

# **SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

## Minutes of the Meeting

September 15, 2017

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

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

Mr. Robinson welcomed the members and guests to the meeting.

The minutes of the July 30 and 31, 2017 retreat were approved as distributed.

Mr. Robinson expressed his appreciation for the individuals in attendance who desired to address the school performance indicators being proposed and discussed at the meeting. The following individuals then provided testimony:

- Dr. Quincie Moore, President, Superintendent's Affiliate, South Carolina Association of School Administrators and Superintendent of Cherokee County School District;
- Kathy Hipp, Superintendent of Anderson School District 3;
- Dr. Jason McCreary, Director of Accountability and Quality Assurance for the Greenville County School District; and
- Joanie Lawson, Government Relations Specialist, The South Carolina Education Association

Mr. Robinson called upon Ms. Barton to provide information to the members that chronicled the EOC's work since passage of Act 94 of 2017, identified the requirements of ESSA and Act 94 of 2017, and that summarized the subcommittee recommendations and amendments as proposed.

Mr. Robinson called upon Dr. Merck to present the recommendations of the Academic Standards and Assessment Subcommittee and the Public Awareness Subcommittee regarding the indicators and points to be used in measuring school performance. Dr.

Merck noted that the staff provided earlier in the day an explanation of the subcommittee recommendations. The briefing was attended by EOC members as well as open to the public.

Mr. Robinson noted that the recommendations come from a subcommittee and do not need a second. He then asked that all the amendments related to the recommendations, which were included in the packet as well as any others, be considered.

Mr. Robinson moved to adopt Amendment 1, an amendment to define the process the state will use in measuring the English language proficiency of English learners. Rep. Loftis seconded the motion. Amendment 1 would identify by school the percentage of English-language learners who meet their annual English language proficiency targets. Schools that have 80 percent or more of their English language learners meeting their proficiency targets will receive a rating of Excellent, schools with 70 to 79% of students meeting their ELP proficiency targets as Good, and so forth.

Mr. Robinson then moved to adopt Amendment 2 to change the name of the indicator “Prepared for Success” in the high school ratings to “College/Career Readiness” to provide greater transparency to the public. Senator Hembree seconded the motion. Mrs. Hairfield asked if the South Carolina Department of Education would work with the EOC on identifying other metrics for the elementary and middle schools in the interim. Superintendent Spearman expressed her commitment to work with the EOC on finding reliable and valid metrics to include in future revisions to the ESSA plan.

Mr. Robinson moved to adopt Amendment 3, an amendment that included the recommendations of Governor McMaster. Sen. Hembree seconded the motion. The amendment addressed the overall rating of high schools accordingly:

- Increase by 5 points the indicator College/Career Readiness;
- Reduce by 5 points the indicator Academic Achievement, which are the end-of-course assessments in English 1 and Algebra 1; and
- Reduce by 2.5 points from the student survey and increase by 2.5 points the Preparing for Success indicator.

Then, Dr. Merck proposed an amendment, Amendment 4, to align the Academic Progress indicator to the overall school growth value and to consider rules for schools with high-achieving students. Dr. Stockwell seconded the motion.

Sen. Johnson asked if Superintendent Spearman would address the recommendations and amendments as proposed before the committee took their votes.

Mr. Robinson called for the vote on the initial recommendations. The recommendations were adopted on a voice vote with two members voting no.

Superintendent Spearman noted that the overall ratings being proposed call for 10 percent of schools to be rated as Unsatisfactory. She noted that currently the state is

providing technical assistance to 39 Priority Schools. If additional schools are identified, as many as 120 schools would be eligible for technical assistance at an additional cost to the state of \$26.0 million. She noted that the Department of Education had already considered requesting additional state funds for Fiscal Year 2018-19 to provide services to 10 percent of our schools. Superintendent Spearman noted that if schools are identified as Unsatisfactory then it is her belief that the state should provide the additional funding.

Sen. Matthews concurred that he could not support “labeling schools” as Unsatisfactory without increasing the funding. Sen. Hembree noted that many students in our state are not getting an adequate education. He noted that the ratings would give him the tools that he needs to raise awareness for the additional support as well as the need to show progress.

Dr. Couch noted that accountability identifies the problem but not the solution. He noted that the state needs to find different solutions to the problem but the one solution that research documents as the most impactful is the impact of master teachers on student learning. Technology can assist, but there is no substitution for effective classroom instruction. He noted that South Carolina has to get serious about education. Funding alone will not solve the issues and neither will accountability.

On the overall rankings, Mr. Robinson noted that the ratings need to make political and pragmatic sense. Since education is the primary driver of our state’s economy, the system needs to focus on preparing more students for college/career readiness. We are moving in the right direction. This accountability system is not the perfect plan but is driving us in the right direction.

Dr. Stockwell noted that the correlation between poverty, in both rural and urban areas, and education is undeniable. He voiced concern that in schools of high achievement, the growth measure may not statistically measure the overall success of the school.

Rep. Felder noted that the accountability recommendations ensure that South Carolina is moving forward to identify strengths and weakness and needed resources.

There being no further discussion, Amendment 1 was adopted unanimously on a voice vote.

Amendment 2 was discussed. Ms. Barton noted that Governor McMaster recommended that only students who earned an ASVAB score of 31 and enlisted in the Armed Services should be counted as career-ready for the military. Sen. Hembree asked for clarification. He noted that if there are substantially significant numbers of students taking the ASVAB in the future, then the EOC would revisit this issue. For now, the original recommendation of only having to earn an ASVAB score of 31 was noted.

Rep. Loftis asked for clarification about the college/career readiness indicators. Amendment 2 was then adopted unanimously on a voice vote.

Amendment 3 was laid on the table. There being no further amendments, it was approved on a voice vote with one member voicing opposition.

Amendment 4, regarding growth model- was approved unanimously on a voice vote.

Then the EOC took up the staff recommendations for the overall rating of schools. The staff recommended that the initial overall school ratings would follow the percentage of students and their performance on the National Assessment of Educational Performance with cut points established using the 2016-17 assessment data to reflect these percentages. The cut points would not be increased in rigor for at least five school years or unless amendments to ESSA or the EAA are enacted.

<b>2015 NAEP Performance in SC</b>	<b>% SC Schools and Ratings for 2017-18</b>
<b>25 to 37% Proficient and Advanced</b>	Excellent – 15% Good – 20%
<b>31 to 44% Basic</b>	Average – 35%
<b>21 to 35% Below Basic</b>	Below Average – 20% Unsatisfactory – 10%

Mr. Robinson moved to adopt the staff recommendations. Sen. Hembree seconded the motion. There being no further amendments or discussion, the motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.