

SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting

April 8, 2019

Members Present: Ellen Weaver, Chair; Dr. Bob Couch, Vice-Chair; April Allen; Rep. Terry Alexander; Rep. Raye Felder; Senator Kevin Johnson; Senator John Matthews; Brian Newsome; Patti Tate; and Dr. Scott Turner.

Members Participating via Conference Call: Barbara Hairfield

EOC Staff Present: Dr. Kevin Andrews; Melanie Barton; Dr. Rainey Knight; Bunnie Ward; and Dana Yow.

Ms. Weaver welcomed members and guests to the meeting. Ms. Weaver acknowledged that Rep. Loftis, now Senator Loftis, is no longer a member of the Committee. She expressed appreciation for his service on the Committee and for his passion for computer science education and for his grandchildren.

Ms. Weaver then explained to the Committee that Frank Rainwater, Executive Director of the South Carolina Revenue and Fiscal Affairs (RFA) Office, was invited to the meeting to explain the work that he is doing on the public education funding model. However, due to a meeting of the Board of Economic Advisors this afternoon, he could not attend today but will plan on presenting in the future. Ms. Weaver noted that staff has provided a copy of the letter that Governor McMaster, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House sent to Mr. Rainwater asking for a review and recommendations of public education funding. The EOC staff is providing support to RFA.

The minutes of the February 11, 2019 meeting were approved as distributed.

The Committee then received subcommittee reports:

Academic Standards and Assessments Subcommittee

Due to an illness, Ms. Hairfield participated via a conference call. She asked that EOC staff provide a summary of the three action items.

K-Grade 3 Social Studies Standards - Dr. Knight noted that the Academic Standards and Assessments (ASA) Subcommittee met on March 18, 2019 and recommended that the Committee approve the revised K-3 social studies standards. As noted by Dr. Knight, on December 10, 2018, the EOC approved the social studies standards for grades 4-12 and requested revisions to grades K-3. Following the December meeting, the SC Department of Education reviewed and revised the K-3 social studies standards.

Dr. Knight explained the revisions made to the K-3 social studies standards included improvements to the alignment and consistency of the standards in grades K-2. In grades K-2,

the standards progress from exploring social studies from the perspective of the classroom and expands to South Carolina and then through the United States. For grade 3, the Department and the EOC staff agreed a logical progression from the classroom, to South Carolina and United States, would be exposure to the world through a world geography course of studies. Because the newly approved 4th and 5th grade standards contained South Carolina history content previously taught in grade 3, the determination was made to retain the original focus of world geography in grade 3 and to remove references specifically to South Carolina. Dr. Jerry Mitchell, a USC geography professor, who served as a member of the EOC review team and the Department writing team, worked with the Department to review and make recommendations to the grade 3 world geography standards. The world geography grade 3 standards explore the world from a theme-based approach.

In addition to approving the new K-3 social studies standards, the ASA Subcommittee recommends that a letter be sent to the General Assembly providing the rationale for the changes to grade 3 social studies standards and noting that South Carolina history will now be taught in grades 4 and 5. The ASA subcommittee also concurred that, in addition to the standards, there is a need to create a document that shows the progression of civic skills and dispositions from kindergarten to grade 12 to operationalize civic readiness.

Rep. Felder asked for clarification about when South Carolina history would be taught. Ms. Hairfield noted that, while the standards embed history, geography, economics and civics, identifying the four social studies strands would assist teachers.

There being no further questions, the Committee approved unanimously the revised K-3 social studies standards.

Industry Certifications for Accountability - Ms. Yow then explained that the ASA Subcommittee is recommending that the Committee approve an additional 80 industry credentials for school years 2018-19 and 2019-20 for purposes of defining a student “career ready” as being a student who is a Career and Technical Education (CTE) completer and earns a national or state industry credential. In the current accountability system, high schools receive a rating for College/Career Readiness, which is the percentage of high school graduates who are college or career ready. One-fourth or 25 points of each high school’s overall rating is based on this indicator. While there are several metrics that can define “career ready,” a student may be deemed “career ready” if the high school graduate is a CTE completer and, where applicable, has earned a national or state industry credential as determined by the business community. The 80 new industry certifications/credentials would join the 164 the EOC has already approved for use in the accountability system.

Ms. Yow explained the data included in the meeting packet. First, there was a list of certifications/credentials, organized by Career Cluster, which were submitted by the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) after vetting by local, regional and state organizations, including the South Carolina Department of Commerce, the South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce, and the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce. The items listed as “Keep” were already approved for accountability and items noted as “Add” are recommended for approval by the full Committee. There was also an analysis of the certifications/credentials earned by students in 2017-18, analyzed by Career Cluster. Overall, students earned a total of

7,275 certifications or credentials in school year 2017-18. Thirty-seven percent of the credentials were earned in the Health Science Cluster, with over half of those credentials coming from Basic Life Support and Certified Nurse Aide. Also, 1,038 of the certifications were OSHA 10 General Industry and 171 were Microburst EmployABILITY Soft Skills Certification, two general credentials the Subcommittee recommends be worked into an overall stackable credential system.

