

June 2, 2010

## Restructuring Task Force Update

From: Linda Siegle

Last week the Restructuring Task Force met for two facilitated days of brainstorming. They were asked to answer the question: *What core essential services must state government provide?* The task force broke into three smaller groups for brainstorming and brought their ideas back to the larger group for discussion and distillation.

Some history:

1976 – 12 cabinet level (means reporting to the governor) departments

2010 – 23 cabinet level departments

2010 – 252 boards, commissions and advisory groups (over the last 15 years the legislature has eliminated 6 boards and commissions while adding 23)

The following broad key areas of concern were voted on – listed in order of the number of votes each received:

Education

Public Safety

Economic Development

Infrastructure

Social Services Safety Net (one vote)

Numerous handouts were provided including a book with all boards and commissions, spread sheets with the number of employees to residents in state government; number of employees to students in both public schools and higher education; and other relevant data. According to the data state government has a higher ratio of state employees to residents than many other states of our size; public education on the other hand has a significantly lower number of teachers to students and even non instructional support to students. Higher education has a significantly higher ratio of faculty to students as well as staff to students. Much discussion ensued on how higher education institutions should be combined under one board of regents or merge small colleges together. Also discussed was the merging of small school districts together. One legislator suggested shifting public education back to local governments (but then he said that would not work). Another suggestion was to put all PreK in PED.

Here are the big ideas coming from the breakouts that seemed to at this moment have broad support for further research:

- Merge Higher Education Department (HED) with Public Education Department (PED)
- Merge Department of Finance (DFA) with General Services and Department of Information Technology
- Create a contracting office that would handle ALL state contracts
- Sunset all Boards and Commissions and remove their rule making authority

- Consolidate school districts
- Make all capital outlay just for statewide projects
- Create operational efficiency throughout state government

Other ideas discussed, but put on the back burner for the moment:

- Create an agency that houses ALL the attorneys for state departments
- Combine HSD and DOH taking services to the local level
- Put all public education funding in the Department of Finance (used to be) instead of PED
- Create a place for all hearing officers instead of each department having them
- Conduct a constitutional convention to rewrite the constitution
- Change the funding formulas for PED and HED
- Review all HMO Medicaid contracts
- Create a new capital outlay process
- Require that all legislation have a cost analysis before it can be introduced
- Review Behavioral Health contract
- Implement administrative and instructional ratios for colleges and universities
- Prevent duplication in higher education
- Review all the tax credits currently offered

Several legislators said that there will be no new taxes passed in the next session.

All for this month – they will be studying the “big ideas” piece and bringing back information to the next meeting. The Task Force has requested that the Health and Human Services Interim Committee bring recommendations concerning HSD and DOH consolidation.