

MAINE COMPACT FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Meeting of January 19, 2005 at the Finance Authority of Maine in Augusta

Notes

Compact Members Present: Wendy Ault, Henry Bourgeois, Alan Burton, Mary Cathcart, Kris Doody Chabre, Sandy Ervin, Sandra Featherman, Joe Foley, Bonnie Fortini, Joyce Hedlund, Ron Milliken, Susan Percy, Derek Pierce, Colleen Quint, Judy Ryan, Henry Schmelzer, Ted Scontras, and John Witherspoon.

Staff and Guests Present: Tom Broussard, Becky Dyer, Dianne Heino, Steve McFarland, Cathy Newell, Patrick O'Regan, Lisa Plimpton, Bob Stuart, Robert Wood.

Chairman Foley opened the meeting at 9:40 a.m. He welcomed new members, reviewed the agenda, and thanked Mr. Witherspoon for hosting the meeting.

Update. Mr. Bourgeois and others reviewed activities since the last meeting:

1. **Stakeholders.** Representatives of twelve organizations met last week and preliminarily agreed on target audiences (parents, students and teachers) and a core message (graduate ready...) to use in our public information campaigns. This meeting and the next were professionally facilitated. This part of the DoE-led initiative is financed by the Compact. Next steps include conducting focus groups with the target audiences to test the message, then reconvening the group to revise the message, if necessary, and agree on 1st-year actions.
2. **CollegeforME – Androscoggin County.** A steering committee of education, business and community leaders in Androscoggin County are launching a multi-year higher education campaign. They are using *Greater Expectations* as their starting point, and will launch their initiatives in May. Next steps are to compile data to set their goals and vision, and convene two conferences to solicit ideas and decide how to do the work.
3. **CollegeforME – York County** may be a similar effort is in the early discussion stages.
4. **Presentations About the Compact:** TRIO conference January 5, York County Eggs and Issues January 14, Lewiston Auburn Education Council January 28, Portland Chamber Eggs and Issues March 8, New England TRIO conference April 6.
5. **Basketball Tournament Spots.** MPBC is filming 1-2 student stories for airing during breaks in this year's February basketball tournaments.
6. **College Transition program.** Mr. O'Regan, the program's consultant to DoE, described this year's goals: (1) negotiate agreements with university and college systems that articulate standards and performance indicators; (2) develop curricula based on best practice; (3) deliver training for adult education teachers; and (4) establish evaluation protocols.
7. **Early College program.** Ms. Plimpton reported that the Mitchell Institute has recently fielded two surveys to provide comprehensive data on the early college opportunities currently available to high school students. First, all high school guidance directors are being surveyed about existing Advanced Placement courses and dual college/high school enrollment opportunities their students may have. The second survey is of existing early college programs, and will collect information on participating schools, student requirements and recruitment, courses available, program costs and funding.
8. **Scholarship Program, and Employer Program:** no change in status.
9. **Higher Education Performance Indicators.** The technical committee reviewed the Compact members' priorities and agreed on a smaller number of indicators, reviewed below.

10. Legislation. Rep. Glenn Cummings submitted legislation for a \$50 million bond for a loan repayment program. And, Senator Peggy Rotundo submitted a bill to create the Higher Education Employer Initiative based on the Compact's strategy. Early College legislation is also under consideration.
11. Compact membership: three new members were added to the Compact.
12. In addition, the Compact has assisted DoE plan the Conference on Education, Technology and Maine's Economic Future to be held on January 24-25.

Program Objectives. Mr. Bourgeois presented a program and activities outline for the next three years, with specific actions for 2005. Two of the four sections of the outline generated little or no discussion: the Compact's vision, goal and mission; and the Compact's facilitation of the Early College, College Transition, Scholarship and Employer programs. The other sections, delivering the *CollegeforME* Campaign and Sustaining the Compact, were discussed at length. A summary follows.

The proposed Campaign, based on ideas from the Campaign committee, is in four parts. Two components, the Education Stakeholders Group and Informing Public Policy (i.e. the Legislature), were discussed elsewhere in the agenda. This discussion centered on the grassroots/community effort, and the public relations and media program.

