

SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
Minutes of the Meeting
October 12, 2015

Members in Attendance: Mr. David Whittemore (Chair); Dr. Danny Merck (Vice Chair); Ms. Anne Bull; Dr. Bob Couch; Sen. Mike Fair; Ms. Raye Felder; Ms. Barbara Hairfield; Sen. Wes Hayes; Mr. Dwight Loftis; Ms. Deb Marks; Sen. John Matthews; Mr. Joe Neal; Mr. Neil Robinson; and Ms. Patti Tate.

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

Mr. Whittemore called the meeting to order, extending his thoughts and prayers to the South Carolinians who had been affected by the recent flooding.

The first order of business was the approval of the minutes from the August 3 and 4, 2015 retreat in Charleston. Mr. Robinson moved to approve the minutes as distributed. Ms. Hairfield seconded the motion. There being no objection, the minutes were approved as distributed.

The chairman then recognized two individuals to present to the EOC.

First, Carla Whitlock of Apprenticeship Carolina, provided information to the committee on the increase in the number of Youth Apprenticeship Programs and companies participating in the effort across the state. Apprenticeships are an “earn while you learn” training model that combines structured on the job training, job related education, and a scalable wage progression. Apprenticeship Carolina™ is part of the Division of Economic Development within the SC Technical College System. Ms. Whitlock highlighted apprenticeships in Aiken, Liberty, Charleston, Anderson and Greenwood, South Carolina. Sen. Matthews asked about the reason for the large increase in the number of apprenticeships. Ms. Whitlock responded noting that there is a large increase in the number of European companies in South Carolina, companies that are familiar with and use the apprenticeship model to meet workforce needs. Sen. Fair asked if the program had reached out to the Department of Juvenile Justice of students in intervention programs. Ms. Whitlock said that she is seeing the program expand to more at risk students.

Then, the chairman recognized Laurie Humphrey, an AP Government teacher at Dutch Fork High School in Lexington-Richland School District Five. Ms. Humphrey was selected to pilot a new AP Government Problem Based Learning curriculum. Laurie Humphrey is the only teacher in the U.S. teaching the new curriculum from the George Lucas Educational Foundation on a semester schedule. The George Lucas Educational Foundation is a nonprofit operating foundation, founded by filmmaker George Lucas in 1991 that seeks to identify and spread innovative, replicable and evidence-based approaches to helping K-12 students learn better. Ms. Humphrey provided examples of the problem-based learning that her students have

undertaken and the results of their engagement. She also noted that the work she is doing with her AP classes is also being replicated in the college prep courses and across her content areas at her school. Ms. Hairfield noted that civic competency is a major goal of public education and commended Ms. Humphrey on using problem-based learning to empower student learning. Ms. Marks asked if parents had access to the standards being taught in the classroom. Ms. Humphrey stated that the standards are the state standards in US Government and that she also provides parents with the syllabus and other information.

Special Report – Summer Reading Camp Partnerships

The chair then recognized Dr. Rainey Knight to provide an overview of summer reading camp partnerships. In the prior fiscal year, 2014-15 the General Assembly allocated \$700,000 “to support community partnerships whereby community organizations would collaborate with local school districts to provide after-school programs or summer reading camps that utilize volunteers, mentors or tutors to provide instructional support to struggling readers in elementary schools that have a poverty index of fifty percent or greater.” In addition the legislature charged the EOC with evaluating the partnerships. The South Carolina Department of Education allocated the funds to the SC Afterschool Alliance which, in turn, funded 15 clubs, primarily Boys and Girls Clubs serving 658 students in 11 sites.

Using the national research students and best-practice literature that document high-quality academic opportunities in summer learning programs as the metric, Dr. Knight collected data and information on program implementation and effectiveness from interviews, surveys and observations of the 11 sites. The report includes nine findings and recommendations including: (1) All after-school or summer programs should employ reading specialists, in the program who can evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of children and design individualized reading programs to meet individual needs. These specialists could also work with or train volunteer tutors; (2) The Department should determine the reading assessment or assessments to be used within sites during implementation of the program in 2015-16 in order to measure students’ progress; (3) The Department should implement the program sooner in the fiscal year to give community partners and school districts adequate time to collaborate and initiate such programs; (4) The partnerships should work closely with districts to coordinate and collaborate to ensure adequate reading instructional time for all students; and (5) The report recommends a competitive grant process for 2015-16 to offer other community partnership the opportunity to assist students. Finally, the report documents two models for providing effective summer reading camps. In one model the district provides the necessary reading instruction hours with certified reading teachers, and the lead community partner or partners, such as the Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA, faith-based groups, public libraries, etc., are responsible for providing enrichment activities for students during the remaining portion of the day. A second model is for the community partner to be the primary for the summer reading camps as well as the remaining activities of the day. The community partner would be responsible for employing a reading specialist to plan, coordinate and implement the reading portion of the day with the assistance of a reading specialist.

Mr. Robinson requested that the report specifically recommend that individuals applying for grants have a structured plan documenting how the district and community partner are working together. Rep. Loftis asked how summer camps were able to break up the four hours of reading instruction. Sen. Matthews and Ms. Hairfield expressed the need to engage and educate community partners and volunteers in the process. Rep. Loftis also asked if the state needs to focus more efforts on early literacy for children from birth through second grade. Sen. Hayes sked if the staff from the EOC and the Department of Education would review the report and proviso to see if any language in the proviso needs to be changed in next year's budget.

Subcommittee reports were then received.

Dr. Merck reported that the Academic Standards and Assessment Subcommittee is working on recommendations to merge the state and federal accountability system. He suggested that members review the two-page summary published by *Education Week* that describes the current No Child Left Behind law and the ESEA waiver as well as pending federal legislation. He noted that a working group will be meeting to determine the metrics for measuring World Class Knowledge and that any member of the EOC who wanted to serve on the working group should notify Mrs. Barton. He concluded by pointing out that 39 school districts have volunteered to participate in the assessment survey. The results of the survey will be available at the EOC's December meeting.

Dr. Couch reported for the EIA and Improvement Mechanisms Subcommittee. The first item is an informational report documenting the implementation of the Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children Program this fiscal year. The EOC is responsible for identifying schools that are eligible to participate in the program. For the current fiscal year there are 101 eligible schools. He highlighted problems encountered in the program this year and the amount of tuition grants that schools reported receiving in the prior school year. A revised Appendix F and Tables 2 and 3 of the report were disseminated at the meeting.

Reporting for the Public Awareness Subcommittee was Mrs. Hairfield. She noted that 458 schools are currently participating in the *Read Your Way to the Big Game*. The EOC has promoted reading at football games at Clemson and USC and in promotional materials and programs. The EOC staff continues to attend and present at meetings of educators and community leaders, promoting education. She noted that with the merging of the state and federal accountability systems there is a need to provide additional information to educators during this time of transition.

The chair then appointed a subcommittee of Sen. Hayes, Rep. Loftis and Ms. Hairfield to recommend a chair and vice chair at the December meeting of the EOC. Because his term on the EOC concludes in June, Mr. Whittemore wanted to ensure that the next chairman could fulfill a two-year commitment leading the committee.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.