

Standards of Learning Innovation Committee

Meeting Minutes

Full Committee Meeting

July 15, 2014 1:30-4:30pm

West Reading Room, Patrick Henry Building

Attendees

Present Committee Members:

Secretary Anne Holton , Dr. Stewart Roberson, Dr. Steve Staples, Grace Chung Becker, Dr. Shawnrell Blackwell, Christian Braunlich, Kelly Booz, Jeffrey Bourne, Dr. Terri Breeden, Dabney Carr, Dr. Jared Cotton, Karen Cross, Dr. Kim Paddison Dockery, Dr. Jenny Sue Flannagan, Deborah Frazier, Delegate Tag Greason, Sarah Gross, Meg Gruber, Dr. Roger Hathaway, Lillie Jessie, Delegate Rob Krupicka, Dr. Tara Lateef, Delegate Jim LeMunyon, Dr. Susan Magliaro, Dr. Brian Matney, Dr. Laurie McCullough, Senator John Miller, Delegate Roxann Robinson, Karen Thomsen, Dr. Chriss Walther-Thomas, Delegate Jeion Ward, Dr. William White, Wade Whitehead, Ben Williams, Sanford Williams

Renee Zando was present via conference call.

Absent Committee Members:

Senator Creigh Deeds,
Veronica Donahue
Susanna Burgos
Dr. Alan Seibert

Scribe

Lisa Jackson

Agenda

- **Call to Order**
- **Charge to Committee**
- **Introductions**

- **Remarks**
- **National Picture on School Assessment**
- **Virginia Assessment & Accountability System**
- **Facilitated Discussion**
 - **Small Group Discussion**
 - **Small Group Reports**
- **Organizational Business**

Call to Order

- **1:30pm** – Dr. Roberson (Chair of Committee) called meeting to order and gave welcome remarks to the committee.

Charge to Committee

- Secretary Holton presented the Charge to the Committee
 - During this time, the Secretary acknowledged several of the members including Board of Education President Chris Braunlich, delegates, and senators in the room.
 - The charge of the committee was read quoting the legislation that established the SOL Innovation Committee
 - The commitment of the members to the committee was presented
 - Two year commitment
 - Liaison to organization, school, community
 - Need for short and long term goals
 - Shared lens of committee: joy of learning and teaching, and the improvement of schools to effectively teach students 21st century skills.
- Secretary Holton presented the video from Governor McAuliffe

- Governor McAuliffe expressed thanks and presented goals of the committee

Introductions

- Dr. Roberson asked committee to introduce themselves with brief introductions including name, locale, position, and organization they belong to.

Remarks

- Dr. Staples provided remarks to the committee members, expressing the commitment of the Department of Education and his staff to make a difference and create change.
- Dr. Staples provided the introduction for Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond who will be providing the presentation on the National Picture on School Assessment.

National Picture on School Assessment

- Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond presented via Skype.
 - PowerPoint presentations were provided to committee members and members of the public for review
 - Information was presented on evaluation and synthesis of assessment tools.
 - Dr. Darling-Hammond discussed the shift in testing in the United States over the past 20 years and since the passage of the No Child Left Behind legislation.
 - Less focus has been placed on higher level skills
 - More emphasis placed on recall and recognition
 - Suggested to take the PISA test into consideration which has more open ended questions and assessing more higher level thinking
 - Discussed other testing measures used in a variety of other nations and states

- Included discussion on assessment and curriculum in Singapore, England, Canada, and Australia
 - Other assessment measures in states such as New York and New Hampshire through the Innovation Lab Network
- Suggested considering replacing multiple-choice exams with more performance-based testing such as traditional and digital portfolio systems.
- Dr. Staples opened the floor up for discussion and questions for Dr. Darling Hammond
 - Dr. Chriss Walther-Thomas (Dean of the School of Education at Virginia Commonwealth University)
 - **Question:** Pertaining to the new assessment initiatives of PARCC and Smarter Balance, and the changes currently being made in Virginia.
 - **Response from Dr. Darling-Hammond:** The current field tests being performed have been promising. It may be possible to use these test as substitute assessment in the future, but it will depend on the thoughts and ideas of educators and administrators in each locale.
 - Wade Whitehead (elementary teacher in Roanoke City Public Schools)
 - **Question:** Privatization of assessments in other nations. Are they written, maintained, and scored by private companies or by the departments of education.
 - **Response from Dr. Darling-Hammond:** Education ministries or departments of many of these nations are in charge of writing, administering, and scoring assessments. Teachers on all levels work together to build assessments. In the 90's, the US did the same until NCLB – when they started being outsourced to private companies
 - **Question:** Whether teachers and educators in other countries receive the scores of the assessments relatively quickly, to be able to adjust, assess, and apply changes from results.
 - **Response from Dr. Darling-Hammond:** Assessments are scored quickly, and are completed by the teachers and other educators. The scores are usually received within weeks.

