

**SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**  
**Minutes of the Meeting**

**August 8, 2013**  
**Clemson at the Falls**  
**Greenville, South Carolina**

Members Present: Mr. Robinson; Mr. Bowers; Mr. Drew; Sen. Fair; Sen. Hayes; Ms. Hairfield; Sen. Matthews; Dr. Merck; Rep. Patrick; Mr. Whittemore; Mr. Martin, and Mr. Warner

Guests Present: Mr. Jay W. Ragley, South Carolina Department of Education; Sarah Collins, EPIC; Dr. Joseph R. Pye, Dorchester 2 Superintendent; Dr. Sean Alford, Assistant Superintendent, Dorchester 2; Ms. Debi Gilliam, Director of Assessment, Dorchester 2; Ms. Sally Cauthen, Senate Education staff; Mr. Grant Gibson, Senate Finance staff; Ms. Emily Heatwole, House Ways and Means staff; Ms. Rachel Card, Governor's office staff; and Ms. Rachael Fulmer, Budget and Control Board staff

Staff Present: Ms. Barton; Dr. Andrews; Ms. Yow; and Ms. King

- I. Welcome and Introductions: Mr. Robinson welcomed members and guests to the retreat. He thanked Clemson University for their hospitality and their willingness to donate the space for the meeting. He rescinded the resolution concerning the Common Core Standards that was included in the packet, stating that the intent of the resolution had been misinterpreted. Sen. Fair asked that more time be given to discussions about the standards at a later date. Mr. Robinson reminded members and the audience that they had a number of important items on their agenda to deal with both days.
- II. The minutes of the meeting of June 10, 2013 were approved as submitted.
- III. Recap of the 2013 Legislative Session – Mr. Robinson asked Ms. Barton to provide the committee with a recap of the 2013 legislative session. Referring to the document provided to members in the packet, Ms. Barton told members that the focus of the CDEPP evaluation this year will focus on quality, not administration of the program. She pointed out that the General Assembly appropriated \$1.5 million for summer reading camps for the children who score Not Met 1 on PASS Reading and Research, and the camps will begin next summer. The committee discussed the growing percentage of students in poverty in SC schools. Mr. Ragley discussed details he noted at the federal level in regards to the program. These comments led to a broader discussion of federal funding in education. Mr. Ragley stated that 9-11% of money spent on education comes from federal dollars. Mr. Bowers noted his concerns about federal money as well as the potential mining of student data in Common Core. Mr. Ragley addressed Mr. Bowers' concerns, stating that no student names are reported on the federal government; all personal student data stay at the state level.
- IV. Cyclical Review of the State Accountability System – Ms. Barton provided a comprehensive overview of where the jobs are in today's economy and the credentials that students must have to get these jobs and others that have yet to be developed in the future. Although SC's high school graduation has steadily increased over the past few years, the three-year graduation rate for public two-year colleges is extremely low for students in South Carolina. Ms. Barton discussed the need to focus on the preparation of students in K-12, especially since the state currently spends \$21 million in remediation in two-year technical colleges. Committee members reiterated the need to define what it means for a student to be college- and career-ready, moving students from novice learners to expert cognitive strategists. Ms. Barton discussed the willingness of business members like Jim Reynolds to move swiftly on having these

conversations. Committee members also discussed groups that are actively having discussions about the future of education in SC, like Governor Haley and the SC Chamber of Commerce.

Ms. Barton also presented members with performance data on NAEP, ACT, SAT, and AP, noting trends in the data. Other topics during the discussion included the gaps in performance on SAT. Mr. Warner discussed the gap between SC students scoring at the top levels of the SAT has historically been larger than other gaps, when compared with similarly-scored peers in other states. Ms. Barton said she was concerned since a gap was starting to emerge among the lower performing students as well. Based on earlier correspondence from Mr. Bowers, Ms. Barton discussed data from the 2013 Kids Count Profile. She noted the percentage of children in single-parent families has worsened; in 2011, 42% of children were in single-family homes. Sen. Matthews requested that staff provide him with details related to the academic achievement among students in single family homes.

Ms. Collins from EPIC presented information about the process that EPIC used to engage stakeholder groups in the cyclical review process. The main goals of the system (i.e., True North), identified by the stakeholder groups and cyclical review group, were literacy & numeracy and higher order thinking skills. Each of the groups looked at accountability systems of different states and identified what was important in an accountability system. Overall, the process revealed that stakeholders agreed that the goal is to create a 21<sup>st</sup> century accountability system that measures whether all students are prepared to enter college and careers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century; federal and state accountability systems should be consistent; and further discussion is needed on particulars. Committee members agreed we must formulate a definition of college and career readiness in SC as well as what is essential for students to learn.