Mr. Foley and others clarified that marketing activities are different from but should complement grassroots efforts. Several comments were made which apply to both:

- Some of the suggested initiatives are already delivered by agencies, which raised 3 points:
 1. The Compact should not be doing work that others are already doing; our value is in adding, not duplicating, effort.
 2. We need an inventory of initiatives to identify gaps and determine where we can add the most value, although many cautioned that this be expedited.
 3. There is a need to coordinate all the higher education initiatives, which an inventory would help us do. A clearinghouse function was mentioned.
- A message about why this is important should be prepared to cut across all 3 elements.
- The Compact should be sending out good information and an enthusiastic message. It should be seen as a trusted and reliable source of data and best practice.
- The Compact should work with existing organizations...it needs to be the overall 'beacon'...the organizer and disseminator of the higher education brand, concept, materials and content.

The members agreed to form three ad hoc committees – marketing, grassroots and legislature – to make recommendations at the March 8 Compact meeting. The committees will meet individually, and possibly together, to identify a strategy for each component – what needs to be done, with whom could we partner, how would we measure success, and next steps. It was observed that committees should include content expertise, e.g. marketing skill, to be effective.

Sustaining the Compact. Members discussed whether or not the Compact should transition to a stand-alone non-profit organization, ground rules for making decisions and related issues. Mr. Scontras suggested, and the members agreed, that we form a steering committee to consider these options and report back to the Compact. They also agreed that each sector – government, business, education and community – appoint one member to serve on the steering committee with Mr. Foley, Mr. Bourgeois and Mr. Schmelzer on the Committee. Mr. Bourgeois said he would arrange conference calls immediately to select members.

Legislation. The members discussed whether or not the Compact should take positions in support of proposed legislation. Mr. Milliken reminded the members that this was discussed in June, and the group decided to not take positions, except for bills that it is sponsoring. After lengthy discussion, Mr. Foley summarized the general consensus, saying that we should support proposed legislation if it forwards our mission and goals. Ms. Ault, a former legislator, suggested that if the proposed bill is not precisely aligned with one of our five strategies but does support our overall goal, it is possible to testify ‘in support of the concept...’. Ms. Quint said that such testimony can also reinforce the Compact’s vision and goal in the message it puts forth – a good way to reinforce the Compact’s themes with Legislators.

Regarding specific legislation, several Compact members applauded Mr. Cummings for putting forth such a bold and important financing proposal. Mr. Bourgeois thanked the Compact and said he would be following up with both Rep. Cummings and Sen. Rotundo to support their legislation.

In a related matter, Mr. Bourgeois referred to an email he received from Mr. Breen, who was unable to be present, who said that “we need a major policy advocacy effort to commence immediately and aggressively to lay the groundwork for why we need investments in higher education...”. Ms. Cathcart, also a former legislator, said that MDF, UM and USM are planning a Forum for Legislators, part of which would be a presentation on higher education policy issues.

Mr. Foley suggested that Mr. Bourgeois work with the subcommittee on the Legislature, referred to above, for further guidance in working with the Legislature as Mr. Breen has suggested.

Higher Education Performance Indicators. Members gave several suggestions to Ms. Plimpton:

1. Mr. Ervin suggested that the forthcoming GLEs (grade level expectations for grades 3-10) might be useful. He also suggested that demographic and aspiration questions on the MEAs may be valuable, and that we might be able to influence the questions asked. He also suggested using the data on highest level of math attainment from the MEAs.
2. Mr. Milliken had several recommendations:
 - Add measures on state government investment.
 - Measure gender differences in terms of participation and attainment.
 - Measure student default rates and/or average student indebtedness.
 - Report on the % of average UMS fill-time tuition covered by the Maine State Grant.
 - Report on Maine State Grant recipients as a % of applicants.
3. Ms. Fortini suggested using % of students passing AP tests rather than % taking AP courses.
4. Mr. Wood urged that we add measures for non-traditional students, and number of non-traditional students who graduate from high school and enter college.
5. Mr. Witherspoon suggested the percent of high school graduates who file the FAFSA form be measured.

Compact Annual Meeting in August. At the suggestion of several Compact members, it was agreed that we would not conduct our ‘annual meeting’ in May as we had discussed, but would hold the session in August. The idea of holding our annual meeting at the beginning of the school year was appealing, and it was felt that a meeting in the middle of the Legislature’s session may not receive any press attention..

Next Compact Meeting March 8. Mr. Bourgeois said that the next Compact meeting will be on Tuesday, March 8th in Portland, from 9:30 to Noon, immediately following a Portland Chamber Eggs and Issues breakfast meeting at which Chairman Foley is speaking. Members will be invited to the breakfast.

Chairman Foley adjourned the meeting of the Compact at noon.