

**Legislative Council Strategic Planning Session
Summary Minutes
August 20-21, 2009
Barrister Bed and Breakfast
Helena**

Marc Scow, facilitator

Legislators and staff in attendance, by group:

Group A

Jesse O'Hara
Karen Berger
John Brueggeman
Dave Wanzenried
Todd Everts
Gayle Shirley

Group B

Bob Story
Greg Petesch
Carol Williams
Dennis Himmelberger
Susan Fox
Bob Bergren
Dave Bohyer

Group C

Jesse Laslovich
Kelly Dasilva
Jeff Essmann
Hank Trenk
Tom McGillvray

What are the worst possible outcomes if we fail to fulfill our Legislative Council and Legislative Services Division Mission?

A- Citizens cease to become involved in their own governance
Become ineffective as a branch
Bad public policy, legally indefensible
Continued weakening of the Legislative branch, both comparatively and absolutely
Strengthen individual roles in the executive branch
People won't see the LB as a good or honorable place to work or serve

(worst outcomes, cont.)

Special interests gain power.

Won't enhance staff resources for branch initiatives

Legislative gridlock, breakdown of cooperation among houses and parties

Representation of the individual citizen won't happen, people won't have a voice in gov't

Loss of respect for the institution and individuals

B- Legislators not as effective

Gridlock, institutional destruction

Public not represented

No change for foreseeable future

Continued decline as a branch

Increased public apathy, cynicism

Balance of branches out of kilter

State goes into decline, chaos

Initiative process gains

No quality candidates

Judiciary forced to make law and policies

C- Loss of staff/loss of quality staff

IT: interruption of session, loss of integrity, confidence (succession candidates - public)

Credibility damaged

Subservient to executive branch

End up like California legislature - hamstrung by ballot initiatives

Legislature becomes irrelevant

Representative democracy weakened

Loss of ability to intervene for constituents

What are the best possible outcomes if we succeed in fulfilling our Legislative Council and Legislative Services Division Mission?

A - More effective legislature that is more respected

Legislature would become "go to" branch of government

Increased accountability in use of public resources

Could "cherry pick" staff - it would be a good place to be to have a dominant role in public policy

Legislative body would have a respected place in the minds of the citizens

Increased quality and quantity of legislative candidates

Able to do a better job

Legislature in a position to leverage its own resources and also the resources from the other branches (cooperation/coordination)

Public trust and confidence in the Branch will exceed that of used car salesman for 1st time

More productive use of Legislature's time

(best outcomes, cont.)

Well thought out public policy

More effective use of staff time and expertise

B - Nirvana

Best for people of Montana

Initiatives die out

Process more sustainable

Public confidence increases

Legislators feel supported

Staff viewed as public policy resource

Efficiency increases - time and money saved

Legislators better understand role and are more effective

Less partisanship - more civility

Leadership vision for state - long-term planning

Balance of special interests, staff, legislators, and agencies

C- Legislature is proactive, leads policy and process equality with exec branch

Legislators able to focus on legislating, better candidates, leaders

People are prosperous, happy, content

People happy and confident with legislative process and outcomes, regardless of outcome

Integrity intact

People are begging to work for legislative branch

Constituents want to be involved and have confidence in the process

The legislature is accessible to people and not hindered by geography

Legislative branch is seen as leader in IT policy, efficiency, productivity

Public perception of legislature is positive, a highly effective body "They accomplish something"

People confident in representative government

They trust Legislative branch

What beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors can we choose that will foster the best possible outcomes?

A - Positive thinking

Patience

Legislature can be effective and respected institution

Representative democracy is worth preserving

Listening a high priority

Action over inaction

Tolerance of and respect for diversity

Montana can be better

Trust in process and participation

(beliefs, attitudes, cont.)

B- Respect

Believe in the institution, that all are equal, that you're there for the people, for future generations

Positive attitude

Leaders and servants

Respectful

Professional demeanor

Enjoy and enhance involvement

Honesty and integrity

Sincerity

C- Integrity, confidence in branch, truth, values

Responsibility to constituents

Strong work ethics

Think and act like the superior branch

Active listening

Respect for ideas as well as people

Walk the talk

Sincerity/genuine

Trustworthy

Honest

Sense of service

Cooperation

Humility

Team player

What strategies, actions, steps or approaches will foster the best possible outcomes? (# indicates dots)

A - Pay for performance

More outreach through TVMT (1)

Better pay

Recognition/rewards for positive legislative behavior, statesman award

Leadership in both parties get together and focus on common goals and outcomes (5)

Consolidating/reorganizing divisions to gain efficiency

Friendlier timeframe for session (-2)

Build better legislator relationships by having interim committees meet at same time (3)

Team building exercises December before session (5)

Change start of session, convene and recess (3), annual sessions

Line item budget for recruitment (-1)

Allowance to communicate with constituents (2)

(strategies, cont.)

