

EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE  
Minutes of the Meeting  
August 8, 2011

Members present: Mr. Robinson, Mr. Drew, Senator Fair, Senator Hayes, Mr. Martin, Mr. Merck, Rep. Smith, Mrs. Taylor, Mr. Warner, Rep. Whitmire, and Mr. Whittemore

Invited Guests: Ms. Bosket, Mrs. Cauthen, Mrs. Marini, Mr. Bounds, Dr. Knight, Dr. Booker, Dr. Padilla, Dr. Allan, Dr. Klar, and Dr. Watson

EOC Staff: Dr. Andrews, Mrs. Barton, Ms. King and Ms. Graham

**I. Welcome and Introductions:**

Mr. Robinson welcomed members and guests to the meeting. He asked public attendees to introduce themselves. Mr. Robinson reminded the EOC that the objectives of the retreat are to continue efforts to improve reading proficiency of all students in South Carolina and to gather information and expertise to improve the number of effective instructional leaders in our districts and schools.

Mr. Robinson asked for approval of the minutes of June 13. Mr. Drew made a motion to approve the minutes as distributed; Mr. Martin seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

Mr. Robinson recognized Mrs. Barton who provided the members with information on her background and experience. She then informed the members of the information contained in the retreat packet.

**II. Reporting Facts and Measuring Change**

Information: Report on PASS Reading, 2009 and 2010

Dr. Andrews discussed the results of a study that compared the PASS reading and Research of students who took the PASS Reading and Research test as third graders in 2009 and as fourth graders in 2010. For the matched sample of 51,773 students, changes in student performance were determined based on the PASS levels of student achievement -- Exemplary 2, Exemplary 1, Met, Not Met 2 and Not Met 1. The results showed that the mean difference between students' 2009 performance and 2010 performance for the matched sample was a decline of 0.24. Furthermore, while 51.1 percent of students had no change in their performance, 16.0 percent of students increased their performance by one or two levels while 32.1 percent declined by one or two levels.

Student achievement changes were *disaggregated* by several factors: (1) by students identified as gifted and talented; (2) by students with non-speech disabilities; (3) by the socioeconomic status of students as measured by the federal school lunch program; (4) by racial/ethnic identity of students; (5) by the mobility of students between schools in the same district and across districts; (6) by the absolute rating of the school that the students attended; and (7) by the improvement rating of the school attended by the child. The disaggregated results showed that similar declines in student performance occurred across all levels. The largest decline occurred with non-speech disabled students who had a -0.33 decline in performance.

Mr. Warner wanted to know if ethnicity or poverty had a greater statistical impact on student achievement. Mrs. Taylor reiterated her concern with the achievement of disabled students.

Ms. Bosket concurred with Mr. Warner about the importance of creating cultures of innovation to promote the spread of best practices and innovation in schools.

#### Information: Report on District and School Leadership

Mrs. Barton summarized national and regional initiatives aimed at increasing the number of instructional leaders in public schools. She discussed the work of The Wallace Foundation and its support of efforts by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) in the states of Alabama and Tennessee. She also discussed the work of the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement at the University of Georgia, the Broad Superintendents Academy, and the Virginia School Turnaround Specialist Program at the University of Virginia. The common themes were: (1) a transition from the role of the superintendent or principal from one of administrative leader to instructional leader; (2) the importance of higher education in such reform efforts; and (3) the role of public and private financial support for such initiatives.

Members discussed the importance of strong leaders and the need to cultivate environments of innovation. Mr. Warner reiterated his concern that there are governance issues that impede or restrain leaders from cultivating environments of innovation.

### **III. Promoting Progress**

#### Current Programs provided by the South Carolina Department of Education

Mr. Mark Bounds, Deputy Superintendent of the Division of School Effectiveness at the South Carolina State Department of Education described the eight programs and initiatives underway to provide support, mentoring and professional development to principals in South Carolina – the Foundations in School Leadership program; the Assistant Principal Program for Leadership Excellence; the Developing Aspiring Principals Program; the Principal Induction Program/Principal Assessment Program; the School Leadership Executive Institute; the Institute for District Administrators; and the Tapping Executive Educators Program. Since Fiscal Year 2000-02, these programs have served 2,879 individuals. He described the model as being based upon the model used in the military, a continuum of services based upon levels of achievement and training.

The new leadership initiatives underway at the agency are: alternative principal certification; tiered principal certification; and the Program for Assisting, Developing and Evaluating Principal Performance (PADEPP). Mr. Bounds noted that the Department is still concerned with the distribution of educators in rural school districts and the need to relieve principals of non-instructional duties. The agency is also looking at initiatives to assist leaders in non-traditional settings including charter schools and Montessori schools. Currently the agency is looking at the development of a transformation leaders academy and implementation of an alternative certification program. Next year the agency will develop the SAMS Program that will train individuals in school administrative functions. Individuals who complete the SAMS program will then be able to be hired by principals to be responsible for many of the non-instructional responsibilities of a principal.

The members asked about the number of employees in the office who provide the services. Currently there are four individuals with plans to hire two additional staff. Mr. Bounds did say that this office meets three or four times annually with institutions of higher education.

Mr. Warner noted how one community in North Carolina merged the mission of the school with a mission to revitalize the community by creating a farmer's market. Framing the mission of the school helped engage the community as well as provide hands-on learning opportunities for students.

The EOC recessed for lunch at noon.

### Discussion with Two Superintendents

Dr. Rainey Knight, superintendent of the Darlington County School District and Dr. Russell Booker, superintendent of the Spartanburg 7 School District shared their insight into leading two very different districts. They noted their challenges and successes.

