

# **SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

## Minutes of the Meeting

October 9, 2017

Members Present: Neil Robinson, Chair; Cynthia Bennett; Anne Bull; Rep. Raye Felder; Barbara Hairfield; Sen. Kevin Johnson; Rep. Dwight Loftis; Sen. John Matthews; State Superintendent of Education Molly Spearman; Dr. John Stockwell; and Ellen Weaver.

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

Mr. Robinson welcomed the members and guests to the meeting.

The minutes of the September 15, 2017 meeting were approved.

Mr. Robinson introduced special guest Mr. Bill Milliken, Founder and Vice-Chairman of Communities In Schools, Inc., and one of the nation's foremost pioneers in the movement to give young people the help they need to graduate from high school and go on to rewarding lives. The Communities In Schools network is a community-based organization that helps students achieve success in school and prepare for life. Communities In Schools is the nation's leading community-based organization helping students achieve in school and prepare for life. Currently, the organization directly serves more than 1.26 million students and their families each year in more than 2,700 schools in 28 states and the District of Columbia. Mr. Milliken described the community of resources that Communities In Schools program provides, focusing on a safe, caring environment in schools, improving pedagogy in the classroom, and ensuring students have an adult mentor. Mr. Milliken noted that a five-year longitudinal independent evaluation of the program has concluded that 90 percent of students in the program stay in school and graduate with skills necessary to achieve.

Mr. Robinson asked about the future of the program. Mr. Milliken stated that the Board has approved 3 to 4% growth annually in the program. Dr. Stockwell express gratitude for the program and asked about how the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) impacts the program. Mr. Milliken responded that ESSA allows Title I funds to be used to fund Communities In Schools Coordinators, which was a key component of the legislation. Sen. Matthews asked for clarification on which areas of South Carolina have Communities In Schools sites. Mr. Milliken responded that the program is operational in Greenville, Columbia and Charleston.

Mr. Robinson then introduced Dr. Leigh D'Amico of the University of South Carolina and Dr. Sandra Linder of Clemson University who presented the initial outcomes and impacts of the Community Block Grants for Education Pilot Programs that were awarded in 2015-

16 to eight school districts to improve the quality of 4K programs. The key findings of the evaluation are summarized below:

### **Implementation**

- All grantees focused on literacy/language development and some focused on additional domains of development such as numeracy and social-emotional development.
- Implementation strategies, while focused on student development and outcomes, included teacher-centered approaches, student-centered approaches, and family-centered approaches.
- Successes reported by districts included increased teacher commitment/engagement, improved instruction, enhanced family engagement, and higher quality classroom environments.
- Strategies emerged to initiate or enhance community partnerships including Head Start and First Steps partnerships, engage families, and promote school-home links.
- Grantees reported facilitators to grant implementation including supportive staff at the district level, planning time built into the grant, and buy-in from schools, teachers, and families.
- Grantees reported barriers to grant implementation including teacher commitment, turnover at the district or school level, capacity for aspects of implementation based on other commitments and expectations, and allocation of time and resources to implement professional development.

### **Impacts**

- Grantees worked with 160 classrooms within 33 schools impacting approximately 3,050 students.
- Grantees provided more than 300 professional development activities or strategies related to the implementation of Community Block Grant strategies.

### **Outcomes: Teacher-Child Interaction Assessment**

- Grantees adopted and received training related to a standardized teacher-child interaction assessment aligned to the goals of project. Overall, the introduction of the teacher-child interaction assessments was well-received as a support tool for teachers and students.
- Grantees used the teacher-child interaction assessments within approximately 93 classrooms serving 1,855 students. Districts assessed between 4 and 34 classrooms with the teacher-child interaction assessments during grant implementation.
- Prekindergarten classrooms assessed generally demonstrated moderate to high quality teacher-child interactions, particularly in spring 2017.
- Across all districts, prekindergarten classrooms demonstrated improvements from fall 2016 to spring 2017 based on classrooms assessed by district representatives. Improvement on the teacher-child interaction assessment occurred in all projects except one based on independent review. The independent review included one classroom assessed in fall 2016 and spring 2017.

### **Outcomes: Promising Practices**

- Two grantees, involved in the case studies, provided promising student outcomes based on improved student assessment scores or reduced disciplinary actions. Based on timeline of report, student outcomes were not available for other grantees, but will be explored as available.
- One grantee, involved in the case studies, provided promising parent and child outcomes, showing an increase from pre- to post-intervention in amount of adult words being spoken and the amount of conversational turns between a parent and child within a 24-hour time period.

There being no questions, Mr. Robinson then called upon Mrs. Barton to present the K-12 Technology Initiative Report. Due to there being multiple data sets provided by the SC Department of Education to the EOC as result of the *2017 Technology Counts Survey*, Mrs. Barton cautioned the committee that the information provided may not accurately reflect the expenditure of K-12 Technology funds. Mrs. Barton then offered the following observations about the data:

1. Districts and special schools reported spending in Fiscal Year 2016-17 between \$24 and \$26 million in K-12 technology funds. The variations are attributed to the different data sets.
2. Based on the *Original Responses*, as much as three-fourths of the K-12 technology funds were expended for internal and external connections and for 1:1 computing. Another one-fourth of the funds were expended for other technology uses. Data from the *Corrected Responses* document approximately 7 percent of total expenditures on other technology uses.
3. Of the 82 school districts that reported in the *Original Responses*, 33 districts reported spending 100 percent of their district allocation on improving internal and external connections and on 1:1 computing.
4. Three school districts (Aiken, Calhoun and Lexington 1) requested and were approved waivers by the K-12 School Technology Initiative Committee to expend their K-12 Technology funds on other technology uses.
5. Regarding the impact of the K-12 Technology funds, districts and special schools reported the following in 1,195 schools:
  - On classroom access, over 99 percent of schools had at least 91 percent of the classrooms with access to the wireless network.
  - Approximately 40 percent of schools had over 91 percent of students served by 1:1 learning in 2016-17 as compared to 28 percent of schools in 2015-16.
  - There were 564,577 devices dedicated for student use in these 1,195 schools.

Superintendent Spearman stated that the results of the survey document that many districts do not have the local capacity to implement effective and efficient technology programs. Rep. Loftis asked if there was a standard of expectation which district could use. Superintendent Spearman state that the Department of Education is working to provide such direction. Mrs. Hairfield noted that classroom teachers need professional development to understand how to integrate technology into instruction.

Finally, Mr. Robinson recognized Superintendent Spearman to update the EOC on the status of the state's ESSA plan. In addition to the actions taken by the EOC on September 9, Superintendent Spearman presented to the EOC recommendations for amending the definition of career ready and college ready for the 2017-18 school year and additional changes for the 2018-18 school year. These recommendations are Appendix A. She stated that in the past several days SCDE has conducted several statewide meetings to get more stakeholder engagement. The EOC agreed to refer the recommendations to the Academic Standards and Assessment Subcommittee which will meet in November to review and consider the recommendations so that the full EOC at its December meeting will be able to take action.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.