

School District Boundary Task Force

Second Meeting
July 9, 2015

West Central Admin. Office
Hartford, SD

Thursday, July 9, 2015

The second meeting of the School District Boundary Task Force was called to order by Senator Deb Peters at 4:05 p.m. in the West Central School District Administration Center, Hartford, South Dakota.

The following members were present: Senator Deb Peters, Senator Ernie Otten, Senator Angie Buhl, Representative Jim Bolin, Representative Herman Otten, Representative Karen Soli, Superintendent Jennifer Lowery, Superintendent Tom Oster and Superintendent Mike Lodmel.

Department of Education staff present included: Tamara Darnall, Susan Woodmansey and Avery Askew. Michael Houdyshell was also present representing the Department of Revenue and Doug Decker from Legislative Research Council.

Review and Approval of Minutes

The first agenda item was to approve the minutes from the last meeting. Motion to approve minutes was made by Superintendent Mike Lodmel and the motion was seconded by Representative Bolin. The motion prevailed on a voice vote.

Non-Contiguous Properties in Select Counties

Michael Houdyshell provided the task force with requested information on the non-contiguous properties in the counties of Minnehaha, Lincoln and Turner. Maps and detailed information were discussed regarding these land areas. Information provided to the task force included valuation and % of valuation represented by these islands. Actual count of students residing on these islands was not available to the task force and something that would be difficult to collect due to open enrollment and enrollment in private schools. Task force members discussed and shared historical information on how these islands were initially created. The consensus of the task force was that it would be a monumental task to alter these boundaries now but that it is something that should be continued to be reviewed.

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Boundary Statutes in Surrounding States

Tamara Darnall presented a chart of information to the task force on how states such as; North Dakota, Minnesota, Nebraska, Iowa, Wyoming and Montana handle school district minor boundary changes. Chart is available at <http://www.doe.sd.gov/secretary/SDBTF.aspx> Item #3 under July 9, 2015 meeting information.

First Review of Draft Legislation

Gerry Kaufman and Doug Decker presented to the task force requested draft legislation to revise our current statutes relating to school district minor boundary changes. (See item #4, under July 9, 2015 meeting information on above referenced website.)

The task force reviewed and discussed this draft and requested changes such as; addition of a section to define terms, revision to the criteria and modification of the timelines to act on a request or acknowledge the receipt of a request for a minor boundary change.

Mr. Decker and Mr. Kaufman will amend the draft as requested and present at the next meeting.

Attendance Centers Operating within the Boundaries of Neighboring School Districts

This issue was discussed during the legislative session with no resolution. Senator Peters wanted the task force to be aware of an issue where there is a rural school located within the boundaries of one school district that was operated in the 2014-2015 by the adjoining school district. A teacher from the adjoining the school district crossed district boundaries and taught students in a school located in their resident district. Current statutes and rules do not address such as situation therefore the Department of Education was unable to deny the request. This situation does have the potential to harm districts.

The task force discussed and heard from superintendents involved in the above situation, all agreed further guidance and clarification needs to be provided to the Department of Education. The task force asked Tamara Darnall to form a committee of select school administrators to discuss possible remedies in rules or statutes that can prevent such situations from occurring. It was the concern of the task force that there may be instances for which they are not currently aware that may require an allowance for a teacher to cross borders into another school district. Ms. Darnall will report back to the task force at the next meeting.

Public Comment & Next Steps

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The task force heard comments from the Dell Rapids superintendent. She was concerned about intentions of the task force regarding the current non-contiguous property in her district. Senator Peters reassured the superintendent that they understood there is history as to why such islands were created. As a result of this task force, the legislative members will be able to respond to inquiries during a legislative session why school district boundaries are not straight, and why they can't be easily altered to remove the non-contiguous properties.

Next steps for this committee;

- 1) to review the revised draft legislation and
- 2) to listen to the input of school administrators on the issue of operating attendance centers outside their present school district boundaries.

Schedule Next Meeting

The next task force meeting will be held via Webex on August 25th at 2 p.m. CDT.

A motion to adjourn was made by Senator Deb Peters, seconded by Representative Otten. Meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.