

**Minutes
Education Oversight Committee
Summer Retreat
August 3-4, 2015
Francis Marion Hotel
Charleston, South Carolina**

Monday, August 3, 2015 at 11:00 a.m.

Members Present: David Whittemore, Chair; Danny Merck, Vice-Chair; Anne Bull; Bob Couch, Sen. Mike Fair; Rep. Raye Felder; Margaret Anne Gaffney; Barbara Hairfield; Sen. Wes Hayes; Rep. Dwight Loftis; Deb Marks; Sen. John Matthews; State Superintendent of Education Molly Spearman; and Patti Tate.

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

Mr. Whittemore welcomed EOC members, staff and guests to Charleston on behalf of EOC member Neil Robinson who had requested that the EOC come to Charleston. Mr. Robinson was out of the country and could not attend. Those in attendance introduced themselves.

The minutes of the June 8, 2015 meeting were approved after correcting a typographical error.

Mr. Whittemore referred the members to their retreat packet that contains a tentative meeting schedule for 2015-16, noting that the EIA and Improvement Mechanisms Subcommittee would likely meet at least twice in November to make budget recommendations for Fiscal Year 2016-17.

The chairman asked Mrs. Barton to provide an overview of the retreat. She explained that the goal of the retreat was to give the members information regarding early readiness, career readiness and accountability because the EOC must make recommendations to the General Assembly by the fall of 2016 on an accountability system for public education that consolidates both the state and federal accountability systems.

Early Readiness Assessment Results, 2014-15

The chairman recognized Dr. Bill Brown, a member of the University of South Carolina Research team that assists the EOC in the annual evaluation of the full day, state-funded, 4K programs. Dr. Brown introduced the EOC to three other members of the research team, Dr. Christine DiStefano, Dr. Fred Greer and doctoral student Kathleen McGrath.

Dr. Brown presented an overview of the results of the CIRCLE assessment that was administered to all children entering a state-funded 4K program and a public five-year-old kindergarten program during the first 45 days of the 2014-15 school year. Due to problems with the data files, the EOC did not receive the results of the assessment until May 29, 2015. Dr. Brown focused only on the results of the early literacy and language development portion of the assessment. The results documented:

- Approximately 56,962 students in five-year-old kindergarten (5K) took the assessment and 25,988 students in four-year-old kindergarten (Pre-K) for a total of 82,950 students. Approximately 95% of the Pre-k students were enrolled in half or full-day programs in public schools.

- By demographics, 50.3% of the students who took the assessment in 5K were white, 34.4% were African American and 4.2% Hispanic. In Pre-K, 37.2% of the children were white, 44.7% African American, and 12.3% Hispanic.
- Approximately 78% of the children in Pre-K were eligible for the free or reduced price Federal lunch program with two-thirds of the students in 5K eligible for the free or reduced price Federal lunch program. A greater percentage of students in Pre-K resided in poverty.
- Of the students in 5K, 10% had an individualized education plan (IEP) while 6.4% of the pre-K students had one.
- CIRCLE scores for early literacy and language development involved three scores: letter naming, vocabulary and a composite score.
- Regarding letter naming, the mean score for 5K students was 25.3 while in Pre-K it was 9.76. Approximately 14,000 pre-K students knew five or fewer letters.
- On vocabulary the Pre-K results were more evenly distributed with the mean score being 14.6.
- By race and ethnicity, there was little to no difference between the scores of white and African American students in Pre-K. Hispanic students scored lower than their counterparts.
- Regarding CIRCLE scores for kindergartners with prior Pre-K enrollment, the results were consistent for students who attended full-day 4K in public schools compared to First Steps.

Following the presentation, EOC members discussed the results.

Rep. Felder asked for clarification on the number of letters that students could name. Dr. Brown emphasized that the assessment was timed. Ms. Hairfield asked why the Department of Education did not choose CIRCLE as an optional literacy assessment for 4K in 2015-16. State Superintendent Spearman and her staff noted that there were significant problems with the quality of the data provided by the vendor Amplify. Employees at the Department found errors and consequently the results will not be released, and the issue is currently in litigation. Dr. Julie Fowler of the Department of Education stated that for the current school year, districts may choose one of three formative assessments for students in 4K including Teaching Strategies Gold, myIGIDs and PALS PreK. For five-year-olds entering kindergarten, all will be assessed using DRA2. DRA2 was chosen because the Department is interested in knowing if the assessment could be used to measure progress of students from 5K through grade 2. Sen. Hayes asked for clarification if the proviso or law needs to be amended. Staff responded that if the Department secures an assessment or assessments through the State Procurement Process, then no proviso would be needed. Rep. Felder reinforced the legislative intent that the Read to Succeed legislation calls for a progress monitoring system for children entering a state-funded 4K or public schools to ensure that children are monitored and given the appropriate intervention to succeed. Ms. Marks asked for clarification about Tables 18 and 19, which document CIRCLE scores for kindergartners with prior Pre-K enrollment. She wanted to know if prior child care centers not participating in the state program were assessed.

