I. Call to order

John Paulson called to order the second regular meeting of the UFARS Redesign Workgroup at 9:05 a.m. on October 21, 2009, at the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), Conference Center A in Interactive TeleVision (ITV) room Conference Center Room 12.

II. Roll call

The following persons were present:

Jaber Alsiddiqui	St. Paul via WebEx
Kristine Carr	Northeast Metro 916
Janna Duffy	MDE
Karen Dykoski	MDE
Barb Gjerde	New London-Spicer School District
Janet Halonen	EskoSchool District
Darin Jensen	SW/WC Service Cooperative
Michelle Knutson	TIES
Lori Mohs	Skyward
Pat Morphew	Worthington CIMS
John Paulson	MDE
Stephanie Shawback	Minneapolis via WebEx
Cathy Wagner	MDE
Tom Wieczorek	Alexandria
Jodie Zesbaugh	Ehlers

III. Approval of minutes from last meeting

The minutes of the September 24, 2009, UFARS Redesign Work Group were distributed prior to the meeting. The minutes were approved as distributed by voice vote.

IV. Open issues

a) John Paulson presented the responses from the vendors queried via the MDE Data Special Interest Group (SIG) distribution list. TIES response had been inadvertently left out from the summary. John Paulson presented the completed summary to the group and promised to send the summaries to the group after the TIES response has been added. Michelle Knutson presented the TIES response orally during this meeting. John Paulson will add the TIES response to the summary.

V. New business
    a) During the discussion of vendor responses, several consensus items were identified:
1. Any rewrite of UFARS must be released on a fiscal year boundary.
2. HR software integration needs to be considered as well.
3. Sorting can be problematic for some vendor and local education agencies (LEA) systems if there are alpha characters included in the UFARS dimensions.
4. 2012 is still the target date for any UFARS rewrite.
5. Holding at least two years open at a time is a reality that must be addressed.

    b) Next Janna Duffy presented on the structure of the committee. The central discussion was around the need for a chairman and vice chairman for the committee. This is a similar structure to the Advisory Committee on Financial Management, Accounting and Reporting. General discussion concluded that this was a good structure and we should use it.
1. Several people in the group voiced concerns that their input would not be taken seriously by MDE and that their participation in the group would be considered a "rubber stamp" for MDE's pre-determined direction. Janna Duffy and John Paulson assured the group that issues, concerns, suggestions and recommendations made by the UFARS Redesign Work Group would indeed be strongly considered and placed before the UFARS Advisory Committee.
2. Concern was raised that the committee was examining implementation elements and the decision for change had not yet been reached. MDE staff agreed that no decision for change had yet been made, aside from changes in underlying technical systems (e.g., movement away from mainframe) and that was something that the committee, in its mission, had yet to determine.
3. After this discussion, a voice nomination and vote were taken.
4. Tom Wieczorek was elected chair and will assume those duties starting at the next scheduled meeting.
5. Kristine Carr was elected vice chair and will assume those duties starting at the next scheduled meeting.

    c) The group added a new fundamental redesign goal. The new goal is to "Accommodate local budgetary decision-making needs." Building and site-level reporting needs to be addressed in any new system.

    d) Cross-walking is an issue that also needs to be addressed. There was a discussion on how cross-walking could be addressed and a "local-use" field or dimension was suggested.

    e) There was some discussion on "real-time". It was concluded that this might be a long-term goal only realizable for some LEAs. A "not twice a year batch" alternative might be more realistic and achievable goal for all LEAs as the group moves forward with recommendations.

f) A discussion item centered on a single School Information System (SIS) for the state. Legislative authority would be required for such a change. Some members favored making a recommendation in this area. It was decided that this should be a future agenda item.

g) The group discussed possible focus groups to seek additional perspective from. It was determined instead to have representatives from several groups come and present before the entire work group. Below are the groups identified at the meeting.
   1. charter schools
   2. legislative staff
   3. legislative auditors
   4. state auditor
   5. federal auditors
   6. program auditors
   7. vendor auditors
   8. users at buildings
   9. principals
   10. human resource groups
   11. superintendents at some small rural districts who might not be represented

   Can we add people who have gone through major upgrades to lessons learned?

h) In order to prepare for presentation by the groups above, the group agreed to provide Janna Duffy with their suggestions for questions to be answered by each group. Types of questions can focus on strengths, weaknesses or anything else. Members of the working group are to provide Janna Duffy with their survey questions by close of business on October 30, 2009.

i) Janna Duffy will send out the consolidated lists of questions to the working group by November 6, 2009.

j) A discussion centered on the broad training that would be required for data managers well in advance of any rollout of a redesigned UFARS. The Redesign Committee felt that attention must be given to communications, rollout and training.

k) Lori Mohs agreed to present examples of Skyward software used in other states at the next meeting.

l) Janna Duffy led the discussion regarding the material distributed last time including the FED's and other state's account structures.
   1. Copies of the Federal National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) and Federal Survey were provided to the members. These documents will provide the mandatory structure for federal reporting. Currently MDE crosswalks UFARS to the federal reporting structure and the crosswalk document was also provided. These documents will be reviewed more thoroughly at the next meeting once committee members have had a chance to review them.

2. Talking points for each state and federal comparison are included in the PowerPoint presentation and not repeated here, noting a correction is needed to the notes slide on federal.

m) Members of the group discussed the concept of the function segment used by federal and other state accounting systems. Several committee members have had discussions with people who have had experience utilizing function in their account structure. The feedback the committee members had received around this were favorable. More discussion will be needed before a consensus is created.

n) Cathy Wagner led a discussion on linking course catalog into UFARS via course code. The Wisconsin example seemed to support this concept. There was a lot of discussion on the difficulty and the drivers associated with a change of this magnitude. This would add significant scope to any UFARS redesign effort. Cathy Wagner will contact a Wisconsin representative to find out more on their layout and use of that information and report back to the committee at the next meeting.

o) Eliminating cross-walks is a goal but perhaps may not be realistic. Internal reporting may be facilitated by supplying optional fields that could help remove cross-walking. Perhaps they would be called "local use." Local use supports consistent support for cross-walking. It was also discussed that late reporting cycle UFARS changes resulted in increased utilization of crosswalks by local districts.

p) The next meeting was scheduled for December 2, 2009, 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon, same location.

VI. Adjournment
The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.