

SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
Minutes of the Meeting
June 11, 2012

Members Present: Mr. Robinson; Mr. Drew; Senator Fair; Senator Hayes; Mr. Martin; Dr. Merck; Rep. Neal; Mrs. Taylor; Mr. Warner; Mr. Whittemore; and Dr. Zais

- I. Welcome and Introductions: Mr. Robinson welcomed members and guests to the meeting.
- II. Approval of the Minutes of April 9, 2012: The minutes of April 9, 2012 were approved as distributed.

At the request of Mr. Warner, Senator Fair made a motion that, having voted on the prevailing side, the motion to approve the minutes be reconsidered. The motion to approve the minutes was reconsidered, and the minutes were amended to delete all references to an "education incubator." The minutes as amended were adopted.

- III. Key Constituencies

Dr. Gerrita Postlewait, representing the Innovation Steering Committee, addressed the Committee. She described the goal of the Innovation Steering Committee to be increasing the supply of high quality public school options for students. Regarding assessments, the objective is to measure those things which we value for all students, namely, knowledge, skills and disposition. She also provided an overview of the Committee's actions since January. Dr. Postlewait focused on: (1) explaining the cycle of innovation; (2) a review of eight non-traditional, promising learning models that result in significantly higher student success rates; and (3) five common elements among the eight models. Dr. Postlewait then turned over the presentation to the following two successful non-traditional models:

Anson New Tech High School in Wadesboro, North Carolina

The presenters were: (1) Jacki Martin, Associate Director of the Riley Institute at Furman University; (2) Chris Stinson, Principal of New Tech High School; (3) Blaine Maples a math teacher at the school; and (4) Casey McElroy, a student. The presenters documented that New Tech currently manages a national network of 86 New Tech schools serving more than 8,500 students. Fourteen new schools will open this fall, including two in South Carolina in Clarendon and Colleton Counties, both within seventy miles of the new Boeing facility.

The staff and student from Anson High School documented the school's implementation and successes over time. New Tech schools are standards-driven, often team taught, and rooted in Project-based learning. A culture of trust, respect and responsibility are the hallmarks of New Tech culture. At New Tech schools, students acquire a level of responsibility similar to what they would experience in a professional work environment. Working on projects and in teams, students are accountable to their peers, while taking individual responsibility to get work done. In this trusted, respectful environment, students decide how to allocate their time, team roles and how to collaborate. Smart use of technology supports innovative approaches to instruction and culture. All classrooms have a one-to-one computing ratio. With access to Web-enabled computers, every student becomes a self-directed learner who no longer needs to rely primarily on teachers or textbooks for knowledge and direction.

Mrs. Taylor inquired as to whether children with disabilities are served in the program. Mr. Stinson responded yes. Mr. Neal asked about the recruitment of students into the program. Sen. Fair asked about the impact of Common Core on the program. Dr. Merck asked about the optimum size of a New Tech high school. Mr. Drew asked about the importance of leadership to successfully implement the program.

Early College High School in Horry County, South Carolina

The presenters were: (1) Joan Grimmatt, Principal of the Early College High School and (2) Marilyn Fore, Senior VP, Academic Affairs and Provost at Horry-Georgetown Technical College. The presenters described that there are three Early College High Schools currently operating in Beaufort, Greenville and Horry Counties. The presenters described how the Horry County business and education community came together to implement the program. The initial goal was to improve the district's dropout rate. The program targeted students of color who were in the middle quartile academically and who would be first-generation college-going students. The presenters gave evidence of the impact of the program on the graduation and college-going rates of the students along with personal testimonies from students. Mr. Neal asked about the minimum academic qualifications.

Dr. Postlewait summed up the next steps for the Innovation Steering Committee, focusing on how to move models like these to large-scale implementation. Mr. Warner asked about the obstacles holding back the system. Dr. Postlewait noted that in her opinion the threat of change that comes with transforming the traditional learning environment and delivery system is probably the greatest impediment.

Mr. Warner and Rep. Neal then discussed the issue of where the greatest challenge in our educational system exists. Mr. Warner contended that getting the affluent, educated parents concerned about their children not performing as well as the top 10% of children in other states will help raise public awareness for all students. Rep. Neal argued that he worried most about the children at the other end, who typically end up in prison or with limited resources and need the attention first. Both concurred that inertia and ambivalence are the greatest obstacles to transforming the system for all children.

IV. Subcommittee Reports

The committee then turned to the Subcommittee reports.

A. Academic Standards and Assessments:

Dr. Merck summarized the findings and recommendations of the three panels that reviewed the current science standards. There being no discussion, the recommendation of the subcommittee to approve the report on the science standards was approved unanimously.

Dr. Merck then summarized the results of the three-year analysis of PASS achievement data. With respect to student achievement, differences in achievement by gender existed for Reading, but not for Mathematics. Students who receive free lunch achieve at substantially lower levels than do full-pay lunch students. Reduced lunch students achieve midway between these groups. The patterns of student achievement on PASS are similar to the patterns of student achievement on PACT. With respect to retention, the retention rate at each grade level is small, approximately 1 percent of students. Compared to promoted students, larger percentages of retained students are Male, African-American, have a Disability, and

participate in the federal school lunch program. And, based on the PASS data analyzed, academic benefits of retention for success at the next grade level were present from grade 3 to grade 4, but were minimal for all other grade transitions.

B. EIA and Improvement Mechanisms:

Mr. Drew reviewed the status of the 2012-13 General Appropriation Bill, noting those items for which the EOC had made policy and budgetary recommendations

C. Public Awareness:

Due to Mrs. Hairfield being out of the country, Mrs. Barton reported for the subcommittee on the implementation of the 2020 Public Awareness Campaign. She noted the results of the Teacher Appreciation Week mailings and student contests.

- V. Dr. Zais then presented how South Carolina might transform the current education model “from one that fails too many children and provides a mediocre education to many others to a more effective model that satisfies the aspirations and matches the abilities of all students.” The Superintendent focused on transforming the following elements: (1) standards, what is taught; (2) environment, where it is taught; (3) intensity, when it is taught; (4) curriculum, how it is taught; (5) instructors, who teaches it; (6) testing, how it is evaluated; and (7) control, how schools are governed.
- VI. The EOC then went into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing a personnel matter.

The veil having been lifted, the EOC came out of Executive Session. Mr. Robinson announced that he would pursue finalizing a three-year contract for an individual to become Executive Director of the agency.

- VII. Mr. Robinson asked if there was any additional information that needed to come before the Committee. Having no other business, the EOC adjourned.