

**Illinois State Board of Education  
Streamlining Illinois' Regional Office of Education Commission**

**Thursday, March 29, 2012**

**Minutes  
(Unapproved due to End of Commission)**

**Attendance**

**Commission Members:**

Dr. Brent Clark	Dr. Vanessa Kinder	Rep. Pam Roth
Meredith Byers	Scott Kuffel	Dr. Darlene Ruscitti
Dr. Norm Durflinger	John Meixner	Jane Russell
Dr. Michael A. Jacoby	Susie Morrison	
Dr. Michael Johnson	Mike Nekritz	

**Guests:**

Amanda Elliott

**Notetakers:**

Sheila Rodriguez  
Rachel Trimble

**Welcome and Introductions**

The final meeting of the Streamlining Illinois' Regional Offices of Education Commission was called to order at 9:03 a.m. by Dr. Norm Durflinger, chair of the Commission, who then facilitated introductions of the Commission members and welcomed the group.

**Approval of March 22 Minutes**

Dr. Durflinger asked if anyone had any changes to the March 22 meeting minutes. Meredith Byers stated that she did not second the motion on Regional Offices of Education (ROEs) not being funded by the Corporate Personal Property Replacement Tax (CPPRT) and that Dr. Ruscitti was the one who seconded that motion. The Commission agreed and approved the March 22 meeting notes.

**Additional Commission Items**

Dr. Durflinger asked the Commission members if there were any additional items they would like to discuss. There were no additional items from the Commission; therefore, he went on to the next agenda item: the approval of the draft Commission report.

## Approval of Draft Commission Report

Dr. Durflinger stated that he received the draft Commission report and noticed that a few things should be included in this report. First, he felt that the original recommendation of the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools (IARSS), regarding the 39 ROEs and minimum population of 53,000, should be placed in the report. He stated that this addition has been made to the final report. Dr. Michael Johnson also noted that on page 1 in the Background section, it states that the Governor and General Assembly requested that the Commission consider an additional question, which is not defined in the law, Article 105 ILCS 5/3A-18, but is highly recommended, regarding the elected positions of the regional superintendents: Should the state consider other options for appointing or selecting regional education officers?" Dr. Johnson explained that it was not the General Assembly but a representative of the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) who requested for this option to be considered, and he requested that this change be made in the final Commission report.

Second, Dr. Durflinger referred to the recommendation on core services and asked for an addition to be made regarding necessary funding; specifically, he asked that the addition indicate that due to time constraints, the Commission was not able to discuss funding to the fullest extent. Ms. Byers stated that the lack of time was mentioned on page 5 of the draft Commission report. Dr. Durflinger stated that the Commission had consensus that the ROEs should be funded through the General Revenue Fund (GRF) and not CPPRT.

Dr. Jacoby stated that he also was thinking that they had talked about the whole issue on clarifying whether or not there was a process for when a ROE's population dropped below the minimum population, and he questioned if the State Board knew that they could initiate consolidation. John Meixner stated that he thinks the process is in place now. Amanda Elliott stated that the State Board has jurisdiction if the number of ROEs goes above 45 and that, right now, the ROEs can voluntarily consolidate. Dr. Jacoby asked if there is anything in the code that mentions census data or initiating the process. Ms. Elliott stated that the general recommendation should say it's the interpretation of IARSS and the State Board. Dr. Jacoby stated that the Commission recommends that based on the population total, further consolidation should occur if a ROE drops below the minimum population level.

Susie Morrison stated that she doesn't think the State Board had thought that it was their responsibility. Ms. Elliott stated that no matter what, they need to clarify this consolidation. Dr. Durflinger stated that they could have a recommendation to clarify the process. Dr. Jacoby stated that they can add to the recommendation on restructuring ROE size that the Commission gave ample consideration and discussion to five options and that consensus was reached on the 44 ROEs being reduced to 35.

Dr. Clark asked why they wouldn't list within the report what they talked about. Dr. Jacoby stated that some people who are looking at the report will look at the minutes, but others won't; he believes that that consideration of the five options was a substantial part of the Commission's work. He added that listing the five options will show others that they already have considered those options. Dr. Durflinger asked if the five options should be included within the final Commission report or added to an appendix. Dr. Jacoby stated that he recommends listing the

five options within the report. Mr. Meixner stated that he would prefer the five options to be in an appendix. The Commission agreed that the five options should be added within the report.

