

## **SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

### **Full Committee Meeting**

Minutes of the Meeting

February 14, 2022

**Members Present (in-person or remote):** , April Allen; Rep. Neal Collins (remote); Dr. Bob Couch; Rep. Raye Felder; Barbara Hairfield; Sen. Kevin Johnson; Sidney Locke; Sen. Dwight Loftis; Dr. Brian Newsome; Neil C. Robinson; Dr. Patti Tate; Dr. Scott Turner (remote); and Ellen Weaver

**EOC Staff Present:** Matthew Ferguson, Esq., Gabrielle Fulton; Hope Johnson-Jones; Dr. Rainey Knight, Dr. Matthew Lavery; Dr. Jenny May, and Dana Yow

**Guest(s) Present:** Dr. Lee D'Andrea (remote) and Dr. David Mathis (for Supt. Molly Spearman)

Barbara Hairfield, serving as acting chair, called the meeting to order. As the first order of business, Ms. Hairfield announced that Sen. Dwight Loftis will be joining the EOC. Sen. Loftis thanked Ms. Hairfield and stated his excitement to return to the EOC again.

Next, members voted on the approval of minutes from the meeting held on December 13, 2021. Minutes were unanimously approved.

As the next order of business, the Nomination Subcommittee brought forward Neil Robinson for EOC Chairman. With no comments from the floor, the EOC unanimously approved Mr. Robinson as Chairman of the EOC. Sen. Robinson thanked the Committee and Ms. Weaver for her service.

Next, the ASA and PA Subcommittees reported on their latest meeting. A brief summary was provided of the meeting discussion items: a report on Full-Day 4K, CERRA's annual supply and demand report, On-Track measurement, JROTC as a CCR indicator, and Student Growth Indicators. No action was taken at the meeting; each item was discussed in subcommittee.

Ms. Weaver called attention to the CERDEP report and a study out of Vanderbilt that suggested the effects of 4K may be diluted over time. Ms. Weaver asked if we had looked at trendlines over a longer period of time and if not, should we? Mr. Ferguson stated that this was on the agenda and that the kindergarten cohort would have been 3rd grade during the time of COVID, which complicates results. One of the key differences between the Vanderbilt report and 4K in South Carolina is that SC has full-day 4K, while the schools examined in the Vanderbilt study did not. Hopefully, more information will be able to be provided soon.

Mr. Robinson next introduced Dr. Lee D'Andrea, presenting remotely. Dr. D'Andrea introduced Part One of the South Carolina Landscape of Alternative Instruction Methods, a report with the goal of providing a deeper understanding of how alternative instruction methods affect students. The conversation began with Proviso 1.69A and findings from the e-Learning pilot. From the findings, she began to look at what methods are successful and emerged with unique delivery modes. Dr. D'Andrea introduced Proviso 1.69A, in which the EOC was asked to examine alternative methods of instruction. Currently, 57 districts (including 2 consortiums) and 5 charter

schools are approved, while 7 districts and one consort do not offer a virtual program; these are coded in the student information as SBAVRL. There are some students who are not in virtual programs, but may take one or two virtual courses; therefore, the number of students in virtual courses may not total with SBAVRL. One of the key takeaways from the report is that districts varied in terms of preparation for virtual learning and in what these programs look like. Dr. D'Andrea is sending a follow-up memo to districts to get more accurate data and Part Two will provide student achievement results.

Mr. Robinson noted that the full report is included in the committee packet. Mr. Ferguson noted that not many districts have high numbers of virtual students, and it is necessary for the EOC to have access to these data to be able to answer these questions.

Dr. Turner noted that while looking at the data, one of the key things to note is transiency between virtual learning and brick and mortar schools. Dr. Turner asked how a student is determined to be one or the other. Dr. D'Andrea stated that when we talked last June, a large majority of students are one or the other. Dr. Turner noted that a larger percentage of students in poverty chose virtual programs and asked if data would be broken out by poverty level. Dr. D'Andrea confirmed that data is broken out by poverty level and ethnic group.

Dr. Mathis noted that this report will help us evaluate virtual options. Additionally, Aiken may be a good model. Dr. Mathis next addressed Mr. Ferguson's comment about authorization of data. Dr. Mathis stated that the Department of Education wants to provide this data, but wants the request to be included under a new proviso in order to distinguish between e-Learning and virtual learning. Sen. Loftis noted that with increased broadband access comes increased virtual learning, so we will want to continue to report on these data.

As the next order of business, Dr. Lavery provided a walkthrough of a 4K data dashboard. Dr. Lavery noted the dashboard's use in surfacing existing data. Dr. Lavery noted that the dashboard is available via a public link. Within the dashboard, everything is interactive. The following data sources were used in creating the dashboard: the 4K experience report; the KRA; and 45-day enrollment data. For the current year, 58,712 kindergartners are represented. This dashboard allows us to view statewide, countywide, and districtwide results and filter by numerous factors, including poverty level. Dr. Lavery noted that there is almost statewide universal 4K eligibility, except for York 4. Theoretically, 11 CERDEP classrooms could be created in order to reach eligible students who are not currently reached. After completing the walkthrough, Dr. Lavery answered questions from the committee.

