

SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
Minutes of the Meeting
October 13, 2014

Members in Attendance: Mr. David Whittemore (Chair); Dr. Danny Merck (Vice Chair); Mr. Phillip Bowers; Ms. Anne Bull; Sen. Mike Fair; Mrs. Barbara Hairfield; Sen. Wes Hayes; Ms. Deb Marks; Mr. Alex Martin; Rep. Joe Neal; Rep. Roland Smith; Ms. Patti Tate; and Dr. Mick Zais.

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

Mr. Whittemore called the meeting to order. He called upon Dr. Merck to introduce the visitors from Liberty and Easley High Schools who were in attendance.

The first order of business was the approval of the minutes from the August 11 and 12 EOC retreat as submitted. Mr. Bowers moved to approve the minutes; Mr. Martin seconded the motion. The minutes as submitted were approved.

Dr. Peggy Torrey, Director of New Carolina, provided an update to the EOC on the work of TransformSC. She focused on the Profile of the Graduate and the results to date of initiatives at three schools. Whittemore Park Middle School in Horry County is using personalized learning facilitated by one-to-one computing, giving students who enter middle school behind grade level the opportunity to remediate faster and those at grade level to move ahead. Last school year, sixth graders were able to increase their mathematics skills by two grade levels with 22 percent of sixth graders able to move to 7th grade math before the end of the school year. At the Cougar New Tech High School in Colleton County, the school in its first year saw significant improvement in attendance and student achievement. Dr. Torrey also used a video to highlight the efforts of TransformSC across the state.

Sen. Fair asked questions about project-based learning and its impact on student class sizes. Dr. Zais commented that throughout the past four years he had supported the use of blended, competency-based and project-based learning to combat the factory-level model of education.

Subcommittee reports were then received.

Dr. Merck reported for the Academic Standards and Assessments Subcommittee. He noted that the awarding of the state assessment for grades 3 through 8 and grade 11 has not been finalized. A protest has been filed. The procurement process will now be followed. He also noted that the review of the current English language arts (ELA) and mathematics standards has begun. The panel will meet on October 28, November 6 and November 12.

Mr. Martin reported for the EIA and Improvement Mechanisms Subcommittee. He noted that the subcommittee held a hearing earlier in the day to receive input from entities and programs funded with Education Improvement Act (EIA) revenues. Mr. Bowers noted that there are several entities receiving funds to improve the teaching and learning of science but PASS scores declined in 2014 across all grade levels. Rep. Neal asked that staff contact EdisonLearning to have them present before the subcommittee on new initiatives to engage the community in blended learning areas. For example, Mr. Neal discussed an initiative in Chicago

whereby churches are having recovery centers for students who need coaching and remediation. Dr. Zais noted that many struggling students need financial literacy training.

Mr. Martin, with assistance from staff, provided an overview of the initial impact of the summer reading camps. The analysis was done to determine best practices in districts that offered to participate in the pilot.

Ms. Hairfield provided a report from the Public Awareness Subcommittee. While the Subcommittee did not meet in September the staff has been working on several initiatives. The staff worked with TransformSC, the Department of Employment and Workforce, the South Carolina Department of Education and others on a brochure to explain the WorkKeys assessment and its impact on students. Schools and districts have asked for more copies of the Reading Brochures. To date, approximately 13,000 have been printed and distributed statewide. A monthly electronic newsletter to all principals, superintendents, instructional leaders and other interested parties is being disseminated. The EOC is also providing information that the South Carolina ETV is distributing monthly via a newsletter directly to classroom teachers.

The Committee then moved to go into executive session for the purpose of discussing a personnel matter.

The veil having been lifted, Sen. Fair asked that the Committee consider increasing the salary of the Executive Director by 5 percent. Rep. Neal asked that the motion be amended also to consult with Human Resource Management to determine a competitive salary. Senator Hayes asked that the EOC implement the 5 percent increase while reviewing the salaries of other state agencies. Sen. Fair moved that the EOC adopt the recommendations of Sen. Hayes; Rep. Neal seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Then Mr. Bowers voiced concern that the Department of Education had not received additional FTEs to implement the Read to Succeed Act. Sen. Hayes guaranteed that during the next budget debate in 2015 the legislature would review the matter. Then Mr. Bowers suggested that the amount of funds appropriated for teacher supplies be increased to at least \$275. He asked staff to determine what the cost would be.

Then Ms. Marks noted that she made six nominations to the standards review panel but only one of her recommendations was actually on the panel. Mrs. Barton explained the process by which individuals were selected. Ms. Marks also expressed concern about the treatment of guests at subcommittee meetings.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.