

# **SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

## **Minutes of the Meeting January 17, 2017**

Members Present: Neil Robinson (Chair); Danny Merck (Vice-Chair); Cynthia Bennett; Anne Bull; Bob Couch; Rep. Raye Felder; Sen. Greg Hembree; Rep. Dwight Loftis; Sen. John Matthews; State Superintendent of Education Molly Spearman; John Stockwell; Patti Tate; and Ellen Weaver.

Members Participating Via Telephone: Barbara Hairfield

EOC Staff Present: Melanie Barton; Kevin Andrews; Hope Johnson-Jones; Bunnie Ward; and Dana Yow.

Mr. Robinson welcomed the members and guests to the meeting including Mike Brenan from the State Board of Education in attendance. Mr. Robinson noted that while the agenda was short in items the agenda addressed some of the most important work that the EOC members and staff have engaged in over the past eighteen months.

The minutes of the December 12, 2016 meeting were reviewed. Rep. Felder and Dr. Stockwell noted two typographical errors of the minutes as distributed. The minutes were amended and then approved.

Mr. Robinson then called upon Dr. Merck, chair of the Academic Standards and Assessment Subcommittee. Dr. Merck summarized the key points of the Subcommittee recommendations for merging the state and federal systems of accountability. These points included: (1) the summative ranking for schools; (2) the use of PISA to compare student achievement to other states and nations; (3) the need to revise graduation requirements to include real-world applications and internships; (4) acknowledgement that the accountability system should be continuously examined to determine unintended consequences and to incorporate suggestions from others entities; (5) student growth at the school level using a value-added system that measures growth of all students as well as students achieving in the bottom quartile; and (6) the reporting of student progress in literacy and mathematics in kindergarten through grades 2 to be phased in over time.

Sen. Hembree expressed appreciation to the subcommittee and staff for their work. To better communicate to the public the accountability system, Sen. Hembree made a motion to amend the subcommittee report to use the existing five descriptors defined in state law -- Excellent, Good, Average, Below Average, and At Risk – to rate a school's overall performance and to rate the school's performance on each indicator, achievement, growth, graduation rate, etc. Rep. Loftis seconded the motion. Mr. Robinson then opened the floor for discussion.

Mrs. Hairfield asked how the summative ratings would be determined. Sen. Hembree stated that the descriptors for the summative school rating and for the indicators would be determined by the EOC at a future date when all the information was available. Ms. Weaver expressed support for the motion, noting that the descriptors provide objective, meaningful information to the public that is actionable. Superintendent Spearman noted

that, while she was a non-voting, ex officio member of the EOC, she did support the amendment.

Then, Superintendent Spearman asked for clarification concerning the dual credit courses under the definition of college ready and the PISA. Then, Superintendent Spearman asked that the EOC consider further reducing the amount of testing in middle grades for science and social studies due to the public outcry against testing. Sen. Matthews made a motion that science be assessed in grades 4, 6 and 8, and social studies assessed in grades 5 and 7. Dr. Stockwell seconded the motion. Mr. Robinson then opened the floor for discussion.

Sen. Hembree noted that, while many of the assessments given in a school year are actually required by a school district or school and not be the state, he did support reducing unnecessary testing. Rep. Loftis expressed concern that students not tested annually in middle school in science might fall behind and not be ready for STEM careers. Mrs. Hairfield stated that, if the subject areas are not tested and the results used in the accountability system, then there will be no guarantee that the full-range of the standards will be taught each year. She also noted that the *Profile of the SC Graduate* expressly includes science, technology, engineering, social sciences and global perspective. Superintendent Spearman stated that she had faith that teachers would teach the standards. By a vote of 8 to 5 the amendment was adopted. Rep. Loftis asked that the staff ensure that all references to college, career and civic life ready be uniform throughout the report.

Then the report as amended was approved unanimously by the EOC, with Superintendent Spearman asking that the record show her support even though she is a non-voting member of the EOC.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.