be a priority.

- Okay. Thank you, ma'am. Dr. Webb, I see you have your hand up?

- That was an error. My apologies.

- Okay. Dr. White, you have your hand up.

- [inaudible] Sorry.

- Ms. Hargrave, is there anything you'd like to add?

- Yes. Just that as far as why this should be a priority, just knowing that this is an issue that we see across the region, and even in other parts of the country, specifically heightened since the pandemic, where we've had students who have...some have not returned to school, or have missed tremendous amounts of school, and fallen behind.

And this has been an issue, like I said, in large numbers of districts across the region. We saw where administrators indicated that they have struggled to maintain pre-pandemic attendance levels for students and are still struggling to try to address the issue of chronic absenteeism.

- To add to that, Ms. Hargrave, I think one of the articles that was included in one of our data collection boards stated that in 2019, there are 24% of 4th-graders across the nation that were chronically absent.

That spiked to 36% in 2022. So again, 24% is appalling, 36% is just unacceptable. So at this point, in some of the data that's been supplied, there's definitely been an uptick since post-pandemic.

And conversations with superintendents in Kentucky, our attendance rates, for example in Lawrence County alone, has dropped, the overall attendance rate has dropped 3% since pre-pandemic numbers. And that's a pretty common percentage across our state. So again, absenteeism in general, but definitely chronic absenteeism is a problem. Dr.

Roach, I think you're next.

- Thank you. Just this past week, National Public Radio reported on a study that found that school absenteeism rate is doubled what it was before COVID. So that's... We're going to have to address this. It's too huge.

Thank you.

- Okay. And Ms. Hargrave?

- Yes. So I think the other thing that I wanted to point out is that there are some... When we looked at the root causes of chronic absenteeism, or feedback that we've heard from parents and other community members, some of the issues are around housing insecurities, as well as transportation.

I think transportation was even mentioned earlier, when talking about bus drivers and things like that. But the lack of transportation, or adequate transportation to school for some students has been indicated as a reason for the high number of absenteeisms across the region.

- Well, and to add along with this, again, some of the research that has been supplied said more than 70% of U.S. public schools saw an uptick in chronic absenteeism relative to the start of the pandemic.

And then to add to that, the average test scores of students that fell in this category overall has dropped by five points in reading, and seven points in math nationwide. So chronic absenteeism contributes, you know? There's a causal effect there. Okay.

Ms. McElroy has, "Frequent absences not only means less instruction, but also missed opportunities for learning loss interventions." Absolutely. I think that's one of the things that we can include for a rationale for why this is a priority, absolutely. And Dr.

Webb has also included some links for chronic absenteeism from the Learning Policy Institute in the chat box. Okay, anything anybody would like to add as far as for the rationale of why this is a priority? Ms. Hargrave, I see your hand up.

- Oh, that's my error. I just didn't take it down.

- Okay. Thank you very much. Ms. Grimsley?

- Yes, sir. I think this definitely needs to be a priority, and in our groups that we were speaking with, it's a difficult one. So it should be a priority because we need more creative, innovative solutions for this, because there's a disconnect between what's in the locus of control with the school systems that are dealing with it, and the amount of influence they have over chronic absenteeism.

We have some teeth for truancy issues, but chronic absenteeism is a tougher nut to crack, and especially in a post-COVID landscape. So having a little bit of a shift of accountability as well, because there's a lot more on the outside that influences this, that schools really don't have too much control over, yet schools are bearing the brunt of the accountability measures for it, without the teeth to affect it the way it needs to be in those cases.

- Others? I'll add one more thing. I do believe this needs to be a priority, and possibly something that could be as far as technical assistance is we have some...we have issues in Kentucky with you can find strong support in some court systems, but possibly not in other court systems.

So for example, depending on your region, you may have some Family Court or others that will that will push attendance, and help us out tremendously, whereas others in Kentucky may or may not. So maybe some more looking at policy, looking at statute and code as it relates to attendance.

Ms. McDonald?

- I just wanted to speak to the point that you just made. That's the case in our district. So there is not enough funding for the working staff that needs to make connections with this family. For example, our school social workers, even our CPS workers, the people who should be reaching out to families and finding out why they are absent, we don't have the staffing to make those connections, and we don't have the legal support to follow through.

- Great point. Thank you for that, Ms. McDonald. Also too, I'd like to mention what Dr. Roach put into the chat. "Research shows that school absences take a toll on grades and performance on standardized tests. And beyond test scores, irregular attendance can be a predictor of high school dropout."

And then she has some great comments on there, and there is, "Students who are chronically absent are at a higher risk for these adverse outcomes." That's from a White House blog on September 13th, 2023. Copy and paste, that's great. I think that's a great way to put that in there. Ms. McDonald, is there something you'd like to add?

- Nope, sorry.

- That's okay. I often leave my hand up, too, on these. All right, anything as far as why this should be a priority, why not? Or maybe even technical assistance activities, anything that anyone would like to add? Ms. McDonald?

- This one's real. I was going to say this disproportionately affects our most vulnerable populations. For example, our multilingual learners, and our students that live in lower socio-economic areas, due to the transportation issues that were mentioned earlier.