- Dr. Sue Magliaro (Director of VT-STEM at Virginia Tech)
 - **Question:** How new programs/initiatives/packages have affected teacher preparation and administration?
 - **Response from Dr. Darling-Hammond:** Discussed implications of curriculum changes and professional development
- Dr. Jenny Sue Flannagan (Director of the Martinson Center for Mathematics and Science at Regent University)
 - **Question:** How curricula in other countries align with their performance-based assessments?
 - **Response from Dr. Darling-Hammond:** Many of those countries are small countries, often the size of a state. Very strict curriculum. Teachers assist in the development of assessments.
- Dr. William White (Vice President for Productions, Publications, and Learning Ventures for the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation)
 - **Question:** Opportunities to complete interdisciplinary work?
 - **Response from Dr. Darling-Hammond:** Use of several projects for assessment. Use of a paper and/or portfolio, as well as an end of the year exam. Collaboration from all subject areas.
- Meg Gruber (President of VEA)
 - **Question:** How does school day/schedule in other nations compare to the US?
 - **Response from Dr. Darling-Hammond:** US have the highest amount of time hours/week of seat time in classrooms. The average amount of hours in the US is 27, compared to the average of majority nations which is 19, with the lowest being about 15 hours per week.
 - **Question:** How do the class sizes in other nations compare to the United States?
 - **Response from Dr. Darling-Hammond:** Smaller class size usually means more attention to each student. Average US class size is 27, while internationally are 24. Must consider staffing needs. On average, 50% of workers in education in the US are classroom teachers while in other countries the average number of classroom teachers is between 70-80%.

Virginia Assessment & Accountability

- Dr. Shelley Loving-Ryder (Assistant Superintendent at the DOE) presented on Virginia assessments and accountability via a PowerPoint
 - Discussed the history of SOLs in the state of Virginia from 1983 to 2014
 - Implementation of new test, the possibility of online testing
 - Past and Current test administration on elementary/middle/high school level
 - Presented on the federal requirements, and how Virginia currently aligned with those standards
 - ESEA waiver
 - Graduation requirements currently in place
 - Discussion on substitute test such as the AP and IB exams
- Questions were taken from the committee members
 - Delegate Greason
 - **Question:** According to new bill, can computer science course be counted for either of the math or science credits and be taken for either the math or science SOL?
 - **Response from Dr. Loving-Ryder:** This type of course is not a part of the verified credits but instead the standard credit systems
 - Delegate Krupicka
 - **Question:** Can the writing assessment be grouped together with reading assessment?
 - **Response from Dr. Loving-Ryder:** According to NCLB, schools must administer reading assessment. But if there is an assessment that can be administered that can be approved that can cover both, it is a possibility.
 - **Question:** Must all tests be state administered?
 - **Response from Dr. Loving-Ryder:** Not all tests must be state administered but some local test may not be approved. All assessments must be peer-reviewed.

- Chris Braunlich (President of the Virginia Board of Education)
 - **Question:** Who makes decisions on whether students can take one of the alternate assessments?
 - **Response from Dr. Loving-Ryder:** Students decide. Students are not required to take SOL if they take and pass one of the alternate assessments.
- Grace Chung Becker (parent of students at TJ HS)
 - **Question:** There are 3 science assessments. Must students take all 3 or just portions?
 - **Response from Dr. Loving-Ryder:** If student is sitting and taking class, must take exam.
- Dr. Loving-Ryder shared characteristics of a good assessment

Dr. Roberson called for a 15 minute break at 3:15pm.

Facilitated Discussion

- **Small Group Discussion**

- Dr. Roberson instructed members to count off from 1-6 to break into small groups
 - **Group 1** included Christian Braunlich, Grace Chung Becker, Meg Gruber, Dr. Roger Hathaway, Delegate Jim LeMunyon, and Ben Williams
 - **Group 2** included Delegate Tag Greason, Karen Thomsen, Dr. Laurie McCullough, Dr. Terri Breeden, Dr. Brian Matney, and Sanford S. Williams
 - **Group 3** included Dr. Shawnrell Blackwell, Kelly Booz, Jeff Bourne, Dr. William White, and Wade Whitehead
 - **Group 4** included Karen Cross, Del. Jeion Ward, Dr. Chriss Walther-Thomas, and Dr. Jenny Sue Flannagan.
 - **Group 5** included Dabney Carr, Dr. Kim Dockery, Dr. Tara Lateef, Dr. Sue Magliaro, and Sarah Gross
 - **Group 6** included Dr. Jared Cotton, Del. Rob Krupicka, Sen. John Miller, Lillie Jessie, and Deb Frazier