Ms. Barton followed-up with a discussion of a framework developed by staff using the recommendations of the cyclical review group and stakeholder groups. The system uses measures of knowledge, opportunities, skills, and future success. Opportunity measures, as presented, would be part of local accountability and reported to school district school boards. The committee discussed the framework, citing the need for local accountability. Rep. Patrick stated that local accountability was not systemic because it had not been mandated to be systemic. Sen. Matthews discussed the unintended consequences of accountability and how we must do something to address the needs of teachers in poor districts. There is currently nothing to incentivize principals and teachers to go to districts in poor areas or those that are not performing well. Mr. Warner discussed the need to build the capacity of teachers and empower them. Mr. Merck stated that the committee needs to determine what success is; what do we value in an education system. Ms. Hairfield stated that educators are looking for more formative assessments that can drive instruction.

Ms. Barton noted that the EOC was invited to attend a joint meeting with the Cyclical Review panel on September 16, from 2:00 until 4:00 p.m. to discuss and reach consensus on issues related to amending the state's accountability system.

- V. Alternative Assessments Update / Standards and Assessments Update – The committee considered alternative assessment proposals brought forward to them as a result of Proviso 1A.62.

Dorchester School District 2 – Their proposal uses ACT Aspire in grades 3-8 as well as ACT and ACT WorkKeys in Grade 11. Superintendent Joe Pye and Dr. Sean Alford answered questions from members about the proposal. Mr. Ragley expressed pessimism that the USDE would approve the waiver granting Dorchester 2 the flexibility

they seek. If approved, Mr. Ragley believes the district may have to double-test students. The proposal was unanimously approved.

Saluda County Schools – The proposal involves using district-created performance assessments and MAP in grades 3-8 as well as PLAN in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, EXPLORE and WorkKeys in 11<sup>th</sup> grade. Lexington One School District wants to partner with Saluda. The committee stated they wanted to hear from the district in person before making a decision. The request was deferred.

Spartanburg 1 – The proposed pilot involves two high schools in the district: Chapman High School and Landrum High School. Each school proposes using an alternative assessments developed by ACT in grades 8-12 and they have asked to receive an alternative school report card instead of a traditional school report card. The proposal for both schools was unanimously approved.

Spartanburg 6 – This proposal was for Dorman High School. Dorman would keep the state report card but would pilot EXPLORE, PLAN, and ACT for grades 9-12. The proposal was unanimously approved.

The discussion of alternative assessments led to a discussion about assessments related to Common Core State Standards. Mr. Ragley urged the EOC to make a decision about an assessment tied to the standards. He stated that Dr. Zais would be interested in an ACT-developed assessment in lieu of Smarter Balanced if the ACT assessment proved to have more value. Mr. Ragley stated that the cost of administering the Smarter Balanced assessment in 100% of districts without HSAP would be \$19 million. However, the SCDE estimates only 71% of districts are prepared for online test administration. Members of the committee questioned and discussed aspects of the Smarter Balanced assessment, ACT, and a state-produced test. Members of the committee concluded that they needed additional information to make a decision about the assessment.

- VI. Leadership – Ms. Barton reported to the committee about a survey recently administered to Teach For America corps members. Based on the results of the survey, many corps members would be interested in staying in education if they were provided with alternative paths to leadership. Mr. Ragley stated a state board regulation exists to provide alternative pathways to principalship. The current regulation requires a master's degree. EOC staff was asked to talk to the state board about revising the requirements for alternative pathways to principalship to allow corps members increased leadership opportunities.

Regarding school board leadership, Ms. Barton discussed a growing concern over the lack of ongoing professional development required preparation for school board members. State law requires training for incoming board members, but there is no requirement for continuing education. Mr. Ragley stated that the Department of Education had put together a training module but it was rejected by the State Board of Education. EOC members asked staff to work on developing options that would require school board members to receive continuing education.

