

**SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**  
**Minutes of the Meeting**  
**February 10, 2014**

Members in Attendance: Mr. David Whittemore (Chair); Mr. Neil Robinson (Former Chair); Mrs. Barbara Hairfield (Former Vice-Chair); Mr. Phillip Bowers; Ms. Anne Bull; Sen. Mike Fair; Ms. Margaret Anne Gaffney; Sen. Wes Hayes; Sen. John Matthews; Mr. Alex Martin; Sen. John Matthews; Rep. Andy Patrick; Ms. Patti Tate; Mr. John Warner; and Dr. Mick Zais.

EOC Staff Present: Dr. Kevin Andrews; Mrs. Melanie Barton; Ms. Paulette Geiger; Ms. Regina King; Dr. Rainey Knight; and Ms. Dana Yow

Mr. Robinson notified the committee that until the members of the nominating committee were present, the EOC would continue with the agenda. Mr. Robinson introduced the two new members of the EOC, Ms. Anne Bull and Ms. Margaret Anne Gaffney, who were appointed by Governor Haley.

The minutes of the December 9, 2013 meeting were approved as submitted.

Mr. Robinson called the meeting to order. He notified the EOC that the first order of business would be the election of a chairman and vice chairman.

Due to the absence of Dr. Merck, who had an emergency at his high school, Ms. Barton provided an overview of the proposed science standards, which had been forwarded from the subcommittee to the full EOC without a recommendation. Ms. Hairfield noted that the subcommittee had questions about the implementation and timeline for the new standards and the assessment. The chairman called upon Liz Jones, of the South Carolina Department of Education, to answer questions. According to Ms. Jones, the Department will begin in the spring of 2014 to write items to be included in the new assessment. The items will be reviewed in the summer of 2015 to determine if the questions are biased, ambiguous, misleading or not rigorous, or lack validity and reliability. In the fall of 2015 the Department will create a field test and an end-of-course test for high school biology. These assessments will then be field tested in school year 2016-17. Dr. Briana Timmerman, Director of the Office of Instructional Practices and Evaluation at the South Carolina Department of Education, directly answered Ms. Hairfield question and stated that the fall of 2014 is considered the first year of implementation. Ms. Hairfield stated that the subcommittee had needed clarification of the timeline for the science assessment. While the standards will be implemented as soon as adopted by the EOC and the State Board of Education, full implementation will not occur until 2016-17 when the new science assessment is developed. Senator Fair asked questions regarding Biology standard H.B.5. He voiced concern and moved that all science standards as amended be approved by the EOC with the exception of Standard H.B.5. The committee voted to approve the science standards with the exception of H.B.5.

Then Mr. Robinson recognized Sen. Hayes, chair of the committee assigned to nominate a new chair and vice chair of the EOC. On behalf of the nominating committee, which was composed of Sen. Hayes, Rep. Patrick and Mr. Martin, Sen. Hayes nominated David Whittemore as chair of the EOC. There being no nominations from the floor, Mr. Whittemore was elected unanimously as chair. Sen. Hayes then recommended that Dr. Danny Merck be elected vice-chair. With no additional nominations from the floor, Dr. Merck was unanimously elected as vice chair.

Mr. Robinson expressed his appreciation to the members of the EOC for their support over the past four years and for their willingness to address key issues in public education, primarily improving the reading proficiency of students. Mr. Whittemore humbly expressed his appreciation for the honor to serve as EOC chair.

Ms. Hairfield then reported for the Special Reading Subcommittee. She called upon Dr. Rainey Knight, special consultant for the EOC and Dana Yow to update the work of the P-20 initiative that was focused on early literacy, K-12 public education and pre-service and in-service training by higher education. Ms. Yow summarized the NAEP scores of South Carolina over the past decade, comparing our state to Florida and Alabama, two states that have had systemic reading initiatives. Regarding the early childhood literacy plan, Ms. Yow talked about the fragmented system and the lack of a readiness assessment. Dr. Zais commented that many high-poverty schools like South Kilbourne in Richland 1 are making significant education gains while other high-poverty schools in the same district are not. Mr. Warner argued, "Poverty is not poverty." A one-size solution to the problems of poor performance is not needed. He argued that holding teachers accountable for the results and treating them like professionals would improve learning more than requiring or mandating changes in policy from the top. Mr. Bowers recommended that the Academic Standards and Assessment Subcommittee review the early literacy recommendations and report back to the full EOC at its next meeting, which was agreed to by the members of the EOC.

Regarding early literacy, Mr. Bowers asked the staff to look into the issue of expanding four-year-old kindergarten and reduced class size to determine what policy has the 'biggest bang for the buck.' The staff agreed to provide additional information on the issue.

Senator Matthews then addressed the EOC about an initiative that he is reviewing to increase the number of highly effective teachers and principals in underperforming schools and districts. In talking with Dr. Russell Booker of Spartanburg 7, Sen. Matthews confirmed that increasing time on task to expand the number of hours spent in instruction is important for children in poverty but comes at a significant cost in transportation. EOC staff will work with Sen. Matthews to consider alternative pilot projects to address the unique needs of rural, high-poverty districts.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.