- Meeting called back to order by Dr. Roberson and began group discussion and report-out. (see notes)
 - Meg Gruber was the reporter for group #1
 - Notes:
 - Hope to see: a change in the assessment system to show more critical thinking, problem solving skills
 - Changing/evaluating the high school system
 - Possibility of integrating all disciplines, measuring through local assessments or college credits?
 - Major concerns
 - System is about recall, not skill building
 - Identifying real purpose of SOLs, what should they be doing
 - Must prepare our students with 21st century skills – the 4Cs, SOLs only target one
 - Collaboration
 - Communication
 - Critical Thinking
 - Creativity
 - Punitive system
 - Lack of flexibility in current system (influenced by US DOE)
 - English language learners and special needs students
 - Areas beyond reading and math
 - New ideas
 - Stakeholders take current system seriously
 - Fairfax and others take the PISA test
 - Sampling of students for SOLs
 - Computer adaptive testing
 - Training of professionals, especially in STEM schools

- Brian Matney was the reporter for group #2
- Notes:
 - Group goals: goal of having accountability and delight work together
 - Give students assessments they deserve, assessments that promise employers a future skilled workforce
 - Education as an economic development issue
 - Major concerns
 - Stifling creativity, undue pressure on teachers
 - “mile wide and an inch deep” curriculum – compare to international learner curricula
 - Employers want workers to know how to learn
 - Have seen
 - IB testing
 - PISA test as international benchmarking
 - Academies across the state—defending senior projects, non-test assessments
- Shawnrell Blackwell was the reporter for group #3
- Notes:
 - Goals:
 - Not just low-hanging fruit, make a significant impact
 - Difference between formative and summative assessments
 - Performance, project based assessments
 - Interdisciplinary to vary up assessment process
 - Concerns
 - Tying achievement to teacher evaluation
 - Quality assessments
 - Success
 - Data driven decision making
 - Current accountability system looks at ALL students – not just highest or lowest performers

- Karen Cross was the reporter for group #4
- Notes:
 - Accomplishments we hope to achieve
 - Move towards student growth assessments rather than summative assessments
 - More curriculum inquiry models, portfolio system, creative thinking
 - Readiness for technological world
 - Better use of resources, more efficient spending of funds
 - Especially in high-poverty communities
 - Comprehensive review of current system
 - Need to encourage collaboration, not competition
 - Current system means difficulty in keeping morale up for teachers and students, change in school culture
 - Success has been where teachers are involved in creating the assessment: portfolio style, rubric-based, example of AP grading (half day for essay grading training)
 - Trust relationship -> support for teachers, trust and team effort to meet needs of every child
- Kim Dockery was the reporter for group #5
- Notes:
 - Goals:
 - Take Innovation seriously
 - Balance interest of the learner with stakeholder input
 - Snapshot of the day not a profile of the student, students shouldn't be defined by one day
 - Successes:
 - Teacherpreneurship: teachers getting ownership of the assessment and a more collaborative environment means better student outcomes

- Rob Krupicka was the reporter for group #6.
- Notes:
 - What do we want to accomplish?
 - System with more types of assessments – less tests, change tests, more focus on what children really need to learn, focus on the children
 - Concerns:
 - Punitive testing, high stakes
 - Teachers aren't included in creation or grading of our tests
 - What works
 - Good professional development, involve teachers in the scoring and creating of the tests
- Dr. Roberson provided a wrap-up of the group discussion and introduced Jennie O'Holleran (Deputy Secretary of Education).

Organizational Business

- Deputy Secretary Jennie O'Holleran provided information on the website that could be viewed by the public and the committee. She provided contact information. Jennie informed the committee that the next meeting will be held on September 30, 2014, the time and location for this meeting has yet to be determined. Deb Frazier (elementary) and Alan Seibert (secondary) were introduced as the subcommittee chairs. Jennie explained that subcommittee assignments would be sent out at a later time.
- Dr. Roberson called for any last comments or questions.
 - **Comment/Question:** Del. LeMunyon inquired about the availability of SOLs to the public. Dr. Roberson suggested it would be a good resource for all members to take a look or even take the exam themselves. A follow-up email will include a link to the released SOL assessments.
 - **Comment/Question:** Del. Greason explained to the committee the vision that was had when writing the bill that established the SOL Committee. Expressed that he hoped to have short-term goals but to also establish a 5- to 10-year plan for the state of Virginia's education system.

Next Meeting

September 30, 2014 – Time TBD, Location TBD

Adjournment

4:27pm – Meeting was adjourned by Dr. Roberson.