And for our multilingual learners, the language barrier.

- Great point. Thank you so much for that. Ms. McDonald, I see your hand up again?

- I'm going to get better at it.

- That's okay. Quite all right. Any others? Anything anyone would like to add on this topic? Okay. All minds are clear? Okay.

At this time, members, I call the vote. Please use the Raise Hand function so we can call the vote and take a screenshot for the record. I call for a vote for the Appalachian RAC to include chronic absenteeism as one of our priorities. Ms.

Beisel, did you get a screenshot? Sorry, Ms. Beisel.

- [crosstalk] screenshot? Okay.

- It takes about, like, 15 to 30 seconds.

- Screenshot taken. I'm sorry, I didn't unmute myself when I said that.

- Oh, I apologize. It looks by the hands that were shown that this will be also one of our priorities that will be listed. Okay... Let me lower my hand. Would someone like to nominate another priority for discussion? Ms.

Oman?

- Sorry, that was from before. My apologies.

- Okay. Dr. White?

- I would like to nominate mental health for both students, and educators.

- We have a nomination for mental health. Would anyone like to add why this should be a priority of our group, or why it should not either? It looks like mental health was not one of the ones that we had listed at this point. Mr.

Kara, as far as at this point, that wasn't one of our priorities, but it has been nominated for discussion. Should we include this as a possible topic to include? Or should we start with a new priority list for this?

- It's totally up to the committee itself. So I know in the report you can talk about and you can write about other aspects that weren't specifically the priorities that you all did research about. But again, I leave it up to the discretion of the committee to form and talk about and deliberate on this priority, or additional priority.

- Okay. Well, we do have a motion to discuss mental health, and let's take that time to do this. Mr. Cheeseman...

- Thank you, Dr. Fletcher. I want to support Dr. White's recommendation here for mental health. You know, something that I can speak very clear to Doddridge County schools, in 2016, we started a holistic child, what we call a Holistic Child Department, and we have vowed to take care of our students social, emotional, and physical needs, and by doing that, we have seen our achievement scores rise.

Ten years ago, Doddridge County schools was 53rd out of 55 districts in overall academic achievement. We've now been in the top 10 the last five years, and we were actually 3rd last year. So we went from 53rd to 3rd, and everybody asked, why was that? And we have great teachers, and you know, I believe that, and our kids are great, but I honestly attribute it to the attention that we have given our students toward their mental health.

You take care of a child's social and emotional well-being, then the intellectual will come. And I think we are an example of that. And just being in rural Appalachia and West Virginia, seeing the situations that our students...and environments that they're living in and they come from, they need us.

They need us now more than ever to take care of their well-being. And I know there's always this conversation that says that the school system is not the parent and all this other stuff, and you know, I just view it like we are called to be educators, we're called to serve, we're called to love kids.

And so I'm very passionate about this, and I believe it is our duty and it is our calling to make sure these kids are taken care of for at least the eight hours that we have them, you know, throughout the day. So I could speak probably much more to it, but I did just want to speak in support of this nomination.

Thank you.

- Mr. Cheeseman, thank you for adding that support, and also for the rationale. Dr. White, it's your turn. What would you like to add?

- Yeah, I was just going to add that I think this is something that intersects with the prior two things we were talking about in terms of teacher recruitment and retention, as well as student absenteeism. There was a report that just came out last week that showed that an increasing proportion of students that are absent at school are absent for reasons other than physical illness, or other things they...

A decent proportion said that they were absent because of anxiety, sadness, or depression. And so I think I just wanted to mention the intersectionalities that this has with absenteeism, as well as the piece about teacher mental and emotional well-being, and the impact that that can have on teacher recruitment and retention.

- I think Dr. Coefield has also supported that, those thoughts, as she put into the chat, and talked about how that could also contribute to teacher retention as well. Okay, Ms. McDonald? Or Ms. McDonald...I apologize.

- No, no worries. I just wanted to agree with what, was it Cheeseman was saying about West Virginia and their program is the same for Jefferson County, and our schools. In some of our schools, we implemented the Compassionate Schools Program that focuses on mental health, and we saw student growth and achievement improve. And then also, we were named a National School of Character, which focuses on wellness, student and teacher, and it's really helped our student achievement, and our family engagement.

- Okay, Dr. Roach has also added a data point in here. "More than 75% of schools surveyed in the spring said that their teachers and staff had voiced concerns about student depression, anxiety, trauma, according to federal data, and also nearly as many schools cited a jump in the number of students seeking mental health services," and this is from "The Washington Post," December 5th, 2022.

Thank you for that. Ms. Hitzelberger has also put in that she feels like this is a very important topic also that's being discussed. So we have why and rationale. Is there any more topics as far as the why and rationale for this to be added, and any other data that anyone would like to add, or any other discussion before we look at...

Or including technical assistance, if you'd like? Dr. Roach...

- I'm also going to copy and paste some data from a report that was from the American Psychological Association, that says children's mental health is in crisis, and it was in 2022. So that might also help out with the rationale.

- Thank you, Dr. Roach. Let's focus on technical assistance, if you wouldn't mind. Dr. Roach, you have something to add?

