

AGENDA

Strategic Planning Subcommittee Meeting

Monday, May 17, 2021
Blatt Building, Room 433
2:00 P.M.

- I. Welcome Dr. Bob Couch
- II. Approval of Minutes from March 15, 2021 Dr. Bob Couch
- III. Discussion:
Review of the SC EOC's Strategic Planning Report..... Subcommittee

VI. Adjournment

Ellen Weaver
CHAIR

Barbara B. Hairfield
VICE CHAIR

Terry Alexander

April Allen

Melanie Barton

Neal Collins

Bob Couch

Raye Felder

Greg Hembree

Kevin L. Johnson

Sidney Locke

Brian Newsome

Neil C. Robinson, Jr.

Jamie Shuster

Molly Spearman

Patti J. Tate

Scott Turner

Subcommittee Members:

Bob Couch, Chair
April Allen
Melanie Barton
Neal Collins
Raye Felder
Greg Hembree
Kevin Johnson
Neil Robinson
Scott Turner
Ellen Weaver, Ex Officio
Matthew Ferguson, Staff

C. Matthew Ferguson, Esq.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Strategic Planning Subcommittee Meeting Minutes of the Meeting

March 15, 2021

Members Present (in-person or remote): Melanie Barton, Rep. Neal Collins, Dr. Bob Couch, Rep. Raye Felder, Sen. Greg Hembree, Sen. Kevin Johnson, Neil Robinson, and Ellen Weaver

EOC Staff Present: Matthew Ferguson, Dr. Kevin Andrews, Dr. Rainey Knight, Dana Yow

Dr. Couch called the meeting to order 1:03 p.m. The minutes were approved from the January 25, 2021 meeting. Mr. Robinson initiated the motion, and Ms. Weaver seconded it.

A SC Superintendent's Panel was introduced to the group to address school accountability: Dr. Frank Rodriguez from Beaufort County School District; Dr. J.R. Green from Fairfield County School District; and Tom Wilson from Anderson School District Five.

Dr. Rodriguez said that accountability is an important component of any system. The goal is to leverage multiple inputs and data points and processes to achieve desired outcomes. Every school is a complex ecosystem. Root causes need to be addressed, not just the outcomes. Formative assessments are critical steps to inform progress and future steps that guide instruction.

Dr. Green talked about his career in Fairfield County School District. He feels that we have developed a system that measures populations, not effectiveness of systems. He discussed how he makes decisions based on his student populations. He would like the committee to think about making sure we have a system that measures effectiveness.

Mr. Wilson, from Anderson 5 gave statistics about where his schools started virtual vs face-to-face. The children who are attending school face-to-face are doing ok; he can't say the same for the students who are attending virtually. Fifty-seven students qualified for gifted and talented when testing off-site; when he brought them in to school, only two qualified.

Mr. Wilson shared a presentation from Georgia and discussed the Georgia College and Career Ready Performance Index, which included Content Mastery; Progress; Closing Gaps; Readiness; and Graduation Rate (HS Only). The Georgia system includes both 4 and 5-year cohort graduation rates. SC requires only 24 Carnegie Units to graduate. With block scheduling, where a student can earn 32 units, a student can fail 25% of courses and can graduate with a D. He would encourage SC to raise the bar to 28 units. Mr. Wilson supports accountability in Anderson District 5 and support assessments.

Sen. Johnson asked Mr. Wilson about graduation rate, stating he was surprised by the 32-unit possibility and graduating with a "D."

Mr. Wilson added that other states that are on the block have higher requirements and the big four subjects are required every year.

Mr. Barton stated that coming out of the pandemic, a disproportionately number of students elected virtual. We are going to see tremendous academic loss – what does an accountability system need to address to cover this discrepancy?

Mr. Wilson stated that Anderson 5 is going to have summer school and afterschool, but they are going to have challenges for many years to come. They have had some students who came back to school 2nd semester who had been virtual who said they are quitting – they felt like they never learned anything. We need assessment, leave it where it is, “It’s better to know how we are rather than guess where we are.”

Dr. Green reminded that we have lots of schools who are not on the block schedule. Make sure the system takes into account things such as self-contained classrooms.

Sen. Johnson stated he often wonders why we as a state do not allocate more resources where there are more challenges.

Dr. Green stated we have a system that counts exceptional education against graduation rate.

Rep. Collins asked Dr. Green how he determined a teacher was doing a good job. Dr. Green said he made decisions based on what he and his staff observed.

