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Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law



IABG | Illinois Asset Building Group
Building financially strong families and communities

Legislation and Advocacy Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

Friday, December 3, 2010

1. INTRODUCTIONS

Karen Harris 1:05pm

2. GOALS LEGISLATION AND ADVOCACY

A. *Melody Thompson from Financial Beginnings discussed financial education in Oregon*

Oregon's financial education system is decentralized. Financial Education falls under economics under social science standards. Is not tested nor are there course requirements. Each school determines its own content/standards and there is no way of tracking what schools are doing. Melody feels lucky that they ended up be a good example. Melody was involved in the Oregon financial education Task Force.

Karen Harris explained the Illinois financial education mandate and the purpose of the working group.

Melody indicated that the Oregon Task Force was interesting because the state combined civics and financial education. There were nine members with half working on each topic. In the beginning it worked well. Oregon had already established eight essential skills that students should know. So the Task Force recommended that Financial Education be added as an essential skill. There was push-back because there were already 8 skills and they were unsure how to test financial education. A Senator proposed legislation to add as essential skills, but mandating a essential skill was not possible due to other legislation. So financial education was added as a half-credit in the overall social sciences credit allotment. The Task Force was pitted against itself since there are a total of 3 credits allocated to the social sciences and the civics group was competing with financial education taking up .5 of those credits. The Task Force issued its final report but nothing happened.

Social science teachers are feeling marginalized as it is, especially with the No Child Left Behind mandates. Melody indicated that you need to make sure that financial education is tested, because if it is not tested it isn't taught.

Oregon does not have money for new programs, so it is engaging in mostly grassroots efforts and encouraging teachers to bring financial education into the classroom. Some organizations

are working on developing resources. In 1997 Oregon got rid of their consumer education requirements.

B. Todd Christensen from National Financial Education Center will discuss financial education in Idaho

Todd commented that Idaho shares some of the same issues as Oregon; financial education is not required and there are no standards. Math and personal finance is a junior or senior year option for high school math classes. Schools are supposed to offer it, but most do not. It has been challenging to get the course in schools. There is not enough political will to change anything.

Three years ago requirements for math changed from 2 to 3 years. As a result Todd was involved in developing curriculum for mathematics of personal finance. The course has been introduced to a lot of districts, but administrators say it has to be driven by parental demand. Todd offered a teacher training and had about 35 teachers come. Todd also developed online training. Teachers were comfortable with the math aspect but not the finance part, especially terminology.

The high school course has to be taught by math certified teachers- so even math teachers needed additional training. Offered the online course through the Idaho Digital Learning Academy (e.g., continuing education for teachers). The course was offered twice, but only two people sign up for it so it was canceled. There are some districts offering it but parents have to be the ones asking for it. The PTA is the only communication between parents and schools.

Karen explained that Illinois has a formalized structure for communications between parents and schools: local school councils.

Todd thought that as soon as parents heard about this class they would want to ask for it, but that has not been the case. Todd asked about whether or not the working group is collaborating with the State Treasurer's Office.

Karen indicated that we are working with the State Treasurer's Office, but that things were on hold at the State Treasurer's office because of changes as a result of the election.

Karen gave an overview of the activities and organization of the working group. The working group brought different stakeholders together to share what each organization is doing. The working group was broken down into subcommittees: (1) Curriculum Committee: Chicago Public Schools (CPS) has done a pilot program. CPS is developing guidelines/resources for K-8 which will be available for teachers online. The group intends to create one online portal with information which the FDIC, the State and City Treasurers, etc. will use; (2) Teacher Preparedness and Training Subcommittee: Developing workshops to qualify for continuing education requirements; (3) Financial Institutions and Partnerships: Learning in the classroom needs to be

supplemented by hands on learning which is more than just field trip to a bank; (4) Cost and Funding: Illinois has no money and it is hard to identify funding options, but the working group has started talking to potential funders; and (5) Legislation and Advocacy: Starting to think about the most effective way to get it implemented which may include expanding the current mandate.

Karen asks Todd if Oregon had a Task Force. Todd said, "No". Melody indicated that she has templates for organization to apply to be listed as a financial education resource online. Since Illinois is thinking of doing something similar she indicated that she would share these templates.

Karen commented that there are a lot of financial education resources out there and that the working group is developing a matrix to such evaluate materials.

Todd commented that Jump\$Start has a clearinghouse and they are looking to make it more local.

Karen asked Melody if she could find/send the proposed legislation from Oregon. Melody will try and find it.

Todd shared that he got a grant from the National Council on Economic Education. They offer an annual grant of \$30-40,000 dollars which we may wish to apply for.

Karen thanked Melody and Todd and they left the call.

C. ISBE and CPDUs

D. A summary of the Teacher Preparedness and Training Subcommittee's discussion about CPDUs and Administrator Academies was provided. The discussion focused on the fact that a representative from ISBE suggested alternatives to a legislative mandate. In particular, she indicated that Illinois law has a prohibition on new education programs without identified funding sources. *Subcommittee Updates*

- a. Curriculum Subcommittee: Will be meeting soon.
- b. Financial Institutions and Partnerships Subcommittee: Members were dropping out due to conflict of interests and so the group is merging with the Curriculum Group.
- c. Teacher Preparedness and Training Subcommittee: An overview of yesterday's meeting regarding continuing education credits for teachers and administrators (e.g., university courses, administrator academies and CPDUs) was discussed.
- d. Cost and Funding Subcommittee: There are potential funders.

E. Advocacy Strategy

- a. *Maps*: Karen reported that Shriver has the software to compile financial maps of neighborhoods, but that it does not have all the data (have payday lenders data, but not banks or foreclosure data). This may possibly be a project for a Howard University Researcher. Karen indicated that the group should still consider this project, especially since there will not be a state mandate. The group agreed.

- b. *CAO meeting/City Treasurer: Cara has a possible meeting* with CAOs in January. The goal is to get a better idea on how to approach them.
- c. Legislative Sponsors: Karen indicated that it would be a good idea to identify some legislators who may want get behind this at some point. Having a contingent that would press the Treasurer's Office or public schools would be a good thing.
- d. Legislation-

F. Recommendations

Karen suggested that the subcommittee come up with some sort of policy proposal which would include implementation strategies based on overarching principals agreed upon by the group. The legislative and advocacy committee would take all of these reports and craft a comprehensive report.

Jack Kaplan asked if there anything from the other committees that would require specific legislation because if so we have to hurry to meet the upcoming legislative deadline.

Karen answered that state education standards are not going to be updated for another 18 months. She does not think the group will be able to offer much input on the development of those standards. The only possible legislative action could be expanding financial education to K-8 and/or lengthen the current requirement for high school students. The likelihood of getting testing added as a requirement is really low because of budget constraints.

Marica Cullen added that on July 29th a law was signed that enacted a moratorium on passing any instructional mandates until July 2012.

Karen commented that the group should start talking to legislators now to prepare for when laws can get passed. The group can also start talking to superintendents and CAO and districts now to get people on board. Marica agreed that this was wise approach, because you do have to build commitment.

3. NEXT MEETING DATE AND AGENDA

Karen suggested this subcommittee meet again after the holidays to give the other groups time to write their proposals. The Shriver Center will circulate the reports as they are finished. The next subcommittee meeting is scheduled for Friday, January 21 at 1pm.