- I do, I think schools need more training, they need more professional development. Teachers need more professional development, school bus drivers need more training, school counselors need more assistance. So we really need more help.

- And to add to that funding for counselors within our schools. I think that, you know, possibly looking at decreasing the ratio of counselor to student in Kentucky in particular. So looking at those type of...having more support when it comes to mental health is very important.

As just a little bit about Lawrence County, we have two organizations that help us with our mental health needs of our students and our staff, and they're in our buildings every single day. I mean, two different companies are struggling to cover all of the mental health needs of our students and our staff.

So Dr. White, thank you for mentioning that, and I really appreciate your addition to that. Dr. Roach, you have your hand up still?

- I forgot to put it back down. Thank you, Dr. Fletcher.

- Yes, ma'am. Dr. White, please add.

- I was just going to add, beyond just counselors, social workers, and school psychologists as well should be a priority, recruiting and having the funds to have those personnel in schools. And then, you know, I don't know that this was mentioned as much in some of the data, but I think two groups of folks are often not mentioned in this, and these are principals and district administrators, and their mental health.

And so I think we see them oftentimes trying to take care of the mental health of their students and teachers, and we're not really checking in on their mental health. So I would just recommend that this be inclusive of all school district employees.

- Okay, Dr. Roach has also included some research from the American Psychological Association in the chat. Dr. Webb, you have a comment. If you wouldn't mind to clarify, when you talk about, "We can't only say staff needs more training..."

Can you clarify on that, please?

- Yes. Thank you, Dr. Fletcher. I actually work in professional learning in Virginia, and part of the issue that we are seeing is that during, say for instance in service time prior to students coming back to school, teachers are bombarded with more trainings, more trainings, more trainings, and there's very little collaboration from different offices, different departments, with VDOE, which is the Virginia Department of Education.

And all of these things, and the lack of collaboration trickles down to...it affects the teachers during the time that they need to be spending getting to know their students, and getting to know their students families, which is all a part of the SEL that we're talking about. So while I do agree that we may need more SEL training, I think we need to be very careful in how we say we need more PD, we need more PD, because that trickles down to districts that are rolling out new programs, new initiatives, all of those things require training.

We've just recently compiled a roster, because there was not one from VDOE, or from the Division to list all of the compliance trainings outside of professional development. We're talking bloodborne pathogens, sexual harassment trainings, all of those things, and it is unrealistic the amount of time that all of these trainings take.

So when we're discussing SEL for students and for teachers, we have to think of school calendars, and how these federal and state mandates are rolled out to districts, and it all comes back to directly affecting the teachers and the students. Thank you, Dr.

Fletcher.

- Thank you, Dr. Webb. And just a thought. I'm not sure if this is where this would go, and maybe Dr. White, or maybe even Dr. Roach could answer this better than I can. Maybe something in looking at teacher preparatory programs, and what type of mental health trainings, what type of support that they have, so that might be something to look at as far as mental health trainings as part of teacher prep programs.

Would anyone like to add to that? Dr. White, I see you shaking your head. What are your thoughts on that?

- Yeah, I think that has to be part of this conversation. But I would just echo the comments that were just made, that teacher preparation programs are also being charged by state policies, state laws to implement more and more of these sort of individual modules.

And so I think we want to think about this from a holistic standpoint, as opposed to just having, you know, one-offs here and there around mental health or trauma-informed instruction, is how can we weave and integrate this content throughout all of teacher prep or principal preparation programs.

- Thank you so much. And again, Dr. Webb has put into the chat talking about school calendars to be considered. Thank you for adding that, Dr. Webb. And also, Mr. Cheeseman has a great comment about in support of the technical assistance.

In his area, they've added a county mental health coordinator, a mental health specialist, and school social worker, and behavior interventionist to make up the Holistic Child Development. And it's a huge asset for his district, so great for that. Dr.

Roach has mentioned, "I agree that trauma-informed instruction needs to be integrated into programs." That's a great point. Also, Ms. Hitzelberger...

- [Brandi] Hi, this is Brandi speaking. I just wanted to say that at my son's school that he went to last year, you know, we have counselors, and we had psychologists, but they spent all their time doing five other jobs and didn't have the time to devote to doing the jobs that you thought that a counselor or a school psychologist would be doing.

And so it would be nice, like you said, to provide more funding to add...I don't know, an extra counselor or school psych so that they can, I guess, do what you think they would be doing. And then we did get a school social worker the last year that my son was there, but she was being paid before with ESSER funds, so when those run out, we will lose her.

So it's just really sad that a school like he went to, that really needs somebody like that is going to lose the things that they need because ESSER funds are going to run out.

- And before I go on, is it Ms. Hitzelberger or Ms. Hitzelberger?

- Hitzelberger.

- Hitzelberger, thank you so much. And to add to what Ms. Hitzelberger said, even in our own district, we hired people to help with special education, and resource teachers for special education to take chairperson duties away from counselors, to give them more time to be counselors. So that is a problem in Kentucky. Okay, we are running a little short on time, so I'm going to ask, let me find it 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 for a vote for the mental health of not only students, but also staff members, for a vote for the Appalachian RAC, to be included in our priorities. Please raise your hand if you're in favor. Okay. Ms. Beisel, do we have a screenshot?