Mr. Ferguson asked Dr. Green if he thought it was possible to gather these data in a value-added model that included growth.

Ms. Barton asked Dr. Rodriguez what some of the instructional decisions he was going to have to make as a result of the pandemic? He said face-to-face is obviously the most effective method of teaching, as well as building a formative assessment system to see where students are along the way. Teachers need the opportunity to adjust instruction along the way; this is what is needed for a continuous improvement model. How we approach academic recovery is a challenge; this is not a one-year fix. We are trying to extend teaching and learning time now. We know we still have certain communities that have been affected by the pandemic and thus have been virtual, working to get them back in classrooms. Strategic decisions must be made along the way. Accountability is complex, and data must be used to inform instruction.

Dr. Couch asked Dr. Rodriguez what the impact of the social/emotional gap is. We must recognize that students’ basic needs may not have been met; they must feel safe.

Mrs. Weaver commended Dr. Rodriguez on thinking about transportation so that those barriers were eliminated to be sure students can get to the additional support. Dr. Rodriguez talked about the collegiality that other superintendents in the state have shared – weekly meetings – sharing ideas. They are building a formative assessment system that allows them to more quickly get data to inform instruction as well as professional learning for teachers to work together by grade level /content.

Dr. Green stated that most of our people have experienced trauma; that has an impact on the students.

Mr. Wilson stated that virtual teachers remain part of the faculty from where they came. Students can participate in sports, in prom although going to school virtually. They are going to add some mental health counselors with some of the Covid funds. He is more concerned about 4th graders then 5th graders who are because they are going to middle school next year.

Dr. Couch called upon Stephanie Croft and other staff from PowerSchool to present on “Using Reporting and Real Time Data Analytics to Inform Decision Making”. The team discussed real-time data via dashboards and a product called Unified Insights. Every district uses PowerSchool as their School Information System (SIS).

Ms. Barton asked if PowerSchool is working with any other states to set a dashboard up for the public and parents. New Mexico was shared as an example and it is also being used in other states.

Rep Felder asked if analytics has the potential to drill down to school or classroom level. PowerSchool staff said yes.

Mr. Robinson asked how long it would take to get something up and running like this. PowerSchool staff said just a few months.

Mr. Ferguson confirmed that nightly uploads can happen, and data is refreshed. He also asked – how many districts use unified analytics (Performance Matters). Seven districts currently use it.

Dr. Rodriguez stated that Beaufort County is using Performance Matters; assessments and item banks are measuring the assessment.

Mr. Ferguson introduced the question for discussion: What needs to change to achieve college and career ready success for all students in South Carolina? Linda Salane led the discussion about the framework.

As you think about the strategic plan for the role of the EOC, do you think it is wise to add or is it important to add “affect change.”

Mr. Robinson stated that he always thought that promoting progress included affecting change but perhaps the concept needs expanding.

Current legislation precludes us from lobbying for specific legislation. There are legislative limitations. There is also legislative authority to step in with more force than we typically have before.

Sen. Hembree stated that most of legislators are not experts in anything; we are typically generalists – the reality is that we’re eager to have ideas and suggestions that are trustworthy presented to us. He said we need to be sure that good ideas get shared with us; we want to do a good job.

Ms. Salane reminded them of their last retreat. It is important to anchor the role of the EOC as an honest, independent broker of relevant information. It is time to initiate collaborative relations and have more robust access to real-time data and translate that data to external entities.

Ms. Felder stated that in looking at this expansion of the EOC’s role, first we must look at the capacity of the agency. We have a small EOC and we have an issue accessing the data. I hope that we see the General Assembly taking the lead in having one longitudinal data system. The capacity of the workload needs to be considered before we expand our roles; it will take a lot of man hours and months to get this built out. Identify where the holes are and what is needed.

Ms. Salane asked if promoting affects change? She said we have a responsibility for robust access. Is it our role to point out gaps or is our role to step in and tell people how to fill those gaps? Perhaps, our role is to identify the gaps and give solutions to fill that data. Using matrix, do we want to advocate for immediate access for data?

Ms. Weaver stated that the role the EOC has to be leaned into wholeheartedly – our data access problem is huge.

Mr. Ferguson stated that most data we need is being collected but the systems are disparate and are not easily available at the state level; smaller districts also struggle to access the data.

Ms. Salane asked if there is anything in Tier 1 that you would take out or anything the EOC is not leaning into. Mr. Ferguson stated we can lean into the opportunities for collaboration – he has asked Supt Spearman to come provide regular input about what is going on.

