

Standards of Learning Innovation Committee

Meeting Minutes

Full Committee Meeting

West Reading Room, Patrick Henry Building

September 30, 2014 1:30-5:00pm

Attendees

Present Committee Members:

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

Delegate Jim LeMunyon and Kelly Booz were present via conference call.

Absent Committee Members:

Grace Chung Becker

Susanna Burgos

Dr. Terri Breeden

Scribe

Eric Steigleder/Lisa Jackson

Agenda

- **Welcome, Agenda Overview, Review of Committee's Progress**

- **Discussion of Current Accountability and Assessment Systems and the Federal Guidelines Waiver**
- **Discussion of Our Research Partners’ Support Capacities**
- **Public Comment**
- **Break**
- **Report of Subcommittee Input**
- **Small Group Discussion**
- **Large Group Report Out**
- **Public Comment**
- **Producing More Public Input Opportunities**
- **Next Steps**
- **Adjournment**

Welcome, Agenda Overview, Review of Committee’s Progress

- **1:33pm** – Stewart Roberson (Chair of Committee) called meeting to order and gave welcome remarks to the committee.
 - Recognized delegates and senators in attendance at the meeting
- Stewart Roberson provided an overview of the committee and its progress
 - He reviewed the Committee’s charge, as quoted by the House Bill 930 legislation
 - Discussed the timeline for the Committee’s work, with the goal of providing interim recommendations to the General Assembly and Board of Education this fall.
 - Provided an overview of the subcommittee meetings that preceded the September 30th full meeting
- Stewart Roberson discussed the steering documents of the committee
 - The “short synthesis” was explained as what the committee had accomplished thus far
 - The “long synthesis” expanded upon what the committee had accomplished
 - The documents are in draft form, and are intended to give the committee members something to reflect on.

Discussion of Current Accountability Systems

- Steve Staples discussed the importance of understanding the foundation of the accountability system
- Dr. Bill Boshier (past Superintendent of Public Instruction) shared with the committee:
 - The purpose of the early accreditation standards
 - Issues that arose during that time
 - How the state came to the current accountability standards
- Bill Boshier provided suggestions for the committee to consider when providing recommendations for change
- Dr. Shelley Loving-Ryder discussed the Standards of Learning (SOLs) from 1998 to present
- Steve Staples discussed the progress of Virginia as compared to other states, as well as other countries on such assessments as the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), and SATs.
- Shelley Loving-Ryder discussed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) waiver and the consequences if not renewed.
 - She discussed the flexibility requirements that accompanied that waiver

Discussion of Research Partners' Capacities

- Dr. Chriss Walther-Thomas and Dr. Sue Magliaro discussed their institutions' research capacities and how they will be able to assist the committee
 - Chriss Walther-Thomas discussed the upcoming meeting of deans from across the various education programs in Roanoke on October 2, 2014.
 - Committed to reaching out to other deans and education programs for help.
 - Sue Magliaro discussed a group of students working with her this school year to conduct research on topics relevant to the Committee's work.
 - They stated they will be creating research briefs for the committee and will attempt to keep reports concise

Public Comment

- Jeff Carol – Principal of Warhill High School in Williamsburg
 - Cautioned the committee on doing away with more tests, which may have unintended consequences.
 - Stated he is willing to include guidance and resources to committee to help implement proposed changes.
- Deborah Loepere – Math Resource Teacher at Braddock Elementary School
 - Discussed that teachers look at test questions and answers to drive and modify their ways of teaching.
 - Suggested that students are only provided with a score and not feedback, which makes it hard to improve on learning.
 - Proposed that teachers and students have access to their old tests to see what was missed so students can adapt and teachers can change strategies.
- Paul Nichols – CEO of Virginia Advanced Study Strategies
 - Discussed his development of a math-gap analysis
 - Discussed the importance of customizing education for careers, charged the committee with taking a strong look at that suggestion.
- Karen Richardson – Virginia Society of Technology in Education
 - Discussed the overwhelming nature of testing on teachers, the gap between perception and reality.
 - Suggested that computer adaptive testing (CAT) has more to do with what students are doing in the classroom and less of what they're doing in their lives
 - Discussed that technology should be used for innovation instead of just testing
 - Discussed that even though there are strong pockets of innovation in Virginia, not all students have the opportunity to take part
- William Portlock – Chesapeake Bay Foundation
 - Urged the committee to undertake environmental education, and discussed the importance of incorporating it into schools
 - Discussed the importance of student-generated, project-based education and critical-thinking skills for readiness for college and careers
- David Ellena – Principal of Tomahawk Middle School

- Discussed the lack of targeted instruction after failing an SOL tests for middle school students, stating that expedited retests for middle schools would reduce anxiety
- Stated that replacing one test with another is not innovative, however using alternative forms of assessment is (projects, videos, portfolios)

Break

- 2:50pm – Stewart Roberson called for a 15 minute break.

Subcommittee Report

- Dr. Alan Seibert and Deborah Frazier emphasized the 18 themes that were voted on during the subcommittee meetings.
- Alan Seibert discussed the need for Virginia to move the current system forward in a measurable, manageable, and affordable way.
- Explained the importance of improved teaching under the current system, including the elimination of “hobby-teaching,” but stressed the need for finding ways to incorporate sources of verified credits, while introducing rigor, relevance, and personalization by relying less on assessment standardization.