- Screenshot taken.

- Thank you so much. And this will be included as one of the Appalachian RAC priorities. All right, would anyone like to nominate another priority for consideration? We are up to three at this point. Would anyone like to nominate another priority? Dr.

Coefield, I see your hand up. Would you like to nominate a priority?

- I did not lower my hand, but perhaps we could talk about family engagement.

- Sure. Dr. Coefield would like to nominate family engagement as one of our priorities. That was one of the ones that we mentioned. Would anyone like to add why or why not this should be a priority? And then the rationale.

Dr. Coefield, would you like to add, be our first to add why this should be a priority?

- Sure. Listening to the discussion in the previous priority, as we talk about social and emotional learning, as we talk about the trauma and the experience of experiences looking at recruiting and retaining personnel, a part of that is engaging our families, engaging the families within the communities, having a better understanding of their needs, and how they can become an integral part of what's happening regarding the desired outcomes for students.

So just looking at this as an opportunity to really engage so that we can meet the needs of the whole student, as well as the whole school community, and how do we do that with making this a priority that we put some support behind?

- Thank you, Dr. Coefield. Any others? I will add, we had...I think it was Ms. Hitzelberger added some research in one of our folders, and one of the pieces of data was according to the most recent census, more than 58,000 Kentucky kids live with their grandparents.

And again, along the lines of kinship care, and so 13,751 of these children live in Kentucky 5, which encompasses most of the Appalachian region. And then, some anecdotal data was from Family Resource Centers, which says, "Between 40% to 80% of children are being raised by relatives in some counties."

- And Dr. Fletcher... Oh, I'm sorry if I'm jumping ahead.

- Absolutely, please go ahead.

- And to add to that, when we look at family engagement, and we are looking at blending and braiding funding, and how we support initiatives and provide technical assistance, when we're looking at families understanding census reports, and understanding how to qualify for resources, and how additional funding flows into our divisions and flows into our states, that again is an opportunity for some education on the other side of making sure that the resources are available for students and personnel.

- Thank you, Dr. Coefield. Dr. Roach?

- My dissertation research was on grandfamilies, and how they engage with school principals, and there is extensive research on the impact of family and community engagement on school success. So it would be really easy to find in the report.

- Well, Ms. McElroy has included too that "Family engagement in schools contributes to positive student outcomes, including improved child and student achievement, decreased disciplinary issues, and improved parent-teacher and teacher-student relationships." So to support that, there's...again, Dr. Roach, thank you for pointing out there's a lot of research there.

And also, thank you for that comment, Ms. McElroy. Dr. Coefield, I see your hand. Do you have something to add, please?

- I will have to do better at multi-tasking and lowering my hand when I'm done.

- Thank you, Dr. Coefield. Is there anything that anyone would like to add for why or why not this should be a priority? And then also, rationale for why this should be a priority. How about possibilities for adding...for anything that may be addressed through technical assistance?

Ms.

McDonald?

- Yes, I'm the only family ambassador in JCPS, which means I'm the only person who my entire job is dedicated to family engagement. The FRC, which is the Family Resource Coordinator, they are not able to do it on their own, and they're also not able to do as many home visits.

So we need funding for training for people to do home visits. We need funding so that there are other people in the building who can take on family engagement. As someone mentioned before, a lot of schools take on family engagement through NCFL, Prichard Committee, but they're doing the same things as counselors. They have so many other roles that it's not really a priority as...it's not as focused as it should be on the main priority, which is getting to know the families.

- Thank you for that. Okay. Are there any other...? Ms. Hitzelberger?

- This is Brandi speaking. I kind of want to go back to even, like, the mental health piece, because being in and out of foster care and kinship care, being raised by grandparents, just, you know, takes a toll on the child and the family, and I think this is just a big piece to think about, right?

It takes a toll on their education, and being there every day, just making...keeping in touch with the family, keeping in touch with the child to check in, to see how they're doing. They're not at school one day, they're back and forth from home maybe... I don't know, I just think it probably plays a big role in what's going on in their lives.

- Thank you, Ms. Hitzelberger. Dr. Coefield has also put in that, "Community partnerships with school divisions could provide technical assistance," so that's a possibility there. Dr. Roach has added into the chat, "Working with the National Association for Family, Schools, and Community Engagement, and preparing teacher candidates in preparatory programs to engage with families."

That's an excellent point, when we come back and talk about teacher prep programs, and how that can be implemented into those. Thank you so much for that, Dr. Roach. Any other comments that refer to our three questions? Oh, and also Ms.

Hitzelberger put in that the Kentucky Youth Advocate was a great resource for her. Questions, comments, or anything anyone would like to add? Or are all minds clear? Seeing no other hands up, as I call for a vote, please use the Raise Hand function so we can accurately call the vote and take a screenshot for the region.

I call for a vote for the Appalachian Regional Advisory Committee to include family engagement as a priority. Can we see a show of hands, please? Has everyone voted?

- Screenshot taken.