At 12:30 p.m. the committee recessed for lunch.

At 1:30 p.m. the chairman called the meeting to order and recognized Senator Fair for an announcement. Senator Fair described an opportunity in February of 2016 for the EOC to partner with the Greenville Hospital System to host a forum to discuss the latest development in brain research, focusing on self-regulation and brain elasticity with the focus being on the implications of the research on early childhood education. With no objections, the EOC will work with Desmond Kelly, MD, Chief of Pediatrics at the Greenville Hospital System on the conference.

Then the chairman recognized on Mr. Lewis Gossett, President and CEO of the South Carolina Manufacturers Alliance. Mr. Gossett thanked the EOC for its commitment to including career readiness as a central component of the next state accountability system. He stressed that workforce development is the single most important issue facing the manufacturing community of South Carolina, even more important than roads. He explained that jobs are available in South Carolina in high-tech manufacturing; however, finding individuals with the high-tech skills is becoming an issue. Jobs are going unfilled. He noted that South Carolina needs more degreed engineers as well as individuals with industry credentials or two-year degrees in math, science and STEM-related fields. To address the shortage, the SC Manufacturers Alliance along with the SC Research Authority, supported the creation of STEM Premier.

Then Mr. Gossett introduced Don Tylinski and Casey Welch with Stem Premier, which was created in Charleston, South Carolina. Mr. Tylinski explained that STEM Premier was designed to expose South Carolina students to opportunities and careers in high-tech manufacturing as well as post-secondary degrees in STEM. With 40 to 50% of the workforce to retire in the next decade, Mr. Tylinski argued that South Carolina needs more individuals at an earlier age to be introduced to different pathways, opportunities. STEM Premier offers them the opportunity to showcase their skills and interest with an online system.

Mr. Welch then proceeded to provide a live demonstration of the STEM Premier system noting that the online tool allows students to create profiles beginning at age 13 that showcase the student's grade point average, WorkKeys scores, ACT, SAT or ASVAB scores, interests, accomplishments, community service, jobs, internships, skills and credentials. Then employers and postsecondary institutions can actively recruit students. Students can indicate their new steps, which may include careers or postsecondary education. The goal of the system is to assist those students who may not have the highest grade point average but do have the aptitude, interest and credentials to pursue a high-tech manufacturing career. Currently, 1,600 students in South Carolina have profiles on the system. The STEM Premier system empowers students to create and manage their profile.

Senator Fair asked if parents give permission for students to access. Mr. Tylinski responded that parents do sign off for their child to participate. Mr. Welch also noted that STEM Premier should give South Carolina the metrics to measure the impact of EEDA. Dr. Couch announced that many of his students are using the system.

Then, the Chairman introduced Daniel Kassis, Vice President of Customer Service at SCANA. Mr. Kassis presented information on a partnership between manufacturing and energy companies regarding sustainability. A partnership between Boeing and SCANA, at-risk youth and military service veterans who have GEDs are trained in how to do energy efficiency studies in low-income areas. The results have been impressive with 58 graduates hired for full-time employment. Dr. Couch noted that energy efficiency programs will provide significant employment opportunities in the future. Sen. Matthews expressed his appreciation that the program seems to address many employment and income needs in low-income homes.

Then Mr. Gossett introduced Warren Helm, Director of Quality, Training and Workforce Development at Boeing and Connor McIntyre Six Sigma Master Black Belt for Cummins Turbo Technologies, to talk about the workforce needs of these high-tech manufacturing companies in Charleston. Mr. McIntyre explained that his company has an apprenticeship program that is growing but the company is still recruiting internationally. For mid-level, skilled labor, he argued that South Carolina needs more mid-level, hourly skilled workers to fill available careers in his company. And as more manufacturing equipment is modernized, there will be a greater need for these employees. Mr. Helm addressed the committee by noting that there are currently in the United States approximately five-million job openings. Next year will be the 100th year anniversary of Boeing with one of the pivotal points in the company's history being the decision to come to South Carolina. Currently, there are 300 jobs that have not been filled at the Charleston plant. For Boeing, a skilled worker is an employee with strong skills in math, science and problem-solving abilities. Finding engineers is not a problem for Boeing; finding highly-skilled, advanced manufacturers is a challenge. Furthermore 50 percent of the Boeing workforce is set to retire in the next five years, which presents problems for the future pipeline.