Dr. Vanessa Kinder stated that Recommendation 1 from the 2010 Task Force, on the development of a coordinating council, should be added to the final Commission report. Dr. Durflinger stated that this has been added to the report. Jane Russell then stated that in the recommendation on restructuring ROE size, there should be clarification and that information on the three Intermediate Service Centers (ISCs) needs to be added. Mr. Meixner then stated that for the recommendation on core services, specifically on the annexation/detachment petitions filed and hearings, it should state that this is a state function but that it should still be handled by the ROEs. He indicated that for school violations, which is another service, it should be added that this should remain with the ROEs.

Mr. Meixner then continued and stated that it is explicit in the report that for General Educational Development (GED) services, the ROEs are responsible for recordkeeping; but it doesn't state that they also administer the test in certain parts of the state, and the option should still be available that the ROEs provide testing. Dr. Durflinger stated that they should cross out ~~only~~ and allow ROEs to have the option to administer the GED test. Mr. Meixner stated that there was no mention of a funding mechanism—specifically the use of GRF and not CPPRT. Dr. Durflinger stated that he told Rachel Trimble and Sheila Rodriguez that funding information needs to be added to the final report.

Dr. Jacoby wondered if it may be beneficial if the salary line item for regional superintendents should be its own line item, not under ISBE's budget. He asked Susie Morrison for her thoughts. Ms. Morrison stated that the State Superintendent of Education thought it would be a clearer way. Ms. Elliott stated that it needs to be added under something because it is not its own agency. Dr. Jacoby asked where the salary item is placed for elected officials. Ms. Elliott stated that those line items are under the comptroller. Dr. Jacoby stated that the salary line item for regional superintendents also should be a line item under the comptroller. Dr. Durflinger asked the Commission members if they are in agreement that the salaries of the ROE regional superintendents be a line item in the comptroller's budget—the same way as other elected officials. The Commission members agreed that this line item should be moved to the comptroller budget. The Commission members also stated that the support line item of \$2.2 million regarding the budget for ROEs should stay with ISBE. The Commission members agreed that it should be added to the report.

Mr. Meixner stated that the timeline, specifically on the creation of the maps by September 2013, should be added to the report. He stated that the creation of boundaries is a lengthy process, and they need to make a note of their timeline for restructuring, stating that the new boundaries be completed by 2013. Dr. Jacoby stated that they could work it in advance of the deadline stated by the State Board of Elections. Mr. Meixner asked that they have it corrected. Mike Nekritz stated that on the recommendation for accountability system, it seems that they are repeating the recommendation from the last Task Force. He stated that local districts also should be part of that accountability system. Dr. Jacoby stated that with the revised timelines expanded, having the input of the local areas would be good. Mr. Nekritz stated that should be part of the timeline, and local districts should be included in ensuring quality of services. Dr. Jacoby stated that they

could recommend further that ISBE work together with the ROEs and ISCs to adopt a new timeline. Mr. Nekritz stated that it would be nice to get the input of others. Dr. Johnson stated that there isn't anything on satisfaction surveys to get feedback from local districts regarding services received from the State Board, and that should be looked at as well. Dr. Jacoby stated that this would be in addition to the accountability work that the State Board will be doing. Mr. Nekritz stated he thinks that this is in the statute, but it hasn't been done. Mr. Nekritz stated that the annual survey should be reinitiated and added to the Commission report under the recommendation for the accountability system.

## **Wrap-Up and Closing Comments**

After the discussion of all these items, Dr. Durflinger asked if the Commission members were in agreement that there are no additional items for the Commission report. He stated that the report will be given to ISBE and then it will be posted on the ISBE website. He stated that the two key things are that (1) the recommendation of decreasing the number of ROEs to 35 with a minimum population of 61,000 in addition to the 3 ISCs; and (2) the report will be completed by the deadline or at the latest by Monday, April 2.

Dr. Durflinger thanked the people in the audience because he knows that a lot of them have been there a long time. He also thanked the Commission for being there. He stated that he tried his best to get consensus from the group and asked the Commission to be supportive.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 a.m.