

SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE  
Minutes of the Meeting  
June 13, 2011

Members present: Mr. Robinson, Mrs. Hairfield, Mr. Drew, Senator Fair, Senator Hayes, Mr. Martin, Dr. Merck, Rep. Neal, Rep. Smith, Mr. Stowe, Mr. Warner, Rep. Whitmire, and Superintendent Zais

- I. Welcome and Introductions: Mr. Robinson welcomed members and guests to the meeting. He began the meeting by thanking Dr. Anderson for her service and introducing Mrs. Denise Holland from Harvest Hope Food Bank. Mrs. Holland outlined the food and nutritional needs of families in South Carolina and Harvest Hope's response. She expressed appreciation for the donation from current EOC staff and members as well as former EOC chairmen in honor of Dr. Anderson's retirement. Mr. Robinson presented the donations and Dr. Anderson expressed her appreciation to the EOC members and reminded everyone of the work ahead to ensure that all of South Carolina's young people have the education to ensure their right of self-determination.
- II. Approval of the Minutes: The minutes were approved as distributed.
- III. Subcommittee Reports
  - A. Academic Standards and Assessments: Mr. Stowe reported on behalf of the subcommittee. Recommendation to approve the social studies academic content standards: The subcommittee recommended approval. Senator Fair seconded the motion and then requested discussion of the end-of-course tests scores prior to action on the standards. Mr. Stowe asked Dr. Andrews to summarize the report on end-of-course test scores, with particular attention to the scores on the US History. Members discussed the revisions to the standards, asking if the amount of content to be taught had actually been reduced. Questions were raised about teacher-developed and delivered curriculum, the cognitive demand of the standards. Ms. Bosket responded on behalf of the SC Department of Education with examples of how the content had been reduced. She was asked to provide a "side-by-side" of the old and new standards. She also indicated that there would be revisions to the end-of-course test in US History to align with the new content standards. Senator Fair asked if the standards for the US History course should be returned for additional work. Mr. Drew indicated that we would never have perfect standards and called the question. Rep. Neal seconded the call. The EOC members voted in favor of calling the question (one negative vote). Mr. Robinson then stated the motion to approve the content standards was before the EOC. The EOC approved the standards unanimously.
  - (B) EIA and Improvement Mechanisms Subcommittee: Mr. Drew reported on behalf of the subcommittee. He asked Mrs. Barton to present the information.
    - (1) Status of FY12 Budget: Mrs. Barton informed members that the General Appropriation bill is before the conference committee. With increased revenues and deliberate actions each body had increased revenues for schools. The reading initiative is in both the House and Senate versions of the bill as are increased funds for charter schools and EFA dollars to students with disabilities. The versions differ on the use of new revenues for schools or unemployment tax reductions, the utilization of the EFA structure or straight weighted pupil unit allocations, study of the Common Core, the allocation of lottery funds and technical assistance. The versions also differ on placement of the EOC.

- (2) Analysis of the Parent Surveys: Mrs. Barton reviewed the findings of the 2010 parent surveys noting generally the positive correlation between parent surveys and school ratings. She outlined areas of concern, including response rates generally, parent knowledge of student behavior and treatment and the reception (by the school) of ideas and suggestions from parents.
  - (3) CDEPP Evaluation: Dr. Bill Brown, USC, outlined the work following CDEPP participants through the third grade. Using a probability sample, the USC team has been able to follow a group of students from four years through grade three (the current placement of the first cohort). The team is constructing two comparison groups: students in other publicly-funded pre-school programs and students with no pre-school experiences. The first report of the follow-up study should be available this fall.
- (C) Public Awareness Subcommittee: Mrs. Hairfield reported on behalf of the subcommittee. She noted that the Director of Communications position had been advertised and applications were to be accepted through June 14. She also indicated that the Family Friendly standards had been revised and posted on the EOC website. The 2011-2012 Accountability Manual is at the printer's for publication and delivery to schools. It is to be posted on the website as well. Finally she outlined the opportunity for the EOC to participate in the *SCMinds@Work* partnership, using private funds.
- IV. General Business: Mr. Robinson announced the appointment of Mrs. Melanie Barton as Interim Executive Director. He expressed appreciation for her leadership and the Committee's anticipation of good things to come.
- V. New Business:
- (1) Race to the Top: Mr. Robinson indicated that he had been contacted by several individuals regarding South Carolina's decision not to compete in this round of Race to the Top grants. He drew members' attention to an article distributed at their desks. Superintendent Zais distributed an opinion piece he had published in three major newspapers in South Carolina. Essentially, South Carolina would be eligible only for \$10-20 million apportioned across 4 years. The funds would be limited to a "scaled-back" version of programs initially proposed in the Race to the Top application submitted by Dr. Rex. Those funds would amount to about \$1.25 per pupil per year. Dr. Zais indicated that the state's resources would be better focused on the tasks of greatest priority. Rep. Neal asked if the Supt. was recommending freeing schools of all federal requirements. Supt. Zais indicated that he was not advocating that; however, he wanted to create circumstances in which there were fewer directives and greater local control.
  - (2) Leadership: Mr. Warner raised the issues of test-based accountability and asked if there were ways in which we could examine the impact of governance and leadership. Senator Hayes asked about the 'closing the gap' schools and their leaders. The Superintendent affirmed his belief in the quality of leadership as the critical factor. A number of members asked questions or commented on the leadership training available and if that training had an impact. Superintendent Zais suggested that the SCDE should present information on the leadership training the agency provides. Rep. Neal asked for structural recommendations and suggested that the EOC should sponsor a leadership academy focusing on the specific skills needed to lead in a school. Mr. Drew discussed the differences in the qualities of leaders versus the certification requirements. Rep. Neal asked that the focus also address working in high poverty circumstances.
- VI. There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.