Dr. Couch said we are all in this for continuous improvement. Often, we have “accountability” as a “gotcha” but it should be about continuous improvement and accessibility to the data.

Sen. Hembree stated that this is hard; but because our role is primarily oversight, we are grading the papers and those having their papers graded don’t like that – there is fear.

Rep. Collins said we need to do authoritative reporting and communicate we are looking for continuous improvement.

Ms. Salane stated that a long time ago, the EOC was perceived as a “hammer”. Ms. Weaver stated that in any situation, you have to have clarity and alignment. One of her greatest frustrations is that no one is looking at the big picture and no one has data. We should not be in that situation.

Mr. Robinson said there is always something that causes us not to be able to do what we need to be doing. We need systemwide data in place.

Mr. Ferguson reminded the EOC that they are a collaborative convener so we can bring in some resources.

Ms. Salane said she heard them saying it was time to double down on the report facts and data piece, lean into promoting progress without stepping into the “affecting” change. How do we measure change and report progress to set a culture of “let’s learn from it?”

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Education Oversight Committee Strategic Plan 2021-2025

Summary Strategies and Objectives

Strategy I: Report Facts

To support all stakeholders in making informed decisions for the continuous improvement of schools and student outcomes, the EOC will advocate for, access, and use a comprehensive, quality, statewide data system.

Objective A: Enhance the EOC's direct access to comprehensive, quality, statewide data for reporting information.

- Advocate for EOC staff to have secure, administrative-user access to Student Information System data;
- Institute processes for EOC staff to have co-equal access to files that contain student-level data used for accountability;
- Establish quality control processes to ensure accurate accountability reporting.

Objective B: Advocate for the synthesis of existing data sources into a comprehensive, quality statewide data system that is secure, transparent and relevant to decision making for schools and student outcomes.

- Partner with existing stakeholder groups to establish policies and processes to connect existing data systems;
- Advocate for the establishment of policies and processes to ensure the security, privacy, and appropriate use of all stakeholder data.

Objective C: Transform data into information that equips multiple stakeholder groups to act for the continuous improvement of schools and student outcomes.

- Create information, to include data visualizations, that empowers multiple stakeholders to take more action-oriented approaches to continuous improvement of schools and student success;
- Increase the use of state and school report cards and other sources of data for decision making and continuous school and student improvement;
- Streamline the accessibility and transparency of information.

Education Oversight Committee Strategic Plan 2021-2025

Summary Strategies and Objectives

Strategy II: Measure Change

To more accurately and efficiently measure change, the EOC will refocus accountability to emphasize school improvement and the success of students.

Objective D: Align system-wide (PK-12) accountability measures with characteristics of college and career readiness (CCR).

- Study the ability of current accountability measures to predict college and career success;
- Select accurate and appropriate measures of CCR progress throughout the PK-12 system;
- Establish a framework to include international and national benchmarks of student success;
- Monitor student CCR success and the continuous improvement of schools.

Objective E: Design and implement an educational accountability system that enables stakeholders to take action and focus on continuous improvement.

- Research the needs of multiple stakeholder groups to determine appropriate measures;
- Develop measures to meet identified needs.

Objective F: Identify and reward school accountability success

- Recognize schools that demonstrate success;
- Include select awards on school report cards

Education Oversight Committee Strategic Plan 2021-2025

Summary Strategies and Objectives

Strategy III: Promote Progress

To more effectively promote progress throughout South Carolina schools, the EOC will strengthen partnerships with key stakeholders and promote collaborative, coordinated action for the continuous improvement of schools and student success.

Objective G: Clarify the role of the Education Oversight Committee as the authority in PK-12 school accountability.

- Solidify the EOC's role as responsible for the development of federal and state accountability;
- Become a co-equal partner in the procurement of measures used for school accountability (e.g. assessments, surveys)

Objective H: Realign EOC resources to become a more effective advisor and honest broker to multiple stakeholder groups

- Research the needs of multiple stakeholder groups;
- Serve as a bridge to connect research to policy and practice for the following stakeholder groups: policy makers, educators, families / students, and business / community leaders.

Objective I: Collaborate with other agencies, schools, and organizations to jointly explore topics relevant to school and student success.

- Convene stakeholders to collaboratively update the accountability standards for a Vision 2030 document;
- Convene forums / speakers on relevant education topics.