

# **SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

## **Minutes of the Meeting**

June 13, 2016

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

EOC Staff in Attendance: Dr. Kevin Andrews; Mrs. Melanie Barton; Ms. Hope Johnson-Jones; Dr. Rainey Knight; Ms. Bunnie Ward; and Ms. Dana Yow

Mr. Robinson called the meeting to order.

The minutes of the April 11, 2016 meeting of the EOC were approved as distributed.

The chairman recognized Dr. Lee D'Andrea, Chair of the High School Task Force and former district superintendent of Anderson 4 and Pickens County. Dr. D'Andrea began by recognizing the members of the Task Force who were in attendance at the EOC meeting including Dr. Bob Couch, Rep. Dwight Loftis and Dr. Janie Lindle from the Moore School of Education at Clemson University. Dr. D'Andrea explained the research that was consulted and national experts who appeared before the Task Force. In looking at the high school experience and the system by which students are prepared for success in the future, the Task Force concluded that the current learning design is not working systemically for all students and is in critical need of systemic renovation. The Task Force found that:

1. The current SC high school diploma requirements reflect 20<sup>th</sup> Century thinking and planning. Twenty-four Carnegie units across math, science, social studies, English and elective courses may or may not prepare the student for college and/or career.
2. The current assessments in SC do not provide an aligned metric of learning progress of a student.
3. The work on seamless transitions from high school to higher education has slowed significantly in the immediate past.
4. There is a significant void in communication regarding college and career readiness and the South Carolina workforce needs/demands at many levels.
5. There is a significant lack of available data to determine if students are successful once leaving the K-12 public schools. For example, the unique SUNS ids do not follow a student into higher education.

The Task Force recognized that there are areas in our state where local leadership has already made significant steps toward changing the learning system. However, statewide, the Task Force made five recommendations to improve the learning system for all students:

1. The content/coursework requirements for a high school diploma must be updated to reflect the needs of workforce readiness in the current environment. The task force even proposed a sample learning design to be considered. Additional work is needed.
2. A coherent continuum of assessments must be established that measures content or knowledge as well as college and career readiness with meaningful and multiple measures.
3. A coordinating council or P-20 Council should be re-established and directed to fully implement the Education and Economic Development Act.

4. An extensive communication initiative should be developed and implemented using the College Foundation of North Carolina's website as an example.
5. There needs to be a comprehensive design for data to be established using a longitudinal data system without compromising individual student privacy.

Mr. Robinson expressed his appreciation for the work of the Task Force. Superintendent Spearman agreed with the findings and recommendations. She asked that at the September 2016 joint State Board of Education and EOC meeting that the Department report on how the agency is already implementing many of the recommendations. She noted that the Department had already pushed for and gotten State Board approval for a revised, uniform grading system. Data collection is still a significant challenge to the Department, having inherited a broken data system.

The chair then recognized the full-day 4K evaluation team, led by Dr. Bill Brown and including Dr. Fred Greer and Dr. Leigh D'Amico to present the initial results of the fall 2015 4K and 5K early literacy assessments. First, Dr. D'Amico presented the results of the 4K assessments which were Individual Growth and Development Indicators of Early Learning (IGDIs), Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS), and Teaching Strategies GOLD. On average, prekindergarten students scored below expectations for their age-range and were developmentally at-risk in some skills. On average, prekindergarten students in private centers scored higher than their peers in public schools. Dr. Greer presented the results of the Developmental Reading Assessment, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (DRA2), which was administered to 55,236 kindergartners in the fall of 2015. Overall, white kindergarten students were slightly more likely to be at higher levels than Black kindergartners, and Hispanic kindergarten students were at lower levels than White or Black children. When comparing the scores from the beginning of prekindergarten and kindergarten for the same children, the results showed that generally students who had participated in full-day 4K in private centers during the prior school year scored at the same levels as their peers who were in public schools. There were, however, significantly more children who attended full-day 4K in private centers who had little or no mastery of phonological awareness (34.2%) as compared to their peers who had attended full-day 4K in public schools (23.38%).

Rep. Felder asked why the data had not been reported earlier. The evaluators explained that the data files were not available until the middle to end of April. Dr. Couch asked about the cut scores on DRA2 and their meaning. The evaluators had not yet had an opportunity to review the cut scores but will in their final report.

#### Subcommittee Reports:

Academic Standards and Assessment - Mr. Robinson recognized Dr. Merck, Chair of the Academic Standards and Assessment Subcommittee. Dr. Merck reported the EOC has initiated the social studies standards review. Approximately 254 nominations were received from legislators, educators, EOC members, and members of the State Board of Education. To date, approximately 60 individuals will serve on the panels to review the standards.

EIA and Improvement Mechanisms – Mr. Robinson recognized Dr. Couch. Dr. Couch provided an overview of the Conference Report on the Fiscal Year 2016-17 General Appropriation Act. He also referred to the budget items and legislation that specifically addressed the Abbeville equity lawsuit. Then, Dr. couch presented the overall findings of the Teacher Loan Report.

Public Awareness - Ms. Hairfield noted that the Public Awareness Subcommittee will be working this summer and fall to address the recommendations of the high school task force report.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.