

SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting

December 9, 2019

Members Present: Ellen Weaver, Chair; Rep. Terry Alexander; April Allen; Rep. Neal Collins; Dr. Bob Couch; Barbara Hairfield; Rep. Raye Felder; Senator Greg Hembree; Senator Kevin Johnson; Senator John Matthews; Dr. Brian Newsome; Neil Robinson; Patti Tate; David Mathis (sitting in for State Superintendent Molly Spearman); Dr. John Stockwell; and Dr. Scott Turner.

EOC Staff Present: Dr. Kevin Andrews; Dr. Valerie Harrison; Hope Johnson-Jones; Dr. Rainey Knight; and Dana Yow.

Ms. Weaver welcomed members and guests to the meeting. She updated the committee on the search process for a new Executive Director for the EOC. Twenty-six applications were received, and the subcommittee designated to conduct the search would be meeting shortly to begin interviewing candidates. Ms. Weaver then introduced Rep. Neal Collins, the newest member of the EOC.

The minutes of the October 14, 2019 meeting were approved as distributed.

Ms. Weaver called upon Mr. Robinson to present the report from the ASA Subcommittee. Mr. Robinson called upon Dr. Knight to present the K-12 Science Academic Standards. First commending the SCDE for their work, Dr. Knight presented the report from the review team that looked at the current science standards.

The recommendations were compiled under the advisement of two review panels: a national review panel of science educators who have worked with national or other state organizations and a state review panel made up of South Carolina science teachers, parents, business and community leaders and South Carolina teachers of English language learners and exceptional education drawn from various geographic areas in South Carolina. She went through the commendations and concerns noted by reviewers. Performance indicators seemed to be redundant, and the group suggested teachers differentiate within individual standards. The group discussed reducing the number of standards so that teachers could go deeper within the standards. There was also a strong belief that preservice teachers need to have a stronger background in science.

Dr. Turner stated he wished CHE would allow physical science to count as a lab science; it is important content that children may never get if they don't take it in high school. Dr. Knight stated she agreed with this request. There being no further discussion, the EOC approved the report.

Dr. Knight then discussed the Preparing for Success indicator for the School Report Cards. For the 2018 and 2019 school report cards, the Preparing for Success indicator is weighted 10 out of 100 points, with social studies and science as the two components for elementary, middle and high school ratings. Due to Proviso 1.94 of the 2019-20 Appropriation Act, only students in grades 4 and 6 will be tested in Science this school year, necessitating decisions for the Preparing for Success indicator. Dr. Knight discussed feedback received from elementary and middle

principals, superintendents, SCDE staff, principals, instructional leaders, science educators, parents, business representatives, and community members. She made five points that affirmed the recommendation that the Preparing for Success indicator should stay consistent for the current school year:

1. Schools have expressed a desire to keep Report Cards as consistent as possible for school personnel and the general public. We are in year 2 with the 2019 release of school report cards. For 2019, there was already a change to the Student Progress indicator (Growth) due to a new vendor. The scoring process was amended; however, the ranges of points that define each rating were NOT changed.
2. The EOC, partnering with the SC Department of Education, will initiate a cyclical review of the School Report Card in 2020 and expects to make recommendations to the EOC. Based on the results of the cyclical review, it is expected additional changes will be made to the Preparing for Success Indicator. In addition, a careful review of the student engagement survey will be conducted with possible revisions/deletions to the School Quality/Student Success indicator.
3. Schools are in mid-year of 2019-20. Schools are aware of the removal of Social Studies assessment in elementary and middle school levels and are aware that science remains in the Preparing for Success indicator.
4. To eliminate or reduce the points for Science in the Preparing for Success indicator would limit the curriculum, especially in the elementary schools.
5. With an emphasis in the state on science and other STEM related initiatives, science should remain a substantive part of the School Report Card.

For the 2019-20 School Report Card, the EOC staff recommends the Preparing for Success Indicator should continue to count as 10 percent (10 points) of the report card with science as the measure that comprises the rating for elementary and middle schools. For the 20 middle schools that do not have a sixth grade, the points will be divided between growth and achievement. Mr. Robinson stated that Supt. Spearman concurred with this recommendation and made a motion to approve. Rep. Felder seconded the motion, and it was then approved.

Mr. Robinson then called upon Ms. Yow to provide an update on the English 2 End-of-Course evaluation as information. The State is transitioning to the End-of-Course Examination Program for English 2 as part of the state's accountability system. The EOC has contracted with Dr. Christine DiStefano to perform the evaluation of the English 2 End-of-Course Exam. The evaluation will be completed by June 15, 2020. Dr. DiStefano has completed similar evaluations of End-of-Course exams for the EOC. This evaluation will result in a report to the EOC that must conclusively state whether the processes in place result in obtaining appropriate, valid and reliable scores, and include any recommendations for changes to the processes.

