

## **Meeting Minutes for the Governor’s Commission on Access to Sound Basic Education**

September 9, 2019

NC Department of Transportation EIC

### **In attendance**

Dr. Fouad Abd-El-Khalick, Judge Charles Becton, Ms. Melody Chalmers (by phone), Mr. Alan Duncan, Mr. Mark Jewell, Ms. Leigh Kokenes, Dr. Helen “Sunny” Ladd, Dr. Patrick Miller, Mr. James Moore, Mr. Mark Richardson, Mr. Nick Sojka, Dr. Stelfanie Williams (by phone), Mr. Brad Wilson (Chair), Hon. Leslie Winner

### **Welcome**

The Chair, Mr. Brad Wilson, called the meeting to order at 10:00 am and read the Conflict of Interest statement.

### **Commission Business and Updates**

The Chair presented the minutes from the June 25, 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 today’s meeting was to revisit the draft priorities from each work group that were discussed at the meetings on May 14 and June 25 and to discuss the revisions the work groups have made based on those discussions. The goal of the meeting today is to reach consensus on the priority areas the Commission will be initially recommending to the Governor for action to ensure the state is meeting its constitutional obligation. The Chair also reminded Commission members that Judge Lee has received a working draft of West Ed’s report. The Judge has issued an order that will keep the report confidential for a period of time while the parties come up with a plan of action for moving forward. The Judge has ordered West Ed to share the working draft of the report with the counsel of record for the parties in the case. Once the report is made public later this fall, the Commission will schedule a meeting with West Ed to discuss its findings and recommendations.

### **Finance and Resources Work Group**

The Chair recognized Mr. Geoff Coltrane, Senior Education Advisor to Governor Cooper, to present the Finance and Resources Work Group revisions to its draft priorities. Regarding bullet 5, Dr. Abd-el-Khalick raised a question about the need to ensure that there is not just adequate funding for child nutrition services, but that districts also have the operational capacity to delivery child nutrition services. Dr. Ladd made a point that most child nutrition funding comes from federal sources and that the Commission’s recommendations need to make clear that districts need the operational capacity to most effectively utilize all sources of funding – local, state, and federal. The Chair recommended that the work group revisit its document to make sure that a focus on ensuring districts have the capacity to utilize all sources of funding is clear in throughout the document. Regarding bullet 6, Ms. Winner recommended that the work group clarify earlier in the statement that the state must fully fund operational expenses since that is required under current statute. Regarding bullet 10, Dr. Ladd pointed out that the idea to recommend a study of the most effective way to fund charter schools was a compromise among the work group members around the issue of charter school funding. Ms. Winner noted that the Teacher Work Group did have to make determinations about how some of their recommendations would affect charter schools.

### **Teacher Work Group**

The Chair recognized Ms. Leslie Winner to present the Teacher Work Group revisions to its draft priorities. Regarding bullet 1 under “Recruitment,” Dr. Ladd pointed out that because of the adoption of the federal Community Eligibility Provision in child nutrition, more schools are not identifying individual students as qualifying for free- and reduced-price lunch. Dr. Ladd shared that researchers are working to identify other metrics that can be used to designate students who come from low-income families. Ms.

Winner shared that the work group can adjust the language to reference current or future metrics of students' socioeconomic status. Regarding bullet 1 under "Preparation," Dr. Miller asked if the language around IHE's should be changed to EPP's (for Educator Preparation Programs) to better align with recent statutory and policy changes. Ms. Winner shared that the intent of the recommendation was to focus on preparation programs in IHEs specifically. Regarding the "Sliding Scale" section, Dr. Ladd recommended changing "low wealth districts" to "low wealth counties" since the low wealth funding formula is focused on counties rather than school districts.

### **Principal Work Group**

The Chair recognized Dr. Patrick Miller to present the Principal Work Group revisions to its draft priorities. Following the presentation, Commission members did not have any questions or feedback.

### **Early Childhood Work Group**

The Chair recognized Ms. Kristen Guillory, Early Childhood Advisor to Governor Cooper, to present the Early Childhood Work Group revisions to its draft priorities. Dr. Ladd recommended that the work group use the term "teacher assistants" instead of "teaching assistants." Mr. Jewell pointed out that the official term for budget purposes may be "instructional assistants." The Chair recommended that the work group use the official budget term and recommended to Mr. Coltrane that each work groups' documents should be reviewed to ensure that the Commission is using common language and official terms. Ms. Winner asked if the work group intended for all families to receive home visits. Ms. Kokenes responded that the intent was only for home visits for families that needed them. Ms. Winner recommended revising the language to make that clearer. Ms. Winner also raised a concern about the specificity of the work group's recommendation around K-3 literacy and if it is appropriate for legislation or a court order. Mr. Richardson responded that the state's focus on raising 3<sup>rd</sup> grade literacy has not been fulfilled over the past several years and that we need to take more concrete steps focused on strategies that work. Ms. Winner asked if the work group would consider moving the specific literacy instructional methods to a footnote. There was consensus among Commission members for that idea. Dr. Abd-el-Khalick recommended that the work group include "culturally relevant instructional materials" as part of its K-3 literacy recommendation as well. Given the Commission's charge and the focus of the *Leandro* case, the Chair encouraged the work group to review its recommendations and ensure that they are focused on actions the state can take in these areas. The Chair also raised the question about the focus in the *Leandro* case on early childhood and if it applies to ages 0-3 in addition to 4 year olds. The Chair recommended addressing the *Leandro* focus on early childhood in the document's introductory material.

### **Assessment and Accountability Work Group**

The Chair recognized Ms. Melody Chalmers to present by phone the Assessment and Accountability Work Group revisions to its draft priorities. Dr. Ladd asked why the recommendation around creating new school and district accountability metrics are focused on an equal weighting between student proficiency and student growth. Ms. Chalmers shared that the work group wanted to indicate the importance of both. Dr. Miller pointed out that under the federal ESSA legislation, the state is not allowed to put more weight on student growth than on proficiency in its accountability plan. Ms. Winner recommended the work group consider focusing on providing separate information on growth and proficiency rather than putting the emphasis on the weighting of the two.

### **Next Steps and Adjournment**

Given the discussion and feedback from Commission members, the Chair recommended that the Commission hold another meeting by conference call over the next month to review and finalize the revised versions of the draft priorities from the work groups. The Chair stated that Mr. Coltrane would follow up with Commission members to arrange a date for that conference call.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 12:50 pm.