

# **SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

## **Minutes of the Meeting**

February 8, 2016

Members in Attendance: Mr. Neil Robinson (Chair); Ms. Anne Bull; Dr. Bob Couch; Sen. Mike Fair; Rep. Raye Felder; Ms. Barbara Hairfield; Rep. Dwight Loftis; Sen. John Matthews; Rep. Joe Neal; State Superintendent of Education Molly Spearman; Ms. Patti Tate; and Ms. Ellen Weaver

EOC Staff in Attendance: Dr. Kevin Andrews; Mrs. Melanie Barton; Ms. Paulette Geiger; Dr. Rainey Knight; Ms. Bunnie Ward; and Ms. Dana Yow

Mr. Robinson called the meeting to order. He welcomed the members and audience in attendance. He then introduced the newest member of the EOC, Ellen Weaver, who is filling the unexpired term of Deb Marks, the business appointee of the Chairman of the Senate Education Committee, Sen. John Courson.

The minutes of the December 14, 2015 meeting of the EOC were approved as distributed.

### Key Constituency:

The chairman recognized the superintendent of the Greenville County School District, Dr. Burke Royster. Dr. Royster opened by reiterating that the quality of the teacher in the classroom and the quality of the principal at the school are the single most important factors in improving the educational achievement of children. He then described how the Greenville County School District has strategically and systematically incorporated the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate throughout its schools in an initiative known as G+. The goal of G+ is that every student graduating from a Greenville County public high school will graduate with a diploma plus an industry certificate or with college credit. The initiative, G+ affects every child in the district. For example, Greenville has expanded its prekindergarten classes by increasing the average class from 20 to 23 students, resulting in a 15 percent increase in the number of children served. The district has also worked with private childcare providers to coordinate and provide quality professional development. In elementary schools the district has set a goal that by the end of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade all students will be reading on grade level. To achieve the goal, the district has set a balanced literacy approach. At the middle grades level, the district has implemented several initiatives: (1) implementing Pro Team to expose students to teaching as a career; (2) increasing the rigor of instruction in the middle grades; (3) collaborating with Junior Achievement to assist students living in poverty in the districts with social programs; and (4) implementing an electronic early warning system to identify students with attendance, behavior and course grades that would signal that the student is at risk of dropping out. Beginning in eighth grade, the district uses Naviance to track 25,000 students with their career interests, transcripts and individualized graduation plans to ensure that the students are on a track toward college and career readiness. Finally at the high school level, the district is implementing opportunities for accelerated learning and expanding manufacturing career opportunities to students.

Rep. Loftis asked about the success of the Naviance system in its first year of operation and the impact of these initiatives at Carolina High School. Sen. Fair recognized Pam Mills with the Greenville County school system. And, Sen. Matthews asked for clarification on the challenges that Greenville has to ensure students can earn national industry credentials.

### Subcommittee Reports:

Joint Report from Academic Standards and Assessment and Public Awareness Subcommittees - The chair then recognized Barbara Hairfield to give the report from the joint meeting of the Academic Standards and Assessment and Public Awareness Subcommittees. Ms. Hairfield directed the members of the EOC to the staff's working document and to other information that describes the components of the new federal law, Every Student Succeeds Act that was approved by Congress and signed into law by President Obama in December of 2015. She asked Mrs. Barton to highlight the key issues in ESSA that impact the work of the EOC. Then Ms. Hairfield asked the members to review the parent support documents including the new *Family Friendly Standards in English Language Arts* and *Family Guide to Assessments: Student Success Tools*, a flyer for parents describing the various types of assessments. She asked members to contact Dana Yow of the EOC staff if they had any suggested changes.

EIA and Improvement Mechanisms Subcommittee – Dr. Couch provided a summary of the EOC's budget and proviso recommendations that were endorsed by Governor Haley in her Executive Budget recommendations. Sen. Matthews noted that one of the issues affecting his districts is the need for more funds for equipment that students need in order to earn national industry certifications. Rep. Loftis concurred stating that more collaboration with technical colleges is needed.

### Special Reports:

Full-Day 4K Report – Bunnie Ward and Dr. Bill Brown of the University of South Carolina summarized the findings of the full-day 4K report. The report, which is Part I of the CDEP evaluation for 2015-16, reports on the quality, impact and access of the program in 2014-15 and through the first six months of 2015-16. When the EOC receives assessment data from the fall 2015 administrations of early literacy assessments, the EOC will release Part II of the evaluation. Of concern were the initial CIRCLE assessment results from school year 2014-15. Students enrolled in CDEP in nonpublic settings (private or faith-based centers) scored higher on CIRCLE in the fall of 2014 administration than did students enrolled in public school settings. However, in comparing the 5K assessment results, there was no difference in the early literacy skills of students who attended public or private childcare care centers. There is a need to better measure the quality of instruction in both public and private childcare centers. Finally, concerning growth, about 51 percent of children eligible for the free or reduced price lunch program and/or Medicaid are being served in a federally funded or state-funded full-day 4K program. Income-eligible students living in 79 percent of the school districts in the state are now eligible to participate.

Both Rep. Neal and Sen. Matthews concurred that the program must measure and improve the teacher-child interaction in 4K classrooms.

SC Community Block Grants for Education Pilot Program 2015-16 – Ms. Ward updated the EOC on the implementation of the block grants. Awards will be made by mid-February.

Accountability Report – The annual accountability report that the EOC is required by law to provide to the General Assembly was provided to the EOC for its input. The report must be submitted by March 1. Ms. Yow asked that members provide any updates to her by February 28.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.