Dr. Andrews then presented a staff analysis on the influence of report card indicators on the overall rating. He went through the impact of each indicator, noting that some indicators like student engagement, caused year to year instability. Sen. Matthews states he wants to look at what causes the fluctuations, not just the outcome. He stated we need to figure out the cause and effect so we can make reasonable policy decisions. Does the size of the school make a difference? Dr. Andrews stated he did not consider the size of a school in this analysis.

Dr. Turner asked Dr. Andrews to remind the committee about the details of the student engagement survey. Dr. Turner said he expects that schools were doing extra prep work for the student engagement survey. He is curious to see what will happen from year two to three. Dr.

Stockwell said that the student engagement survey is not a stable measure; where is the value in a student engagement survey if it isn't driving student achievement? There isn't a correlation between achievement and engagement. Ms. Weaver stated that we need to measure things that are meaningful, and that this analysis will be good to use for the cyclical review. Rep. Felder said that she thinks that schools and the public have become more aware of how important the student survey is. People didn't see the value in it, and she is interested in seeing what happens from Year 2 to Year 3. It will be interesting to see if it is really measuring student attitudes. Dr. Mathis asked Dr. Andrews if he considered school participation rate in his analysis; Dr. Andrews stated he did not.

Dr. Andrews then moved on to presenting an analysis of report card indicators and poverty. He went through the correlations, noting that as the poverty of a school goes up, achievement tends to go down. He noted there is zero correlation with student growth. We are after a measure where all schools can demonstrate growth from one year to the next. The Student Engagement indicator is different; as school poverty goes up, student engagement scores went up. Ms. Weaver stated she was curious to see if there are schools that are beating the odds, schools with high poverty that are showing high achievement. She thinks this will be illustrative of how to learn from these schools. Dr. Knight stated we could create a list of these schools and see which ones are there consistently. Rep. Alexander said there are schools proving that kids on poverty can learn, and we need to learn lessons from these schools and use the data wisely. He further stated that there are issues with teachers not thinking that every child in front of them is capable. Mr. Robinson said the conditions children are being taught in really matters; we need to take this study to the next level. We must be realistic; it is hard to know if we can put a great leader in every school. Sen. Matthews stated we must make impact and make concrete recommendations. We can't just sit around and interpret data. We need to decide what to do to make an impact. He said we must figure out how to better educate children in poverty. Ms. Weaver concurred, stating she would like the EOC to take a more proactive role in making recommendations about making changes.

Dr. Andrews then presented an ESSA update, giving the EOC a summary of where SC students are in relation to the goals outlined in the ESSA Plan. Dr. Stockwell asked when our target year was for closing disparity gaps. Dr. Andrews said all the goals were written for 2035. Dr. Turner asked if it was possible to see the data broken out by ethnicity and poverty status.

Ms. Weaver then called upon Dr. Couch to present from the EIA Subcommittee. Dr. Couch asked Dr. Knight to present the EIA budget and proviso recommendations as approved by the subcommittee. She went through the recommendations in detail. There was discussion among EOC members. Dr. Mathis noted that programs funded by the SCDE for Partnerships for Innovation already required an evaluation. For the Center for Educational Partnerships, Dr. Turner asked if there was a plan to expand to other colleges and universities. Sen. Matthews expressed concern at the idea of teachers getting involved in the community if they teach in rural communities; they don't often live in those communities. Regarding industry certifications, the EOC is not recommending an increase since it not known how much districts are spending on the certifications. Dr. Mathis said that districts are saying it is not enough money.

The EOC discussed making certain that guidance counselors have 12th graders fill out their FAFSA forms. We might consider providing an incentive so that participation goes up.

There is concern that students are leaving dollars on the table because parents are not filling it out. Rep. Alexander stated that this is a responsibility of Career Specialists.

Jane Turner addressed a question about the cost of international teachers from Sen. Matthews. Dr. Mathis stated that Ms. Spearman is in conversations with superintendents about the number of international teachers, and she is trying to reduce it. Rep. Felder asked if there is carryover money in CERRA. Ms. Turner said that they were charged with putting a one-year reserve fund in place, which they built up using a collections account. They can't dip into collections fund after this year, and the state has not been fully-funding Teaching Fellows since 2008. Ms. Turner later stated that Rep. Felder may be thinking of the Teacher Loan Program.

Dr. Mathis stated he appreciates the recommendation for instructional materials. Consumables alone cost the state \$20 million, and the online license fees go up every year. They go along with the textbooks. Priorities are Social Studies and math with the new standards.

Ms. Tate asked to put a plug in for CERRA and the work they do. She believes the best teachers come through CERRA programs.

A motion was made to adopt the EIA recommendations. Following the motion, the recommendations were adopted in full.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.