- VII. Roundtable Discussion – Mr. Warner led a discussion focused on creating a new education system that prepares students for 21<sup>st</sup> century reality. He referred to a conversation with Virginia Aldridge, the founder of the Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities. Ms. Aldridge said it was her job to "build them [teachers] a stage to take them [students] to the mountaintop." Warner stressed that building a profession of teachers is the most important thing we can do. We must allow them to take ownership in their profession and own the outcomes. He stated that we currently spend \$9.7 billion on public education. Of that money, the state spends \$3.6 billion on teachers. He

suggested a shift in some of the moneys for education toward teachers, the money in school funding should follow the child, and that we should consider further consolidation of school districts, “flattening the overhead.”

Mr. Robinson stated that we must continue to look at consolidating school districts. Mr. Drew asked if we might have too many standards. Mr. Patrick stated that he felt like we must look at the classroom as the unit of change and rebuild the system including the financial, governance structure and accountability system, from the focus of the classroom. Leadership and innovation are key factors. Mr. Martin asked the question: when were public schools not broken? Ms. Hairfield pointed out that educators become frustrated because they are a profession that doesn't make the rules for themselves. Key points for further exploration that came out of the discussion included:

- Teacher salaries
- Leadership
- Culture / attitudes toward learning
- Training of teachers
- Curriculum/standards
- Teacher empowerment
- Finance
- Organizational structure
- Classroom or school as the unit of change
- Alternatives to school schedules (i.e., year-round schools, 8 AM-5PM schools)
- Early literacy and child development

The committee discussed legislation about the elimination of an elected superintendent and declined to take a position on this legislation.

There being no further business for the day, the Committee adjourned for the day. The Committee publicized its intent to have a reception at 6:30 at High Cotton, followed by dinner.

### **August 9, 2013**

Members Present: Mr. Robinson; Mr. Bowers; Mr. Drew; Sen. Fair; Sen. Hayes; Ms. Hairfield; Sen. Matthews; Rep. Neal; Rep. Patrick; Rep. Smith; Mr. Whittemore; Mr. Martin, and Mr. Warner

Guests Present: Rep. Philip Owens; Ms. Sally Cauthen, Senate Education staff; Mr. Grant Gibson, Senate Finance staff; Ms. Emily Heatwole, House Ways and Means staff; Ms. Rachel Card, Governor's office staff; and Ms. Rachael Fulmer, Budget and Control Board staff

Staff Present: Ms. Barton; Dr. Andrews; Ms. Yow; and Ms. King

Mr. Robinson welcomed members and staff back for the morning meeting. He recognized a special visitor, Rep. Owens, chairman of the House Education and Public Works Committee.

Mr. Robinson also asked staff to invite appropriate representatives to come and speak about ACT, the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium and any other testing officials on September 9, from 1:00 until 4:00 p.m. in Columbia. Additionally, Mr. Bowers asked staff to gather information on the costs of a state assessment if one were developed. He noted that Florida is considering developing their own state test to assess Common Core State Standards in grades 3 through 8.

VIII. Update from Special Reading Subcommittee – Ms. Hairfield updated the committee on activities related to reading. Dr. Rainey Knight, former Superintendent of Darlington County Schools, is working with the EOC and instructional leaders from around the state

on developing a model district reading plan. Additionally, Dr. Tony Johnson is working with post-secondary education on the teacher preparation components of the reading legislation and the University of SC children's Law Center is working on early literacy research.

IX. Participation on other Governing Bodies

The Statewide Charter School District nomination of Alex Martin is pending.

Dennis Drew reported on the Charter School Advisory Committee. He stated the board needs more board members; there is often a struggle to get a quorum.

Mr. Warner continues to serve on the Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities Board.

Ms. Barton will represent the EOC on the K-12 Technology Committee. She explained a little bit about the committee and told them the committee meets monthly in Columbia.

Mr. Robinson stated that the committee was waiting until a new educator representative was appointed to the EOC before addressing the pending nomination to the SC Teacher Loan Advisory Committee. Ms. Anne Marie Taylor has resigned from the EOC.

X. Goals and Objectives – Mr. Bowers discussed the need for a P-20 initiative based on the previous day's conversations. Based on the advice of Ms. Hairfield, the committee decided to focus on literacy as its P-20 focus. Other topics discussed included focusing on literacy with teenage mothers as well as low-literate adults; unique partnership opportunities like Nurse Family Partnership; alternative paths to education leadership opportunities; putting good teachers in poor rural districts; the accountability of teacher preparation programs; and the correlation of Common Core State Standards and college-entrance exams. Revisions to the goals and objectives for 2013-2014 were discussed and staff was asked to present the committee with a revised copy in October.

XI. Adjournment

Having no other business, the EOC adjourned.