

Meeting Minutes for the Governor's Commission on Access to Sound Basic Education

October 14, 2019

Conference Call (hosted from the NC Department of Transportation EIC)

In attendance

Dr. Fouad Abd-El-Khalick, Ms. Melody Chalmers, Mr. Jim Deal, Mr. Alan Duncan, Hon. Rick Glazier, Mr. Mark Jewell, Ms. Leigh Kokenes, Dr. Helen "Sunny" Ladd, Dr. Patrick Miller, Mr. James Moore, Mr. Mark Richardson, Mr. Michael Williams, Dr. Stelfanie Williams, Mr. Brad Wilson (Chair), Ms. Henrietta Zalkind

Welcome

The Chair, Mr. Brad Wilson, called the meeting to order at 11:00 am and read the Conflict of Interest statement.

Commission Business and Updates

The Chair presented the minutes from the September 9, 2019 Commission meeting. Hearing no edits from Commission members, the Chair approved the minutes as presented.

The Chair reminded Commission members that the focus of the meeting today is to revisit the draft priorities from each work group that were discussed at the previous three meetings and to discuss the revisions the work groups have made based on those discussions. The goal for today's meeting is to reach consensus on the priority areas we are initially recommending to the Governor for action. The Chair also shared that following today's meeting, the Commission will arrange for a meeting once the West Ed report is made public by Judge Lee. At that meeting, the Commission will discuss West Ed's findings and recommendations and identify any additional changes needed for their recommendations. Lastly, the Chair shared that he has arranged a time for him and the work group leads to meet with the Governor in a few weeks to discuss the Commission's initial recommendations.

Finance and Resources Work Group

The Chair recognized Mr. Jim Deal to present the Finance and Resources Work Group revisions to its draft priorities. Mr. Deal shared the additional revisions made since the September 9 meeting, which were tracked in the document. Mr. Duncan stated that if the state fully funds operational costs, then counties may or may not be able to fund capital costs, and this could create a point of tension. Mr. Deal and Mr. Richardson agreed with that point, especially for many of the state's low-wealth counties. Dr. Ladd asked if the phrase in the document should be "low-wealth counties" or "low-wealth school districts." Mr. Deal recommended that the phrase be changed to "school districts in low-wealth counties" to ensure consistency and be more inclusive. Mr. Deal shared that the work group will make that change throughout the document.

Teacher Work Group

The Chair recognized Mr. Geoff Coltrane, Senior Education Advisor to Governor Cooper, to present the Teacher Work Group revisions to its draft priorities. Mr. Coltrane shared the additional revisions made since the September 9 meeting, which were tracked in the document. Dr. Ladd recommended changing "institutions of higher education (IHEs)" to "educator preparation programs (EPPs)." Dr. Abd-el-Khalick reiterated the need to focus on increasing enrollments in fully accredited EPPs.

Principal Work Group

The Chair recognized Dr. Patrick Miller to present the Principal Work Group revisions to its draft priorities. Dr. Miller shared the additional revisions made since the September 9 meeting, which were tracked in the document. Following the presentation, Commission members did not have any questions or feedback.

Early Childhood Work Group

The Chair recognized Ms. Henrietta Zalkind to present the Early Childhood Work Group revisions to its draft priorities. Ms. Zalkind shared the additional revisions made since the September 9 meeting, which included a reworking of the introductory section and highlighting in the introduction the six overarching recommendations from the group. Mr. Richardson shared that he supports the work group's recommendations, but pointed out that even if the state expands the number of pre-kindergarten slots available to 4-year-olds, that does not guarantee that students will access the program. Ms. Zalkind noted that expanding the program to full-day, full-year and providing transportation could help address that issue.

Assessment and Accountability Work Group

The Chair recognized Ms. Melody Chalmers to present the Assessment and Accountability Work Group revisions to its draft priorities. Ms. Chalmers shared the additional revisions made since the September 9 meeting, which were tracked in the document. Discussion focused on the recommendation to provide separate information in the accountability system on both student proficiency and student growth and if student growth was an understandable measure. Mr. Duncan and Mr. Richardson shared that student growth is an important accountability measure and that policymakers need to ensure that the public understands what student growth is. Dr. Ladd asked if the priorities should include a recommendation about accountability for charter schools. Mr. Duncan pointed out that under current law, charter schools are included in the same accountability system as traditional public schools.

Next Steps and Adjournment

Given the discussion on the priorities, the Chair stated that if there were no objections, then he will consider that the Commission has reached consensus on these priorities. Hearing no objections, the Chair shared that he and the work group leads will move forward with sharing these priority areas with the Governor as the initial recommendations from the Commission.

The Chair stated that Mr. Coltrane would follow up with Commission members on scheduling a meeting to review West Ed's report once it is public. Following that meeting, the Commission will provide feedback to the Governor on West Ed's report and will provide further guidance on its recommendations for meeting the state's constitutional obligation.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 11:50 am.