Rep. Loftis asked about the largest deficit in the job applicants. Mr. Helms responded the largest challenge is having sufficient math skills, followed closely by problem-solving abilities. Mr. McIntyre noted that South Carolina is producing great students, just not enough to meet the needs of high-tech manufacturing. Rep. Felder stated that one day a year, career day in schools, is insufficient. Many career days do not showcase jobs in high-tech manufacturing or other high-demand jobs. Mr. McIntyre agreed and stated that more youth apprenticeship programs are needed.

Sen. Matthews agreed that the perception or stigma is still there that manufacturing jobs do not pay enough and the working conditions are not desirable; however, that perception is not reality. Mr. McIntyre agreed, citing a recent Harvard article that stated that students coming out of a technical school will make more money than a four-year graduate in a non-STEM program.

Rep. Loftis noted that project-based learning is needed more in our schools. Ms. Hairfield stated that starting in middle schools should be our goal. She commended Boeing for their involvement with the Charleston County School District and expressed her desire to have Boeing employees inside schools more.

The EOC adjourned at 4:00 p.m. The chairman announced that EOC members and staff would be having dinner at Coast Restaurant at 6:00 p.m.

Tuesday, August 4, 2015 at 8:30 a.m.

Members Present: David Whittemore, Chair; Danny Merck, Vice-Chair; Anne Bull; Bob Couch, Rep. Raye Felder; Margaret Anne Gaffney; Barbara Hairfield; Sen. Wes Hayes; Rep. Dwight Loftis; Deb Marks; Sen. John Matthews; and Patti Tate.

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

The chairman introduced Dr. Terry Holliday, South Carolina native and Commissioner of Education for the state of Kentucky until the end of August. Dr. Holliday thanked the committee for inviting him to Charleston to discuss accountability. Having been a classroom teacher, a principal, district superintendent and now state commissioner of education, Dr. Holliday explained that he had a comprehensive view of accountability from all levels.

Dr. Holliday opened by describing the events that led up to the creation of Kentucky's current accountability system for public education. In 2009 Kentucky passed a comprehensive education reform bill, Senate Bill 1. The motivation for the legislation was the fact that the majority leader's child who was class valedictorian needed remediation courses upon enrolling in Vanderbilt University. There was widespread concern that a high school diploma in Kentucky did not prepare students to be college ready.

According to Dr. Holliday, the process that Kentucky underwent involved the following: (1) adopting new college and career ready standards that happened to be Common Core State Standards; (2) developing new summative assessments aligned to the standards; (3) creating a new accountability system that measures college and career readiness; and (4) reporting the results using a new state report card format that focused on numeric scores.

Dr. Holliday used handouts to document the changes in the accountability system. Currently, students in grades 3 through 8 are assessed annually in English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. All juniors take the ACT. Two administrations of COMPASS as well to students not scoring high enough on the ACT to demonstrate college readiness. Students who are both college and career ready upon graduating from high school receive multiple weights in the accountability system.

As Dr. Holliday explained, there is a need to balance the amount of summative and formative assessments given. Summative assessments are limited in how much they can inform instruction but they should help drive improvement in curriculum. He noted that the results of NAEP are the best indicators to determine how well a state is succeeding in preparing students to be college ready. Proficient on NAEP is the level that prepares students for college. Kentucky went from 30% proficient in 2009 to 67% in 2015. It is estimated that increasing the rigor in Kentucky and ensuring that more students are college ready has saved Kentucky parents \$15.0 million in the cost of remedial course work.

In the end, the answers that South Carolina must answer are as follows. First, what behaviors do you want to drive? For the No Child Left Behind Federal legislation, the goal was to close the achievement gap. However, the unintended consequences were a narrowing of the curriculum, too much time spent on test prep, and too much focus on the "bubble" students, those who needed a little extra intervention to be proficient. Students at the "ends," those who were significantly below grade level and those who were significantly above were often over-looked. The behaviors also need to be balanced with emphasis on the arts, physical education and social studies. Second, how will the state reward schools that are doing well and identify

schools that are underperforming? If a state only focuses on absolute achievement, then schools with severe poverty and underachievement will not be rewarded for growth. Socioeconomic conditions will be the determinant of success rather than educational gains. Dr. Holliday recommended that the state include measures of student growth and increased graduation rates in the accountability system. Finally, a third question is whom will the state engage in devising the accountability system? He strongly recommended engaging classroom teachers as well as parents, business, etc. In the end, accountability must incentivize behavior we want to see in schools and drive student improvement.

