

SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
Minutes of the Meeting
December 12, 2011

Members Present: Mr. Robinson, Mrs. Hairfield, Mr. Drew, Senator Fair, Mr. Martin; Dr. Merck, Rep. Patrick via conference call; Rep. Smith, Mrs. Taylor; Mr. Warner, and Mr. Whittemore

- I. Welcome and Introductions: Mr. Robinson welcomed members and guests to the meeting.
- II. Approval of the Minutes of October 10, 2011: The minutes of October 10, 2011 were approved as distributed.
- III. Key Constituencies:

Dr. Tom Peters, Executive Director of South Carolina's Coalition for Mathematics and Science provided an overview of the history of the science and math hubs in South Carolina and discussed the new focus of the Coalition on STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education. Since 1993, Dr. Peters noted that the science and math hubs focused on instructional improvement; leadership development; and interventions in underperforming schools. This year the Boeing Company has decided to invest \$750,000 over a three-year period to assist ten schools in integrating strategies to improve reading of informational text in the content areas of math and science. The results of the work in these ten schools will provide research and strategies to implement other structural changes in curriculum and learning. Other manufacturers, including BMW, Michelin and 3M, already support the work of the Coalition. Dr. Peters also discussed efforts underway in other states, including North Carolina, that has issued a comprehensive plan to integrate STEM education throughout South Carolina.

Mr. Warner asked for clarification about the budget for the Center. Dr. Peters responded that the center currently charges fees for services with contracts of approximately \$455,000 in the current year. Mrs. Hairfield noted that the hubs have been instrumental in coaching teachers over the years and asked how many districts are using their services. Dr. Peters projects that 25 districts are using the expertise of the center. Mrs. Taylor asked for research on the effectiveness of the program. Dr. Peters responded that he has contacted Carnegie Mellon University that has a comparable program. The research is limited to implementation research at the current time. However, the Boeing project will allow the center to substantiate the effectiveness of the STEMS on reading and writing. Dr. Peters noted that the Greenville County School District has asked for assistance in implementing the Common Core State Standards in mathematics. Senator Fair raised concerns that Greenville is spending money on Common Core when legislation is pending before the General Assembly to stop the implementation of Common Core.

Mr. Smith asked when the South Carolina Department of Education terminated funding for the math and science centers. Dr. Peters responded that it was June 6 of the previous fiscal year. Mr. Smith raised concerns that the EOC and potentially the General Assembly would be asked to support funding of an initiative that the State Superintendent of Education has not supported.

Ms. Meka Bosket, Deputy Superintended of Policy and Research at the South Carolina Department of Education, was recognized to address the issue of why the Department of Education has chosen not to renew its contractual agreement with the math and science centers. Ms. Bosket said that the agency could not determine the impact of the program or justify the investment. She also noted that other private vendors would be available to assist districts and schools with implementing the Common Core State Standards. Mr. Robinson asked Ms. Bosket how the funds that had been allocated to the math and science centers in the current year were being expended. Ms. Bosket responded that the funds were used for other professional development efforts. Senator Fair followed with questions of Ms. Bosket concerning the implementation of Common Core, expressly the cost of the assessment. Dr. Merck asked if the agency had considered using WorkKeys rather than HSAP. Ms. Bosket responded that Dr. Zais supports WorkKeys but that there are other programs including those being developed by ACT and SAT that might also be used.

IV. Subcommittee Reports

The committee then turned to the Subcommittee reports. Mr. Robinson noted that Rep. Andy Patrick, the newest member of the EOC appointed by Rep. Owens as his appointee from the House Education and Public Works Committee was participating in the meeting by conference call.

- A. Academic Standards and Assessments: There was no report from the subcommittee.
- B. EIA and Improvement Mechanisms: Mr. Drew reported on the EIA and Improvement Mechanisms Subcommittee's budget recommendations for Fiscal Year 2012-13. Mr. Drew summarized the recommendations of the EIA subcommittee to:

Adopt the current year's EIA appropriation base as the base appropriation for all EIA programs in Fiscal Year 2012-13

Continue consolidation of EIA line items as noted which will reduce the number of EIA-funded programs to 42, down from 71 in Fiscal Year 2008-09.

Reduce EIA appropriation to the Department of Disabilities & Special Needs (DDSN) for teacher salaries of \$150,000 is the amount requested by the agency to conform to reductions in the number of instructional personnel.

Funding of New Initiatives including:

Teach For America South Carolina – EIA funding of \$2.0 million to increase the number of top college graduates and professionals teaching in public schools in low-income communities, with high annual teacher turnover rates, and consistently low student achievement. To date, private funds alone have brought 31 Teach For America corps members to the school districts of Clarendon 2, Darlington, Florence 1, Orangeburg 3 and Orangeburg 5. The recommendation is to expand the program with both state and private funds. The goal is to have an additional 75 corps members teaching in South Carolina in 2012-13.

