

SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Full Education Oversight Committee Meeting

Minutes of the Meeting

December 12, 2022

Members Present (in-person or remote): Barbara Hairfield, Melanie Barton, Dr. Bob Couch, Sen. Kevin Johnson, Sidney Locke, Sen. Dwight Loftis, Dr. Brian Newsome, Ellen Weaver, Rep. Raye Felder (remote), Dr. Patti Tate (remote)

EOC Staff Present: Matthew Ferguson, Dana Yow, Rainey Knight, Hope Johnson-Jones, Jenny May, Matthew Lavery, Gabrielle Fulton

Guest(s) Present: Dr. Lee D'Andrea and Diane Sigmon

Barbara Hairfield served as Chair for the meeting, substituting for Neil Robinson. As the first order of business, members voted to approve minutes from the last full EOC meeting held on October 10, 2022. All approved the minutes as they stood. Dr. Patti Tate, chair of the Academic Standards and Assessments Subcommittee, summarized the ASA meeting held on November 14, 2022. For a full summary of the meeting, refer to the minutes of the meeting. The ASA Subcommittee brought forward two items for discussion: the launch of a newly improved ExpectMoreSC website and the release of 2021-22 Report Card ratings. Two action items were brought forward: Scoring of new accountability metrics and the approval of new ELA standards. Dr. Tate made a motion to approve all subcommittee recommendations. Ms. Barton inquired about the expected timeline for implementation. Mr. Ferguson stated that he will follow up with specifics, but that he believed that professional development will begin in the 2023-24 school year, with implementation and the first year of testing beginning in the 2024-25 school year.

Ms. Barton stated that states with progress are providing grade-level reading lists and asked if this is something South Carolina will be doing. Mr. Ferguson confirmed that yes, the standards will provide examples of grade-level texts. Mr. Ferguson noted that science and math standards will be rolled out soon as well, so the timeline will help prevent teachers from having to implement three new standards at once.

Ms. Barton stated the importance of quality professional learning opportunities. Mr. Ferguson added that the learning repository will help to provide quality materials to teachers across the state. Sen. Loftis added that some early childhood studies are taking a second look at phonics

and asked if this was something being considered. Mr. Ferguson stated that to address this, one of the recommendations is to provide clear descriptions of what early childhood reading instruction needs to look like. Ms. Hairfield called a vote, with all members voting in favor of approving the ASA subcommittee recommendations.

Dr. Couch provided members with a summary of the last EIA subcommittee meeting, also held on November 14, 2022. EIA recommendation highlights are provided as follows, with more details available on the EOC website: 1) recommendations for addressing unfinished pandemic learning; 2) recommendation for allocation of resources to identify gaps in math content skills; 3) funds for ten additional contract days for professional development in Palmetto Literacy Project schools; 4) emphasis on reading essentials; 5) additional \$300,000 for an SCDOE assessment of reading pilot; 6) funds to create a pilot for AI high school curricula; 7) increased funding for CTCs; 8) funds directed to improving teacher recruitment and retention.

Ms. Barton thanked Dr. Couch and noted that these EIA recommendations prioritize teachers and students. Ms. Hairfield noted her agreement. Ms. Weaver thanked Dr. Couch and stated her excitement for the prioritization of early reading instruction. Sen. Loftis moved to approve the EIA recommendations, with all members voting in favor.

Next, Ms. Hairfield introduced Dr. Lee D'Andrea to present the Report on South Carolina's Landscape of Alternative Methods of Instruction. Dr. D'Andrea thanked Mr. Hairfield and commented on Ms. Barton's point regarding the timeline of implementation for new ELA standards, noting that one of the stipulations that will be included in the RFP will be to include technical demands of the Learning Object Repository and to immediately include those materials so they are available to teachers.

Dr. D'Andrea noted that last year's report faced challenges in data accuracy. This report is the evolution of examining teaching ecosystems in South Carolina. Dr. D'Andrea noted the difference between digital ecosystems and virtual programs, with digital ecosystems including the use of digital resources in physical environments. 38 districts were approved, but not all are using a virtual program. Dr. D'Andrea noted that virtual classes are utilized for many reasons, including medical reasons, short and long-term deployment, and morning apprenticeships. Virtual programs and classes are expected to last far beyond the effects of the pandemic. Webinars were provided on the identification of virtual programs in Power School. Next steps include reviewing the 45-day report from the SCDOE once it is provided and surveying participating districts to help others better understand the associated costs.

Ms. Barton stated her concern that students need resources at home to be successful in digital programs, asking Dr. D'Andrea what these resources might be. Dr. D'Andrea stated that if students are taking virtual classes at home, they need broadband/internet connection. Ms. Barton noted that if successful districts could mentor others, it may be helpful to districts interested in participating. Rep. Felder stated that virtual programs are sometimes used for disciplinary reasons, asking if we know how many students are being schooled remotely for these reasons. Dr. D'Andrea stated that districts can code virtual attendance, but that she does not know the exact number and will have to get that information. Dr. D'Andrea noted that this could be an interesting inclusion in the upcoming survey. Ms. Weaver noted that increased equity in access to online courses is critical in South Carolina. Sen. Loftis asked how many students are in internship/apprenticeship programs. Dr. D'Andrea stated that she does not know the exact number, but that in one district, the availability of virtual programs led to an increase from approximately 100 to over 300. Sen. Loftis asked if we are keeping track of feedback from businesses on student performance in their internships. Mr. Ferguson stated that he believes there is a feedback process and that he will address this with CATE in January.

Dr. Couch stated that in his experience, they have done a workplan with the industry and then meet with students and parents for all to sign off on the student workplan, with business feedback being solicited at the end of the process. Dr. Couch stated that in the first week, we see quickly if students have broadband, and that a digital integration trainer can be a helpful resource for faculty. Ms. Hairfield acknowledged Mr. Ferguson's work at the EOC before calling an Executive Session. After returning, Sen. Johnson made a motion to contract with a company to aid in the search for a new Executive Director. All voted in favor. Mr. Ferguson thanked the EOC for its work. With no further items, the meeting adjourned at 2:06 pm.