SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
Minutes of the Meeting (held via web call due to COVID-19 closures)
April 20, 2020

Members Present: Ellen Weaver, Chair; Neil Robinson; Superintendent Molly Spearman; Sen. Kevin Johnson; Rep. Neal Collins; Sen. Greg Hembree; Rep. Raye Felder; Barbara Hairfield; Patti Tate; Dr. Bob Couch; Dr. John Stockwell; Dr. Scott Turner; April Allen; and Rep. Terry Alexander

EOC Staff Present: Matthew Ferguson, Dr. Kevin Andrews, Dr. Valerie Harrison, Dr. Rainey Knight, and Dana Yow

Others Present: Dr. Lee D'Andrea and Dr. David Mathis

Ellen Weaver opened the meeting by thanking Superintendent Spearman, the South Carolina Department of Education (SDE), teachers, principals and superintendents for their efforts in implementing remote learning during the pandemic period. Matthew Ferguson made remarks as the newly appointed executive director of the EOC.

The minutes from the February meeting were approved and seconded as submitted.

Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs (ECENC) Report
Dr. Kevin Andrews presented the ECENC report for the 2018-19 school year. The summary of student progress shows in reading students showed a score of 1.4 NCE in reading and -0.1 NCE in mathematics. The corresponding median percentile rank showed a three-point gain in reading and a one-point gain in mathematics.

The recommendations from the report included:
- Collect students' birthdate, gender and race for next year to ensure better matched student data;
- Provide previous year's data in order to assess student improvement;
- Highlight student assessment reporting requirements published in the application process for school eligibility in order to increase participation rate; and
- Monitor schools failing to report assessments

Suspension of Ratings
Ellen Weaver presented recommended suspending overall and indicator ratings on the state report card for 2020. Sen. Hembree made a motion to accept. Barbara Hairfield seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

eLearning Report
Dr. Lee D'Andrea presented the eLearning report as per 1A.83 proviso for the 2019-20 school year. The report summarized the implementation of year 2 of eLearning, which involved 15 school districts. Year one involved 5 school districts.

She emphasized three components of teaching and learning.
1. Digital Learning: students and teaching using technology
2. eLearning: as per the proviso
3. Online learning: using technology for long periods of time as for an entire course

A video produced by ETV was shared that showed teachers and students using eLearning for year 2.

Dr. D'Andrea discussed the implementation process describing the critical components as being districts having 1:1 devices, a learning management system, instructional technology support for teachers and a strong infrastructure to deliver the instruction. Districts participated in mock eLearning days in preparation for inclement weather days to utilize eLearning.

Questions from districts emerged as a result of the implementation and included:
- How many days can this be used effectively?
- How to increase connectivity options?
- How to address students with IEPs?

Findings in the report included:
- District leadership and organization structure is important to the overall success
- Well established digital learning environment within physical classroom is important to be established prior to using technology for eLearning
- Preparation and planning make a difference in the quality of the migration from digital learning environment

Recommendations in the report included:
1. Continue another year with a cohort 3
2. Establish a readiness cohort to assist districts not yet ready for eLearning
3. Use year 3 as transition year from the EOC to South Carolina Department of Education (SDE)

The report stated the following conclusions:
1. eLearning is a successful resource for short term utilization
2. Strong foundation at the district level is important for successful implementation
3. Online learning is moving forward

Discussion followed the presentation. Questions included:
- How to close the equity gap with devices and connectivity?
- Superintendent Spearman shared information from the Department regarding their work with remote learning. The Department has surveyed over 4,000 teachers regard remote learning. Results showed 80% of teachers indicate things are going well and 20% shared they have concerns. Ms. Spearman shared the Department will receive $216 million in federal relief dollars with $195 million going to school districts. Finally, Ms. Spearman expressed concerns with broadband access in rural areas. Representative Felder agreed with this concern.
- Who will be involved in year 3 cohort? Suggestions included reviewing the districts' plans that submitted technology-related emergency plans to the SDE. All districts will be invited to participate as either cohort 3 of eLearning or as a readiness district.
- Learning management systems were discussed as a component for delivering eLearning. A state contract was discussed.
- Rural areas were again discussed with the different approaches used in remote learning.

- Regarding the CARES funds, Superintendent Spearman suggested using the funds for extra instructional days.
- Representative Alexander stated he did not want to punish kids for not having access to Internet.
- Senator Hembree suggested districts use the CARES funds for technology for remote learning. He also wanted to know the price tag for distance learning statewide. Superintendent Spearman indicates she would get the numbers.

Cyclical Review Update
Ms. Dana Yow presented update on the EOC's cyclical review process. The report will be presented to the EOC in December 2020. Members of the cyclical review were shared. A summary of the February meeting was shared as well as the plans for the webinar May meeting.

Mr. Robinson made a motion to adjourn and Representative Alexander seconded the motion. The committee voted unanimously to adjourn.