S²TEM Centers SC (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) – To support existing and future companies with a trained workforce, the EOC proposes

investing \$1,750,000 to transform the five regional math and science centers and the South Carolina Coalition for Mathematics and Science at Clemson University into an entity for innovation, research and implementation in STEM education. The coalition would establish a formalized STEM education infrastructure plan funded with both public and private funds.

Education Infrastructure and Innovation Initiative – The EOC recommends an appropriation of \$32,500,000 in a new initiative that would first, develop a five-year plan to address technology needs and to promote innovation in education. Up to 15 percent of the EIA appropriation would be used to develop the plan with the balance of funds in the program carried forward into the subsequent fiscal year to begin implementation of the plan. The plan would determine infrastructure needs of public schools, including charter schools, and technical colleges; determine 21st century curriculum, instruction, assessments and accountability needs that will promote improved learning through innovation; and determine professional development needs of teachers and administrators.

Mr. Warner asked why the consolidation of line items is needed. Mr. Drew responded that it gives districts more flexibility and requires less time and effort in allocating the funds. Mr. Warner raised questions about the recommendation to fund S²TEM Centers SC. Mr. Fair reiterated his concern about districts spending funds for Common Core implementation and moved that the question be divided. Mr. Smith seconded the motion. The committee voted to divide the issue.

The Committee took up first the consolidation of line item appropriations for programs for disabilities. Mr. Warner moved and Mr. Smith seconded the recommendation to consolidate the line items into Aid to Districts. There being no discussion, the recommendation was adopted unanimously.

The Committee then took up the consolidation of line item appropriations for teacher salaries and fringe benefits. Senator Fair moved and Mr. Warner seconded the recommendation to consolidate these line items. There being no discussion, the recommendation was adopted unanimously.

The Committee then took up the recommendation to appropriate \$2.0 million for Teach For America South Carolina. Mrs. Taylor asked about the program and was advised that the EOC had received a presentation in October on the program's goals and expansion efforts. There being no further discussion, the recommendation was adopted unanimously.

The Committee then took up the recommendation to appropriate \$1,750,000 in EIA funds to S²TEM Centers SC at Clemson University. Mrs. Hairfield moved and Mrs. Taylor seconded the recommendation. Mr. Warner advised that the Center should be prepared next year to justify the value of its services. Mr. Robinson concurred that no program receiving EIA funds in Fiscal Year 2012-13 should consider the funding automatic. Mr. Smith expressed his concern with starting new programs in the EIA when teachers have not received pay increases in several years. There being no further discussion, the recommendation was adopted with Mr. Smith and Senator Fair voting no.

The Committee then took up the subcommittee recommendation that \$32.5 million be appropriated to the Education Infrastructure and Innovation Initiative. Mr. Smith moved and Mr. Martin seconded the recommendation. Ms. Taylor asked if the Subcommittee had considered the recommendations of the Reading Panel. Ms. Taylor was informed

by staff that the recommendations of the panel were not finalized and had not been available to the subcommittee to be considered. Mr. Warner asked questions about the use of the funds to promote innovation through technology. Mr. Drew concurred and stated that the vision and plan should include innovation and asked that the recommendation be amended to reflect the goal of innovation. There being no further discussion, the recommendation was adopted.

C. Public Awareness: Mr. Robinson called upon Mrs. Hairfield to give an update on the Public Awareness Subcommittee. Mrs. Hairfield noted that a communications plan had been provided to the staff and would be discussed by the Public Awareness Subcommittee at its January meeting. The communications plan focuses on notifying the general public, parents, educators, legislators and business leaders of the 2020 Vision and our state's progress toward the Vision.

V. Nominating Committee

Mr. Robinson called upon Mr. Drew to discuss the recommendations of the Nominating Committee. Mr. Drew noted that the Nominating Committee consisted of himself, Mr. Martin and Senator Hayes. The Committee recommended to the EOC that Mr. Robinson and Mrs. Hairfield be nominated for chairman and vice chairman of the EOC again for a two-year term. Sen. Fair moved that the nominations be closed and Mr. Robinson be elected Chairman of the EOC and Mrs. Hairfield Vice Chairman of the EOC for another two-year term. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Warner asked the chair, staff and EOC members to respond to a letter that he had emailed in the fall. Mr. Robinson noted that he would discuss the issues raised by Mr. Warner in subsequent emails.

Having no other business, the EOC adjourned.