B - Reorganize staff/branch (7-1)

Increase staff to support legislators (1)

Create staff teams (interdisciplinary) (8)

More rights for the minority (-2)

Improve office space for staff and legislators (5)

In-depth training for leaders (e.g. conflict resolution) (2)

Permanent operational staff for leadership (2)

Adequate staffing for leadership

Sufficient legislative budget (don't lead with you chin) (2)

More opportunities to develop leadership in legislators (NCSL, training, in-house, in-state, regional events, CD's videos, interactive small groups) (5)

Interim committee improvement - training, paradigm shift

C - Fiscal note impact review by LFD (3)

Institutionalize the expertise of the legislative rules - put the rules in a digitized format (3)

Even out work load among legislative staff

Facilitate relationship development between legislators - legislative lounge (2)

Make more room in the capitol for legislature (1)

Branch operations - look among divisions -- use the 3 divisions in policy development (i.e. education) (1)

Humanize the legislature

Institute mechanisms that promote respect across party lines (1)

Think outside of the biennium

Succession planning - how much staff will it take to replace senior staff (3)

Evaluate the Legislative Branch

Explore ways to improve communication between legislators and constituents, between House and Senate (1)

Invest in the Branch for the future

Reallocate bill draft work load (i.e. give house members bill drafts (-7)

Main themes from "dot" exercise

Improve office space for legislators and staff

Create staff teams (interdisciplinary)

Legislator Leadership development

Elected leadership cooperation/communication

Reorganize Staff/Branch

Team building before session

Interim committee improvement

Large Group Discussion Notes:

1. Rules - digitize, simplify, reorganize, or index, Rules Subcommittee.
Digitize to make rules searchable. Embed with vote system so appropriate rules are linked.
Cross reference or reorganize, i.e. list all votes that take more than a majority, all reconsideration motions in one place or indexed, deadlines, revenue and appropriation bills designation.
Working manual for floor process. Mechanism to institutionalize, options, i.e. parliamentarian.
2. Staff teams: Consult with LFA, need to make presentation to LFC. Illustrate pilots that have already worked: EQC, mental health, workers' comp, fire suppression. Figure out how to incorporate audit work, work with LA and LAC.
3. Elected leadership training - schedules, topics (how to lead, conflict resolution and how to deal with confrontation, communication, positive partisanship, team building, ground rules, "set the belt line") Legislative Leadership Foundation. Transition/legacy.
4. General topical and educational leadership development - bring in NCSL, broad topics, METNET, emerging issues (health care), basics of leadership, theories, on-line courses. Regular seminars like Wheeler Center. Leadership promotion within caucuses, Continuing Education.
5. Scheduling time together in interim. Use interim committee schedule to bring legislators together, have seminars, dinners during an interim week. Where are there interim opportunities? Topics such as nuts and bolts, budgeting communication skills, conflict management.
6. Interim Committee improvement: add nonvoting members to interim committees or reimburse a certain number of meetings for nonmembers to be able to attend interim meetings.
7. Standing Committees to interim committees. Areas to research and find solutions: unequal numbers (nonvoting or conf. comm voting), statutory prohibition, membership needs to include app. subcommittee members, related to interdisciplinary teams.
8. Legislative space. 1) statutory changes needed to gain back authority. 2) Learn more about state's process, Mater Plan, long-term plan and needs of Governor and Secretary of State, too. 3) long-term plan requires vision of leadership and staff needs, need a long-term subcommittee.
9. Orientation and Legislator Training. Bring legislators and staff together, staff booklet, "buddy system", timing, interim committee staff and meetings for trainings, information office, small groups and individuals, need to overcome skepticism, also need H/S staff and other leg staff interaction/training, training in orientation needs to be open to all, prep days, mentoring, lunch and dinner opportunities.
10. Post-session meeting on budget book - simplify executive summary

3 Self-selected Groups - ideas for main themes

#1 - Elected Leadership training, needs and ideas, how, when, where?

Post-election: communicate immediate actions that leaders need to do: staffing budget, hiring, appointments

- get all 4 leaders in same room
- former leaders impart wisdom

Develop communication skills

- conflict resolution
- negotiating
- identify common ground, goals. where are land mines, "must have" objectives

Confirmation process: clarify Senate rules regarding

Assignment of bills

- priority of bills
- bill flow: (1) approps, (2) policy, (3) transmittal

Regular meetings/communication between leaders

- President/Speaker
- President - Minority Leader and Speaker - Minority leader
- All 4 leaders
- Governor - invite as overture

Interim appointments: solicit citizen interest and use website

#2 - Legislator development, pre-session/session, interim

Interim-

Group scheduling of interim committees (once every other month - Brueggeman's designated week)

Issue Seminars (in conjunction with group scheduling)

Social Events

- Committee dinners at beginning
- Informal mini-caucuses

Committee membership

- chairmanship rotation statutory change
- standing committee transition and # of House members
- ex-officio members compensated
- conference committee voting

Pre-session (Nov and Dec)/Early Session -

Caucus mentors and staff mentors (example given of 5 legislators per staff member)

Legislator Training

- early session training in standing committees
- pre-session (caucus week).
- web tool training - power point for future reference (user friendly)

End-of-session Survey before Sine Die

- Not just freshman legislators

Law School for Legislators

- Room 303
- More time for judges

Training legislators to go paperless

Orientation Dinner

- random seating
- dinner the night of caucuses

#3 - Staff Teams/reorganization

Steps:

LSD/LFD teams first, then LAD.

- Evolve to permanent topical expert staff teams with LAD in the mix. Ongoing "permanent" teams. Interim first, then comfortable with teams during session.
- Enlist LC/LFC members to present idea to LFD
- Joint administrative committee meetings
- Bring LAD in through LAC
- Present performance audits to interim committees that deal with subject and financial compliance audits to LFC
- Look at where this model has worked; what worked; what didn't, who has what information and expertise

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