- Thank you, Ms. Beisel, so much. Okay, would anyone like to nominate another priority? We're up to four, and we're trying to limit this to five. Would anyone like to nominate another priority?

Dr. Webb?

- Apparently, we are all not good with lowering our hands. I'm sorry.

- That's okay. Thank you, Dr. Webb. Dr. Coefield? Okay. Are there any other nominations?

Ms. Oman?

- It looks like we haven't addressed employer workforce preparation and needs. Is that correct?

I'll go ahead and nominate that. Or...Oh, I changed my mind. I didn't realize we still had student voice. I would like to nominate student voice, especially concerning, you know, our middle schoolers and high schoolers talking about mental health, all of that. I'd like to have a, in the time that we have, some discussion regarding that. Elementary school voice as well, but our middle and high school, our adolescents especially, knowing what they're dealing with with their mental health, I think it'd be beneficial to talk through that.

- So we do have two. We have student voice, and we also have the employment. Mr. Kara, were you going to say something? I'm sorry...

- Yeah, sorry. I'm just going to interrupt real quick. I know we're scheduled to end at 12:30. However, since we started 10 minutes late, we can go over 10 minutes. But if we can try to wrap this priority, and the other priority that you all want to talk about, and then we also have to do voting for a subcommittee. So just being cognizant within time to wrap everything up within the next 15 minutes, if possible, so if we can be as concise as possible in regard to why it needs to be a priority, and then our technical assistance side, that would be great.

Thank you.

- Okay, that makes this a little tricky, because we have two priorities left, you know? And I think we need to limit it to five. That's what we've been tasked with. So I'm going to ask the group to discuss both priorities, and if you want to add priority needs for either of the two, you're welcome to do that. Dr.

Roach, you have your hand up.

- Yes, I was on the committee for employers, and we did talk about college and career readiness skills. Some of the research showed that...and we recommended that we continue to set an emphasis on those college and career readiness skills that include academic

knowledge, technical expertise, those employability skills that are sometimes called soft skills, effective relationships, applied knowledge, workplace skills.

So we said that that is still a need in Appalachia, because according to the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, there's still a shortage of skilled workers. And it's needed for economic prosperity. So that's something that our committee discussed. Now, whether or not we want to make that a priority, that would be up to the committee.

- Okay, well, I'm still leaving the floor open for either priority, potential priority. Is there anything that anyone would like to add to either of the two priorities? Ms. Oman...

- I'll speak to student voice, because I was working on this one, and I teach full time, so I'm around students 24/7. But I think this should be a priority partly because of a lot of the research that I looked at was student surveys regarding how they feel about their school climates, as well as their safety within their schools.

Safety, physical safety, obviously we know in terms of school shootings and things like that, it is something that's on the minds of a lot of our middle and high school students. But also safety with regard to their mental health, and how they feel, especially with access to technology, what they see in technology, sort of the social-emotional component of that, and how they're feeling when they're around their peers, things like that.

So I think some of the student voice does tie into what we talked about regarding mental health, and the mental health especially of our middle and high school students, how they feel about themselves at school, how they feel amongst their peers, and what sort of supports we have within the school system.

Whether it's those psychologists or those trusted teachers, those trained educators to support them, to make sure that they are feeling welcome at school, they're feeling mentally safe. And then also the physical safety, I know that's a totally other sphere in terms of security and things like that, but that was something that was noted on a lot of the student surveys that I looked at for the region.

- Dr. Fletcher, you're on mute.

- So when I think about student voice, I guess my question is can student voice be incorporated into the mental health aspect?

You know, as far as, you know, using data from student voice, you know, making sure that we use student voice either whether it be from the...I think Kentucky, Virginia, and Tennessee, and they may have had some research from West Virginia to include that student voice in some of the other topics.

So I guess I agree with having student voice, but would it be more along the lines of having student voice as a source of information for the others?

- Based on a lot of what I was looking at, I do think that connection makes a lot of sense. Because a lot of what the students were being asked was less on their academics, and more on how they're feeling about themselves, how they're feeling about their interactions at school. So I think that connection makes a lot of sense, and we can use that data from the student surveys to support some of those, you know, technical assistance suggestions that we had in that area as that evidence for that data collection.

- Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Oman. Mr. Cheeseman, you have your hand up...

- Yes, sir. Really quick, I would agree with that connection. Everything that Ms. Oman said regarding safety and mental health, I highly, highly support that. I would also see a connection here to student voice with the chronic absenteeism. If we allow students to take on some responsibility, to have some ownership, to hear from them, what interests them, what they like to do, and put them in positions, you know, while they're in school to learn and to grow in areas that, you know, that interest them, and put them in positions to potentially walk into a very nice job, or a good setup for college.

You know, instead of just this one-size-fits all model, if we really could do individualized education, and meet kids where they're at, and hearing from each one of our kids, I think we could see kids come to school a little bit more as well.

So I can see a tie in for absenteeism as well. But I do support student voice with the mental health.

- I think that rationale, if we include as far as why this is a priority, the evidence that we need to look into is when it comes to chronic absenteeism, what student voice says of why this is a priority. And when it comes to mental health, you know, the evidence that we could get from student voice would be very valuable in that also, too.