Small Group Discussion and Report Out

- **Groups counted off by 6**
 - The 6 groups were tasked with discussing the desired results from the three focus areas and were given 45 minutes to discuss. The groups then reported on the results of their discussions.
 - **Group 1** discussed desired results 1, 2, and 9.
 - In terms of Desired Result #1, the group felt that the Standards of Learning (SOL) need to be revised to ensure that they reflect actual skills needed by students. There may be a need to revise the SOL earlier than the current schedule calls for but to delay the implementation of the new content and skills in the assessments. This would provide an opportunity for school divisions to

incorporate the new content in the curriculum without the impact of its inclusion in the state tests and would allow a more immediate revision of content. The group agreed with the statement included in Desired Result #2 based on their belief that this statement references certifications that students can earn. The committee strongly agreed with #9 and noted that post-secondary data would be needed to measure student success.

- **Group 2** discussed desired results 3 and 12.
 - The committee identified disparities between rural and urban Virginia in the capacity to provide professional development but concluded that all school divisions will need resources and support of some type. They also agreed that professional development based on research-based best practices should be a priority for professional development across the Commonwealth. Superintendents and administrators as well as teachers will require support for any changes. In addition, the public needs to be informed about how professional development helps student performance. Citizens may be unaware of the value of professional development in improving student achievement.
- **Group 3** discussed desired results 4 and 13.
 - Most of the group's discussion centered on Desired Result #4. The committee began with the premise that student learning should be the constant with time as the variable and that flexibility in assessments could allow for acceleration and targeting remediation. The group would like to see a system of assessment that:
 - provides immediate results for teachers to use in certifying
 - proficiency or determining needs
 - is created by educators, perhaps in partnership with universities
 - has a flexible testing window and allow testing by module and by language
 - has a large bank of questions in order to develop individual tests and insure
 - validity and security
 - is transparent in funding
 - is publicly developed and administered

Once students show proficiency, the teacher would be able to move on to other areas of interest to the students and reinvest in passion for learning rather than pursuit of proficiency.

In terms of Desired Result #13 regarding expedited retakes; this question may be moot if our system of assessments allows for periodic, teacher-determined test administration so that weaknesses can be addressed over the course of the academic year.

- **Group 4** discussed desired results 5, 6, and 7.
 - The group agreed that when student growth and achievement are measured, school accreditation should be based on a balance of the two. Students should have multiple way of demonstrating mastery including tools that measure growth. Individual goals should be set for each student so that students and teachers can receive the results in real time and act on them. If these desired results are met, there should be an increase in students' individual growth, responsibility and achievement resulting in higher number of accredited schools across the state.
- **Group 5** discussed desired results 8 and 14.
 - For Desired Results #8, the group believes that students should have mixed options to show proficiency. For #14, a determination of how a Carnegie unit is defined will need to be made before further discussion can take place. Colleges and universities should be involved in any changes that are made so that Virginia students will continue to be accepted by Institutions of Higher Education just as those who took the SOL tests.
- **Group 6** discussed desired results 10 and 11.
 - Group 6 spent time talking about what # Desired Result #11 actually meant since each group member had interpreted it a little differently. If in #11, "current assessments" refers to current SOL tests, then the group doesn't believe that the SOL test have value as diagnostic instruments, and they were never intended for this purpose. The predominant purpose of assessment should be to guide instruction rather than to rate schools. This goal can be achieved when student assessment is decoupled from accountability systems. Any reliance on student assessments for accountability should be based on growth.

Public Comment

- Stewart Roberson opened the floor for comment from elected officials.
- Delegate Krupicka – discussed his expectation of having ideas for next month’s meeting. Charged the committee to think about things in concrete terms, and to specifically address test security.
- Delegate Greason – Charged the committee with considering whether the changes made disrupt the trajectory of the Virginia’s accomplishments as discussed by Steve Staples. Discussed the importance of making change in a positive direction.
- Senator Miller – Offered his thanks, and reminded committee the faster action items are completed, the more accomplished the Committee will feel.
- Delegate Ward – Offered her thanks to the Committee. Discussed the importance of hearing public comment, which will be important for both students and teachers.

Public Input Opportunities

- Secretary of Education Anne Holton discussed the need to broaden public input.
 - Discussed the desire to bring student input to the Committee.
 - Discussed creating Google Hangout for the forum to take place.
 - Committee agreed Google Hangout would take place on October 30 from 9:30-11am to include students between 5th and 12th grade.
 - Members were asked to send an email if they were interested in volunteering to convene a group of students to participate.
 - An ad-hoc committee will be formed to bring the student feedback to the larger committee.
 - Planned for future “hangouts” if there are more volunteers than available space.

Next Steps

- Stewart Roberson discussed the next steps.
 - Planned to take a look at longer-term issues.

- Next Meeting:
 - Subcommittee Meeting:
 - October 14, 2014 – in-person Elementary Subcommittee, 1:00pm, location TBD
 - October 16, 2014 – in-person Secondary Subcommittee, 1:00pm, location TBD
 - October 27, 2014 – teleconference Elementary Subcommittee, 10:00am
 - October 27, 2014 – teleconference Secondary Subcommittee, 11:00am
 - Full Committee Meeting
 - November 6, 2014 – time and location TBD

Adjournment

- **4:53pm** – Meeting was adjourned by Dr. Roberson.