Dr. Knight noted that she hired the best teachers she could find for the classroom and principals who used good judgment. Student performance was the focus of all decisions made. Her very stable and patient board of trustees also was supportive of her instructional changes. Dr. Knight noted that “there are no excuses;” she is in the business of teaching children. She meets four times per year with principals. Accountability is a key component.

Dr. Booker commented that he is leading his district through a transformation. He has instituted a system whereby parents have choice in several programs including Montessori, International Baccalaureate (IB), arts-infused, and STEM schools. He has led efforts to close two schools in two years. He pursued and obtained grant funding to open an early learning center providing services from birth to age 5. The district hopes to get NAEYC accreditation. He also led the effort to institute a 9<sup>th</sup> grade academy this year to improve the district’s graduation rate.

Mr. Robinson asked if there were any governance issues restricting the performance of their districts. Dr. Booker commented that he is concerned that there is no longer a dialogue with the South Carolina Department of Education. Dr. Knight gave examples of decisions made by the agency that directly impact schools and their budgets but which were made without input from the superintendents.

Mr. Warner asked what type of accountability structures would better hold schools accountable. Dr. Booker recommended a system focused on growth. Dr. Knight agreed but noted that such a system should be aligned to the report card.

When asked if there was one thing that they would change about public education, both said that they would change the perception of public education. Dr. Booker shared with the EOC a document that the superintendents had drafted as a guide for public education. Both noted that they appreciated the efforts of the State Chamber in its SC Minds at Work campaign.

### Discussion with Institutions of Higher Learning

From Clemson University Dr. Mike Padilla, Director of the Eugene T. Moore School of Education and Associate Dean of Educational Collaborations, and Dr. Hans Klar, assistant professor in Education Leadership began the discussion. Dr. Padilla noted that the role of higher education is changing. Universities must be responsible for education change and provide research, evaluation and expertise as needed. Higher Education also has a responsibility to school district to provide staff and curriculum development to assist schools. Dr. Padilla noted that the Clemson University is ready and able to collaborate. In addition Dr. Larry Allen, Dean of the College of Health, Education and Human Development at Clemson University reflected on the significant changes that have occurred in higher education.

Dr. Klar then presented the preliminary findings of a study, SC Successful School Principals’ Project. This project is one of other endeavors in the United States as well as in sixteen other countries. Using data files from the release of the 2009 annual school report cards, researchers at Clemson used a multiple linear regression to identify schools doing significantly better when

compared to their counterparts. The schools were above 70% poverty index. Upon identifying the schools, the researcher followed up with school visits, interviews and surveys of principals, parents, teachers, assistant principals, community liaisons and even high school students. Based on the core leadership practices, the researchers found:

- An unrelenting belief that their students could learn;
- A system of goals and rewards;
- Strong yet positive accountability of teachers and students;
- Orderly clean schools with happy students;
- Individualized professional development opportunities for teachers;
- A “no excuses” style of leadership;
- A focus on issues helped leverage change such as implementation of a single gender program;
- A culture of collaboration;
- Community involvement;
- Focus on finding the right teachers for the classroom; and
- Instructional resources aligned with standards.

Dr. Lemuel Watson, Dean of the College of Education at the University of South Carolina discussed the importance of higher education in public education. He noted that teaching, research and service provided by higher education should be provided. He noted that a P-20 initiative is needed to connect data to instruction so that all children in South Carolina achieve. He emphasized the importance of the state having an innovative, creative, data system. Dr. Watson discussed current initiatives in Illinois. Before becoming principals in Illinois teachers must exhibit leadership potential. A person cannot self-select into a leadership program. Also they must participate in a year-long residency paid for by the state. Education is an applied field; field experience for principals is important.

Both Dr. Padilla and Dr. Watson mentioned the importance of value-added achievement because institutions must determine if their graduates are effective teachers and leaders. Collaboration and dialogue are needed between K-12 and higher education. Mrs. Taylor concurred that more partners are needed in education reform and improvement.

#### **IV. Participation on Other Governing Bodies**

- A. Information: Education and Economic Development Act - Mr. Martin reported that the Coordinating Council has been given one additional year to operate and continues to move forward in implementing the EEDA.
- B. Information: Statewide Charter School District – Mr. Drew had to leave the retreat at 3:10 p.m. Mrs. Barton reported for Mr. Drew that there are 44 charter schools operating this year in South Carolina with an enrollment of 15,967. With the reorganization of the Department of Education there are changes in personnel and administration of charter schools.
- C. South Carolina Public Charter School District -- Mr. Robinson indicated that Mr. Martin is the EOC’s nominee for the position on the SCPCSD board. This nomination and others are pending before Governor Haley.
- D. Governor’s School for the Arts and Humanities – Mr. Robinson noted that Mr. Warner is being appointed to the board of directors of the Governor’s School for the Arts and Humanities, taking the position vacated by Dr. Jo Anne Anderson.
- E. South Carolina Reading Achievement Systemic Initiative. -- Mr. Robinson announced that he is appointing Ann Marie Taylor to the reading panel.

**V. EOC Roles and Responsibilities**

- A. Action: Objectives for 2011-2012 – Mr. Robinson asked Mrs. Barton to draft the objectives, taking into consideration the discussions of the August 8 meeting and asking EOC members to provide input. The objectives will be discussed, amended and then approved by the full committee at its October meeting.
  
- B. The committee went into Executive Session to consider a personnel issue.

The veil was lifted from Executive Session. Mr. Robinson noted that the committee will discuss the hiring of a permanent Executive Director at a later date.

The meeting adjourned.