So if it pleases the group, I think that we should, you know, when we nominate people for the committee, is to include student voice as a basis for some of our decisions that's in...as part of that. So if we include student voice, again, in those two parts, as far as, again, data sources for mental health and for chronic absenteeism, would that please the group?

Any comments about that? If so... Or anybody opposed to that?

- I personally am in agreement, Dr. Fletcher.

- Thank you. I don't see anyone, are there any... Again, I do not want to diminish the importance of student voice. Student voice is extremely important to have a successful district... Not only a successful district, but also just healthy individuals.

I mean, having a good culture, a good environment, there needs to be student input and a student voice to be heard. So if that's going to be the case, that we're going to move as

making this as part of the other two, can we move back to focus on our employers, and looking at the employer workforce preparation and needs?

And thank you all for that support, by the way, before we move on. So any comments about that, please?

- I nominate that motion, Dr. Fletcher.

- Thank you so much, Dr. Webb. Anything that anyone would like to add, or why or why not this should be a priority? Ms. Oman...

- I just wanted to add one specific thing regarding the workforce preparation. A lot of what we're seeing now is teachers needing to be physically prepared to handle students who are emotionally dysregulated, which wasn't something at the beginning of my teaching career. And now we need to be trained in the best way to support students who need physical restraint in a legal way, and in an ethical way.

And I see that across the district that I work in post-COVID, and across the country, with students using their bodies in an unsafe way. And part of teacher prep I think now needs to include that SEL component, but it also needs to include how we physically, if we need to put our hands on students in order to keep them safe, and to keep others safe as well.

What that looks like will vary state to state, obviously based on law and based on things like that, but I do think we need to look closely at that. That is part of what it means to be an educator now, and to support the entire student, especially those that need that help physically because they're so dysregulated, or showing a lot of aggressive behaviors, as opposed to using, you know, police officers in our schools or something like that.

- Thank you, Ms. Oman. I want to point to, I think, Dr. Webb and maybe Mr. Hogg's work as far as why this should be a priority. One of their high-level overview included that individuals require many skills to be college and career-ready, including academic knowledge, technical expertise, and a set of general cross-cutting abilities called employability skills.

And those can include three large buckets, applied knowledge, workspace skills, and effective relationships. I think that a lot of things we've touched on today talks a lot about relationships, mental health, so I think this ties in with our employer workforce preparation needs. Dr.

Roach, would you like to add?

- Yes. In this subcommittee, we discussed the importance of apprenticeships, and that in Appalachia, we are lacking some fields that need to be developed through workforce development, and that had to do with childcare and healthcare. We have childcare and

healthcare deserts across Kentucky, especially in rural areas, according to the research from the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce.

So I know that this isn't as dire as some of the other issues that we've been discussing, and I know that quite a bit of resources and money have been poured into CTE, but I don't think it's something that we should drop.

I think we need to continue, especially throughout Appalachia, we need to continue to try to work with K-12 to strengthen our workforce and strengthen those college and career readiness skills in our schools.

- Thank you, Dr. Roach. I agree wholeheartedly. Dr. Webb?

- Yes, I agree with that wholeheartedly as well. Part of what the role is in my office is for us to partner field experience students from college, community colleges and universities with schools to do their observation hours, and student teaching, and that type of thing. And more and more we're seeing challenges with, as it was mentioned earlier, soft skills, and I hate to call them soft skills because I think they're probably the most important skills, but trying to improve our teacher prep somehow with those internships or those different apprenticeships to really build the employability of pre-service teachers who, for instance, when they're filling out an application are misspelling their own names wrong, are reaching out to schools that are calling principals by their first names, you know?

Just things that they're not going...this does not help the recruitment issue. It all works hand-in-hand. But really just trying to improve that, I agree with everything said.

- Thank you, Dr. Webb. Mr. Cheeseman had a technical assistance idea, if we haven't put that in yet, "Developing localized curriculums through public and private partnerships." They've had some great success in implementing that, that's very good. Is there anything anyone would like to add to why this should be a priority, or why not? Going once...

I think that some of the research that you could include is for why this is priority, of course I'm very familiar with Kentucky, but I know that Kentucky has spent a lot of time in developing employability skills frameworks.

And I think Dr. Roach put a piece of data in that talks about the employability skills, and a crucial component of college and career readiness that's already in our data. And if you look at across the state, and I know this is also a national thing, we look at portraits of a graduate and portraits of a learner, you see probably around 90 to 95 districts in the state of Kentucky that have a...out of 170, 171 that have a portrait of a learner, a portrait of a graduate that doesn't necessarily focus on simply academics, but it focuses more on employability skills, communication, collaboration, all the things that we think about that our teachers do in trying to provide those deeper learning activities so kids can be ready for either post-secondary in college, or straight into career.

So the focus in Kentucky is enough to me to add this as a priority. And again, I'm sure it's like that in other states. We're kind of closing in on time. Are there any other additions to this? Dr.

Roach...

- The only thing... Thank you. The only thing that I would add for ideas for technical assistance, I would recommend looking into place-based education. One of the problems we have in Eastern Kentucky is that our students are educated and skilled, and they leave, and they don't see their community's assets, they see their community's deficits.