Mr. Robinson stated that this made an incredible amount of data more accessible and requested the link to the dashboard. Mr. Ferguson stated that he will send the link within the week. Mr. Ferguson also noted that if there is something committee members would like to see added, it may be possible to include it with few tweaks to the dashboard itself.

Mr. Mathis asked if this covered last year's 4K class; Dr. Lavery confirmed this. Dr. Mathis stated that with hybrid and face-to-face learning, there is a disparity between pupils in poverty and those that are not. Therefore, this may help us see what districts are in need. Mr. Ferguson stated that this allows us to see students we may be able to reach, and Dr. Mathis agreed that this will give us numbers of who we may need to look for. Mr. Robinson stated that this will answer many questions.

Next, Mr. Ferguson presented the Clearinghouse data report. Mr. Ferguson noted that this is data that South Carolina has not seen before, allowing us to view how SC graduates do once they are in college and whether they enroll or not. Mr. Ferguson noted that once students go to college, they are generally staying. However, not many are completing a degree within six years of graduating college. Mr. Ferguson noted that this report is the aggregate, but that there are about 300 reports created from the Clearinghouse data.

Mr. Ferguson explained the EOC's plans for this data, including distributing a report for every high school in the state so that schools can see how their students do once they matriculate to higher education. This will allow us to see the difference between students telling guidance counselors that they will go to college and the number that actually go. This will provide us with actionable data for improving outcomes.

Mr. Ferguson noted that 97% of higher ed. schools nationally and 98% of ones in SC are included in Clearinghouse data, as any school with any student eligible/receiving federal loans has to report on their data. Service academies are not included in this data because they don't accept federal loans.

Sen. Johnson asked specifically about page 23, which states that 37% of students graduate within six years. Mr. Ferguson confirmed this. Sen. Johnson noted that this appeared low, and he stated that it would be interesting to see national data.

Sen. Loftis asked a question regarding technical colleges, in which students are often hired prior to graduation, inquiring if this would impact data. Mr. Ferguson stated that yes, it would but that certificates can be included, which may help close that gap.

Mr. Robinson next introduced Dr. Mathis. Dr. Mathis provided an update on quarantine and isolation numbers for both staff and students in SY2021-22. Dr. Mathis noted that this has been a difficult year. Next, Dr. Mathis provided an overview of interim assessment results. While there is some evidence of learning recovery, we still lag behind pre-COVID learning rates. While we often discuss making a year's worth of growth in order to maintain learning, that is not enough anymore.

Often, the issue is not that students are unable to understand concepts, it is that they did not have the opportunity to learn them. Learning lag is especially significant for pupils in poverty, minority students, and students who already had low prior achievement. More equity gaps are found in ELA than math.

In a move to improve literacy, SCDE is offering LETRS training for all teachers in Palmetto Literacy Project Schools. Knowing the science of reading helps teachers teach reading and address why some students might be struggling. This LETRS training is a two-year commitment, consisting of eight units. Dr. Mathis noted that this training could make a big difference in teaching reading and that each teacher receives a \$500 stipend at the end of each year.

Dr. Mathis stated that in November, the SCDE met with deans of SC's colleges and universities to discuss the state's literacy initiatives. After, the Deans' Alliance participated in three informational sessions with LETRS to learn more about the initiative. The SCDE will work with interested colleges in order to provide LETRS training.

To address resource gaps, the SCDE selected five curricula that emphasize the science of reading and is providing those materials to PLP schools, in addition to developing the Learning

Object Repository, an instruction hub that includes materials and lesson plans from SC's best teachers for all SC teachers to use. Dr. D'Andrea will meet with districts in five regions in order to implement and use these resources. Finally, Dr. Mathis noted his excitement for a new partnership with Marzanno to provide statewide professional development. A pilot will be conducted, so that by the end, we will know what interventions work best at every grade level.

Mr. Robinson thanked Dr. Mathis and stated his excitement about LETRS, asking how teachers were to receive that. Dr. Mathis stated that before the pandemic, this was done in a hybrid model, but now it is conducted via virtual modules. Teachers receive an exam at the end and must achieve 85% or higher in order to receive credit. Dr. Mathis noted that the number one factor indicative of College Readiness was success in 5<sup>th</sup> grade math, which really helped the SCDE to refocus efforts.

Mr. Robinson thanked Dr. Mathis. Mr. Ferguson then provided an Executive Director update, noting that we may be able to look at financial data and spending on education in a dashboard format. Mr. Ferguson then presented a gift to Ms. Weaver in order to thank her for her service as chair. Mr. Robinson asked Dr. Mathis to share his slide deck with Mr. Ferguson.

The meeting was adjourned.