Dr. Merck asked Dr. Holliday to clarify what scores students have upon graduating from public schools in Kentucky and to explain how the accountability system impacts teacher and principal evaluations. Dr. Holliday noted that all students have an ACT and at least one ACT COMPASS score. Students desiring to enter careers may also have a WorkKeys or ASVAB score. Kentucky partnered with the Pentagon to identify the 50th percentile score on ASVAP as being “career-ready.” For career students, Kentucky also gives the WorkKeys. Currently, students earning a Silver or better WorkKeys certification are deemed career ready. Dr. Holliday anticipates that in the near future “career ready” will be deemed Gold or Platinum on WorkKeys. Kentucky is also moving to having all students who are career ready to have an industry certification. Regarding teacher evaluations, Dr. Holliday recommended that states not have teacher “evaluation” systems but instead teacher “effectiveness” systems that support teachers as well as principals. Such a system will improve instruction. Principals are challenged to know what good teaching looks like and how to improve instruction.

Sen. Hayes asked Dr. Holliday how Kentucky combined its state and federal systems. Dr. Holliday responded that they used the ESEA waiver process to do that. He also noted that whether a state uses ratings of A, B, C, D or F or nomenclature such as “distinguished, proficient or needs improvement,” the bar needs to be reset at least at five-year intervals. Regarding the debate of rating and ranking schools, Holliday said that they determined if they didn’t do it, others would do it for them. Additionally, bonus points were awarded within Kentucky’s accountability system for students who met college- **and** career-ready criteria.

Sen. Matthews asked how Kentucky defines living wages for determining career readiness. Dr. Holliday said that they used workforce statistics from the Chamber of Commerce to determine how much income it takes for a family of four to live.

Ms. Hairfield asked a question about one of the handouts that related to 23% of a school’s score being program reviews. How does that work? Dr. Holliday noted that the state has a rubric that school councils are required to use to determine their program reviews. Then the Kentucky Department of Education conducts random audits to determine the validating and reliability of the program reviews.

There are rubrics for world languages, etc. Kentucky does have innovation districts, high-performing districts that are developing their own innovation accountability systems based on performance assessments.

Dr. Couch asked who drives the education conversation in Kentucky. Dr. Holliday stated that it is the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, the Pritchard Committee and higher education.

Rep. Loftis asked how Kentucky has been able to elevate and integrate career technology. Dr. Holliday noted that there are no dead-ends and many on-ramps. Kentucky needs 80 to 85% of its students to go on for post-secondary education with everything they need to be successful.

Then the chairman recognized Barbara Hairfield to introduce the next speaker, Dr. Gerrita Postlewait, the new superintendent of the Charleston County School District. Dr. Postlewait told that the committee that Charleston is a dichotomy with some of the best and worst performing high schools in the state. She also stated that accountability is local – to children and parents. The lowest performing charter school in the state is also in Charleston. According to Dr. Postlewait, Charleston needs to think differently about three components: (1) what do we want children to be able to do and learn; (2) what is necessary to prepare leaders and principals; and (3) what clear evidence will we accept that documents that the changes are having an impact. Working with Richland 2, Lexington 1, and the Horry County School districts, she will come back in six months to discuss other options for accountability that includes local accountability.

In conclusion, Mrs. Barton asked the members to reflect upon what they had learned at the retreat and to advise the staff of other information that they need or input to complete its task during the next year – recommending a single accountability system for public education. Rep. Felder asked that the EOC hear from parents of struggling students as well as parents of successful students. Sen. Hayes asked that the EOC hear from the districts working on the local accountability system. Sen. Hayes also asked that the EOC staff complete an audit of districts that would voluntarily participate in a survey that looks at the time spent on all types of testing in districts and schools. The focus would be only on district or school required testing. Rep. Felder responded that we need to look at ensuring that teachers receive a living wage salary. Rep. Loftis noted that teacher recruitment in our rural districts needs to be improved upon. We need to focus on STEM and career, technology. Sen. Matthews noted that increasing time on task is an essential component, especially for students in poverty. Both Dr. Couch and Ms. Hairfield agreed that districts need some freedom to move toward competency-based education. Ms. Hairfield asked for clarification on when the social studies standards might be revised.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.