And place-based education helps teachers utilize local assets, community assets in their instruction so that students can see how positive their communities are, and what's there in their communities. So that would be my recommendation for technical assistance.

- Excellent point, Dr. Roach. Thank you so much for that. Okay, since we are closing in on time, 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 Appalachian Regional Advisory Committee to include, let me see the actual name of that again, as employer workforce preparation and needs as one of our priorities.

Oh, just a second... And has everyone voted? Okay. And Ms. Beisel [crosstalk]

- Screenshot taken.

- And it would appear by the numbers here that that would also be included as one of our priorities. Okay. So we've gone through our five priorities here, and we've listed five that we want to have. At this point, are there any other items that emerged during the sensing that we did not establish as priorities, that you may want to include to make the Department aware of?

We did this with mental health, so I'm very thankful for that. So are there any other additions? Ms. Oman?

- Sorry, I just forgot to put my hand down.

- Okay. That's okay. Well, then let's transition to our reports. We need to come to a vote to establish a committee, or multiple committees to summarize the committee's findings and recommendations in its needs-sensing assessment report. Mr.

Kara, can you give us a little bit of guidance of how many committees you recommend, or how many maybe some other regions have used? What's your thoughts on this, please?

- Sure. I will just tell you what other committees have done, or what our practice is. You can have one committee that falls under the quorum, so we cannot have any... Even if it's individual committees, or one big committee, it has to be under the quorum. And for this it's

nine individuals, which includes myself and the Liaison. So you know, just taking that into consideration.

Some folks, or some committees have done a subcommittee for each of the priorities of the writing process. So you can go about it that way, or you can have one large subcommittee that's under the quorum, and designate individuals to write that part. And the writing process, it's really not a huge uptake.

It's about three pages per priority that, you know, we would expect, or MSU would expect in that. Does that help?

- Yeah. So we're looking at possibly having five subcommittees, or one overall writing committee. Is that what I'm hearing here?

- Yeah.

- Okay. I think that if we have one overall committee, I think that would be sufficient if we have one committee, especially if we're looking at nine or less members. And then, maybe from that point we can kind of do some work from there. So any other thoughts on that, on having multiple committees, versus one? Would anyone like to add any thoughts on that?

- I like the idea of one, Dr. Fletcher. I think it might get confusing with many different subcommittees.

- Thank you, Dr. Webb. I agree. So at this point, would anyone like to self-nominate, as to a member to join the writing subcommittee? Dr.

Roach...so, Dr. Roach would like to self-nominate. Dr. Webb... Ms. Hargrave... Dr.

White... Ms. McElroy... Ms. Grimsley. So that would give us one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight. As Chair, do I need to be a part of this also too, Mr.

Kara?

- You do not, no.

- Okay.

- I will say since that is eight individuals, would you all at this time, would you all like to designate, like, what sections each of those eight individuals would like to write about, so we make sure that all the areas are covered?

- Okay [crosstalk]

- Can we nominate Dr. Fletcher, since he didn't nominate himself?

- I'm going to accept the nomination and be a part of the writing committee. Thank you for that.

- If that is the case, just know that we would have to drop two individuals out of the subcommittee just because, again, I have to attend those committees, and I would be counted as one, and then I believe our Liaison as well would be counted as one.

- But I think that gives us nine, correct?

- I thought there was eight, or there...with you would be nine.

- Including me, it would be nine. But I thought you said that we'd have to have nine or less [crosstalk]

- Yeah. So on your notes, is it... Oh, actually, thank you, Danielle. The DFO does not count towards the quorum, so that...and neither does the Liaison, so I was mistaken. So perfect, so yeah, there can be nine members in that committee itself. So if you have that on your

[crosstalk]

- I was including you and the Liaison. So right now, I have, just so I don't miss anybody, I have Dr. Webb, Dr. Roach, Ms. Hargrave, Dr. White, Ms. McElroy, and Ms.

Grimsley. Was there anyone that I missed that would like to be a part of this? Okay. All right, so do I need to have a vote on that committee, and then assign the parts out to each person?

- Yeah, you can establish the subcommittee, and then we can do a debrief meeting with myself and the Liaison, and we can establish the writing procedure.

- All right. So with that being said, who would like to nominate Dr. Fletcher, Ms. McElroy, Ms. Grimsley, Dr. White, Dr. Hargrave...

I'm sorry, Ms. Hargrave, Dr. Roach, and Dr. Webb as members of this writing committee? Ms. Roach and Ms. Hitzelberger.

And do we need to do a vote at this time?

- If someone can just second the motion...

- I second the motion. This is Brittany Oman.

- Brittany Oman seconds the motion.

- Then it's all good now.

- So we do not have to have a vote?

- I don't believe... I'm just double checking my notes to make sure. Yeah, that's fine. We can... It is established.

- Okay. All right, so we've created that, and also had a second by Dr. Roach, and then...I'm sorry, who was the second again?

I didn't get that written down.

- That was me, Brittany Oman. I second.

- [crosstalk] - Yeah, all good. Yeah, of course.