The analysis also showed that of the 164 certifications/credentials already approved for use in the accountability system, only 64 - or 39% -had at least one student earning it. The SCDE has stated they are analyzing the data and will be able to determine what credentials are not being used with historical data from two consecutive years. This process will allow them to delete with justification. Also, of note – no certifications were earned in the Marketing or Finance Career Clusters for School Year 2017-18. The SCDE has proposed five (5) certifications be added in Finance; seven (7) for Marketing.

Ms. Yow explained that the EOC staff has been working with Angel Malone, Director of Career and Technology Education Office at SCDE, during this process. Ms. Malone, who could not attend the meeting, participated via a conference call. She noted that the new federal Perkins law requires states to connect local regional workforce needs and stackable credentials to create access especially in rural schools and districts. Ms. Malone explained that the agency is working with the SC Department of Employment and Workforce to align industry credential opportunities with the demands of the workforce regionally to create a primary and stackable credentials for the 2020-2021 School Year.

Dr. Couch noted that in recent conversations with business and industry in Anderson that employers want students who have a Silver or better on the WIN career readiness assessment, who have an OSHA certification, and who have earned a soft skills credential. Rep. Alexander stated that the state needs to evaluate the clusters and possibly redefine the clusters. Dr. Couch agreed with Rep. Alexander and noted in his new career center, the 16 clusters are grouped under 5 broad areas. Dr. Turner asked for clarification about how the industry certifications will impact accountability. Sen. Matthews asked for clarification about the Ready to Work (R2W) Career Readiness Assessment and certificates that students can earn.

Dr. Turner asked if there are certifications that should be added. Dr. Couch and Ms. Allen noted that the list needs to be amended periodically especially with dramatic changes in the workforce. Ms. Allen noted that a student who earns a credential is highly valued by industry because a certification means that the student has specific skills substantiated by an independent review.

There being no further discussion, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the additional certifications and to work with the Department of Education on designing a system of primary and stackable credentials in the future.

Palmetto Gold and Silver Criteria - Dr. Knight explained that state law requires the EOC, working with the State Board of Education, to establish the criteria for the Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards Program. State law requires awards be established for schools: (1) attaining high levels of academic achievement; (2) attaining high rates of growth; and (3) making substantial progress in closing the achievement gap between disaggregated groups.

The Subcommittee recommended that the Committee approve criteria for elementary, middle, and high schools that attain high levels of academic achievement and high rates of growth. These criteria, as approved, will be forwarded to the State Board of Education for its consideration. The Subcommittee further recommended additional analysis of data is needed before schools can be recognized for making substantial progress in closing the achievement gap between disaggregated groups.

There being no questions, the Committee approved the Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards Program Criteria.

EIA and Improvement Mechanisms Subcommittee

Update on Fiscal Year 2019-20 General Appropriation Bill - Dr. Couch provided a summary of the 2019-20 General Appropriation Bill as adopted by the House on March 13 as it relates to education and to the EOC's budget recommendations. In summary, the House recommended the following:

- Consolidation of the general fund line item appropriations for the Education Finance Act (EFA) and EFA employer contributions into a new line item, *State Aid to Classrooms*. To the new General Fund line item, *State Aid to Classrooms*, the House added \$159,248,000 to raise the starting salary on the State Minimum Teacher Salary Schedule from \$32,000 to \$35,000, as recommended by the EOC, and to increase salary cells beyond five years of experience by 4 percent. These funds pay for the full cost of increasing the salary schedules. The combined line item appropriation reflects an average per pupil of \$3,846 per pupil. Furthermore, the funds are allocated based on the manner in which the funds were allocated in the current fiscal year. There was no increase to the base student cost or increased funding for additional weighted pupil units.
- For the first time, the House published in the budget the new State Minimum Teacher Salary Schedule and the percentage increases for each cell in the salary schedule. The budget projects an average teacher salary of \$52,830 in Fiscal Year 2019-20. The actual SC average teacher salary in 2017-18 was \$50,050.
- The House also funded:
 - \$50 million in excess debt service for School Districts Capital Improvement monies for funding school facility upgrades;
 - \$20 million in lottery revenues for instructional materials; and
 - A minimum of \$19.4 million in lottery revenues for school bus lease/purchases.

Of note, the House did not annualize any of the appropriation for industry certifications as recommended by the EOC. The House also did not provide funding for computer science professional development.

Dr. Couch called upon Ms. Barton to provide an update on the budget and recommended by the Senate Finance Committee, which completed its work in the prior week. Ms. Barton noted that the three key differences in two versions of the bill are as follows: The Senate Finance Committee: (1) increased funding of the Education Finance Act (EFA) by \$15 million; (2) reduced funding of

charter schools by \$2.1 million due to revisions in student enrollment; and (3) funded the same increase in teacher salaries as the House but also funded the special schools.

On provisos, both the House and the Senate Finance Committee adopted the EOC's recommendations to include Cambridge International exams as part of the state's reimbursement policy for college placement tests. And, both supported increasing the maximum annual and maximum lifetime loan amounts under the SC Teacher Loan Program.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.