

Governor's Marijuana Impact Assessment Council
Education Subcommittee

ADOPTED MINUTES

Wednesday, Sept. 30, 2015

Present were Marty Nelson, Brian Cox, Brian Farmer, Doreen McGlade and Shad Hamilton.

Welcome and roll call

Facilitator Rob Black of WDE called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

Self-introductions

Members were asked to offer brief biographies.

Rob Black began working at the Department of Education in June 2015 after having worked in career readiness, grant writing and staffing the Wyoming Workforce Development Council at the Department of Workforce Services. He was previously a policy analyst for Gov. Dave Freudenthal and a journalist before that. He is now a member of WDE's accreditation team and also works on dropout prevention and Native American education issues.

Brian Cox has been an associate principal at Central High School for the past seven years. He also taught at the Air Force Academy High School for five years and two years at McCormick Junior High in Cheyenne. He is "living vicariously" through the experiences of his Colorado colleagues with the introduction of recreational marijuana. He attained a bachelor's degree in biochemistry at the University of Wyoming, a master's from the University of Colorado and is writing his dissertation through UW.

Doreen McGlade is president of the Natrona County Education Association, a 35-year educator with a bachelor's in early childhood and special education and master's in special education. She has worked in preschool-through-grade 6 special education, taught in first and second grades and has spent two years as district mentor. Her daughter, Dr. Erin McGlade, is a clinical psychologist who works at the University of Utah with Dr. Deborah Yurgelun-Todd in a research facility that just received a \$15 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to study the effects of substance abuse on the developing adolescent brain. Dr. Yurgelun-Todd and her colleagues have authored a paper on safety and toxicology on cannabinoids, which Ms. McGlade will share to the subcommittee's Google folder.

Marty Nelson is a clinical psychologist by training, board-certified in child psychology and has always maintained a private practice. He taught at the university level, worked at the Department of Corrections and built and operated mental health centers for a number of years. He arrived at the Department of Family Services in 2012 and is senior administrator for services, mainly child welfare.

Brian Farmer is executive director of the Wyoming School Boards Association with ties to education primarily as a school board member, having served in Cheyenne for many years. He also taught at UW and worked on a Ph.D. in education policy.

Review of committee charge and timeline

Mr. Black said the mission of the subcommittee is to frame policy questions that pertain to the effect of marijuana legalization on students – questions that will be forwarded to the Governor’s Marijuana Impact Assessment Council for vetting by the Wyoming Survey and Analysis Center. A second role is to locate research documents that will underscore concerns highlighted by the committee and aid in the Council’s final report.

The committee’s deadline for providing questions and research studies to the Council is Nov. 30

Discussion of issues related to marijuana’s effect on students/youth

Referring to the Colorado report, Mr. Black noted that the number of youth using marijuana is rising and more are getting suspended.

Brian Cox said young people underestimate the immediate damage of marijuana use and said Central High has seen a spike in suspensions or expulsions for using the drugs or possessing paraphernalia. Increases have also been seen in minor infractions such as dress code violations for wearing clothing that advertises marijuana. Further, students have been some operating minor businesses by buying the drug in Colorado and selling in Cheyenne.

Mr. Black asked if Cheyenne schools are compiling reports on marijuana-related incidents. Principal Cox said each school can compile reports from the behavior management information systems in each district, and he can reach out to the Wyoming Association of Secondary School Principals and its Colorado counterpart association.

Shad Hamilton, principal at Fort Washakie High School, has seen a huge increase in marijuana use over the past five to six years, and that the Wyoming Department of Education should be able to pull reports from its statewide database of behavior incidents. He said marijuana use is the biggest problem related to student behavior and academics.

Mr. Black suggested that the Wyoming Youth Risk Behavior Survey could be referenced.

Doreen McGlade offered that the group many want to look to studies analyzing implications of policy through the National Institutes of Health. Particularly, if marijuana becomes legalized in Wyoming or not, how do we message those research findings to students and parents about the impact? She has seen research that has demonstrated a significant difference in the brain between adolescents and adults.

Brian Cox pointed out that education budget squeezes led to the idea that tax revenues from marijuana sales could help pay for schools and he asked if Wyoming is in such dire need of funds that a new tax base is needed.

Brian Farmer said the revenues in Colorado are not coming in as anticipated due to concerns about the legality of dispensaries, how they are taxed, confusion between federal and state law, and the fact that banks won't take the dispensaries' money because of uncertainty if those funds will be seized. A question that could be posed is what are the actual revenues and how much is being dispersed to education?

Ms. McGlade located a study of the effect of medical marijuana laws on adolescent use from 2003-11 using risk behavior surveys and will upload to the Google site.

Dr. Marty Nelson pointed out that DFS operates the state's Boys and Girls Schools and that if Wyoming were to see an 20 percent increase in youth probationers like in Colorado, the Boys School would not be able to handle the influx. He would have to divert all of his preventative money to juvenile delinquency. One question might be how many grade levels are these students behind their counterparts.

Another issue is the fact that schools might realize more funding due to taxation of marijuana, but DFS won't receive any of that extra funding yet will incur higher costs with the extra probationers and delinquents

Mr. Cox posed the question another way: If taxation is the rationale for legalizing recreational use, is that money really necessary to support services and is it enough to outweigh the increased costs of infrastructure and social services?

Next Steps

Mr. Black agreed to create a spreadsheet in the Google Drive folder that members can populate with questions and research links.

GMIAC next meeting

The next meeting of Governor's Marijuana Impact Assessment Council is 8.a.m. Oct. 6 in Room 1699 of the Herschler Building and Mr. Black invited members to attend if possible.

Next meeting of subcommittee

The group agreed to meet via conference call every other week beginning Oct. 9. The next meetings were set for 10 a.m. on Oct. 9 and Oct. 23. Mr. Black pledged to extend Google calendar invitations.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:43 a.m.

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- Next steps
- Next meeting of GMIAC Oct. 6, 8 a.m.
- Next meeting of subcommittee TBD