- All right. So those have been...that'll be our committee. Then, it also wants us to establish leads, if I look at...I'm looking at this correctly. So of the folks that were nominated, would anyone like to take the lead on a particular portion? Dr. Webb?

- I'm happy to do teacher recruitment and retention.

- Okay. Ms. Hargrave?

- I'd like to do chronic absenteeism.

- Thank you. Okay. Ms. Grimsley?

- Yes, may I assist Dr. Webb?

- Okay. Okay, so far, I have Dr. Webb taking the lead on teacher recruitment and retention, and with Ms.

Grimsley as aiding in that. I have Ms. Hargrave on chronic absenteeism. Dr. Roach?

- Could you remind us what is remaining?

- We have mental health; we also have the employer [inaudible]. Thank you.

- I've added it on the screen.

- Thank you so much.

- Thank you. I will take the employer, the employer... I think we talked about a career in technical education.

- Yes.

- Yes, so I'll take that. Thank you.

- So it looks like we need family engagement, and student and teacher mental health.

- I'm sorry, Dr. Fletcher, could I take family engagement instead?

- Sure. That'd be fine.
- That's been a research interest of mine. Thank you.
- [inaudible] engagement [inaudible] lead. So that leaves mental health. Dr. White, would you care to take mental health? Is Dr.

White on here?

- I'm not seeing her name. She might have accidentally dropped.
- Dr. White was the one that brought up mental health. I think that she would be a great recommendation for that.
- Since she was part of the committee, we can assign that to her, and then we can touch base after the committee as well.
- So we still need a lead on the employer workforce preparation and needs. And I would prefer not to take the lead. If we have someone that's asked to assist that would mind to take the lead on that? Ms.

McElroy or Ms. Grimsley, would either of you be so kind as to take on the employer workforce preparation and needs lead?

- Sure, I will. My hand's raised, Shannon Grimsley.
- Oh, thank you, Ms. Grimsley. Thank you for that.
- And then, Doctor... I'm sorry, go ahead. No, no, please go ahead.
- No, go ahead. I'm sorry, go ahead.
- We're going to need to...I was going to say, are you about to nominate yourself for one of these sections, or put yourself for one of these sections?
- I was going to assist Dr. Webb.
- That's more than okay.
- Okay.
- Because I was going to say right after this, can you, on your side, I think on your script, do the nomination, or call to nominate to [crosstalk] identified people? Because we're going to still need to take a screenshot of the votes as well.
- I saw that on the end. Thank you so much. Okay... I need to see that screen again, please. I'm sorry. Before we do a screenshot, could I see the screen again, please? Thank you so much.

So we have a... Would someone like to nominate Rebecca Roach to take the lead on family engagement, Andi Webb to take the lead on teacher recruitment and retention, Angela Hardrave to take on chronic absenteeism as the lead, Dr. Rachel White as the student teacher mental health lead, Sabrina McElroy is chronic absenteeism to assist, Shannon Grimsley as the employer workforce preparation and needs as the lead, and Robbie Fletcher as the recruitment and retention assist?

Would anyone like to nominate those individuals for that subcommittee, or for those subcommittee roles?

- And at this point, someone can say aye.

- Mr. Cheeseman, you have your hand up. I assume that you would take that nomination.

- Yes, sir, I'll make that nomination.

- Thank you, Mr. Cheeseman. Would someone else second the nomination?

- Second, this is Brandi speaking.

- Second by Ms. Hitzelberger. All right, at this time, let's take a vote, please. And if you could please raise your hand. Okay, has everyone voted that's on the call? I see 10 votes; I think that is enough to pass.

Is that correct, Mr. Muhammad? I'm sorry, Mr. Kara?

- Yes.

- Thank you so much.

- Screenshot taken.

- Thank you so much.

- Good.

- I think that we've already reviewed the accepted priorities, and now we're looking at timelines. I'm sorry, Ms. Hitzelberger, do you have [inaudible]?

- Nope, sorry.

- Thank you so much. So we have the leads, and we also have those that are assisting. We also have the full committee for writing. And it looks like from the slide, our actions as the subcommittee will meet to draft assessment reports November 2nd. The subcommittee submits a draft on November 3rd, then releases assessment for full committee review on November 13th.

And of course, full committee meeting and vote to be scheduled somewhere between the 14th and 16th, then submit assessment to [inaudible]. Any questions from the group? All right. I'll turn it over to Mr. Kara for, I assume at this point, we'll look at adjourning. Unless there's anything else we need to add, Mr.

Kara?

- No, I was going to say, just if there's no other questions, I'll hold the space for five seconds to see if anybody has questions. If not, I will adjourn.

- Will we just get more direction on next steps? Okay, thank you.

- Yes. You'll receive email correspondence from our side in the coming week. So with that, I move to adjourn the meeting for the Regional Advisory Committee meeting for the Appalachia region. I ask committee members to take themselves off mute and say "aye" if they agree.

- [Together] Aye.

- Thank you. Thank you. The meeting is adjourned on October 13th, at 12:57 p.m. for the Regional Advisory Committee meeting for the Appalachia region. Thank you so much, everybody.

- Thank you to everyone.