

Academic Standards Review Commission Meeting Minutes
January 16, 2015
1:00-5:00PM
301 North Wilmington Street, Raleigh
State Board of Education Board Room

Commission Members in attendance: André Peek, Jeannie Metcalf, Tammy Covil, Denise Watts, Katie Lemons, Laurie McCollum, Ted Scheick, Bill Cobey, Olivia Oxendine, Ann Clark (by phone), Jeffrey Isenhour (by phone)

Meeting Called to Order: **Co-Chairman** André Peek called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.

Minutes from the December meeting captured three topics the Commission will focus on:

1. Ensure developmentally appropriateness of the standards: Jeff Isenhour, Olivia Oxendine
2. Simplify the standards: Tammy Covil, (ELA), Ted Scheick (Math)
3. Increase teacher and LEA flexibility: Katie Lemons, Laurie McCollum

Bill Cobey and Ted Scheick names will be corrected in December minutes. Motion to approve minutes (with action items) unanimously approved.

All materials generated by the Commission will be posted on website in time for listeners to follow along moving forward.

Budget and Staffing: Report from Commission members and Co-Chairs André Peek and Jeannie Metcalf.

Budget is moving forward within the General Assembly. As of right now, Commission members should submit expenses to the Department of Administration until funding is provided via legislation.

The Commission reviewed three drafted job descriptions: Executive Assistant, Editorial Assistant and Policy Analyst. Salaries are estimated to cost around \$50,000-\$80,000 each. Positions would work less than 30 hours a week to keep individuals part-time. Positions would not require benefits or health insurance due to being held part-time.

Commission members agreed only an Executive Assistant and Editorial Assistant would be needed to complete their work. The Executive Assistant would do most of the “leg work” and ensure that Commission members are prepped and prepared for meetings. The Editorial Assistant will ensure that the Commission accomplishes their commitment and ready to present their deliverable. The Editorial Assistant is responsible for capturing information, best practices and literature that will assist the Commission in its work. Both positions will work together and perform other duties as asked by the Commission.

Motion to move forward with engaging with North Carolina Human Resources Office, finalizing job descriptions, posting job descriptions, and narrowing down applications approved. No hires will happen without Commissions approval.

Report from Developmental Appropriateness Work Group: Report from Commission members Olivia Oxendine and Jeffrey Isenhour.

Commission members Oxendine and Isenhour walked through process, procedure scope and sequence for developmental appropriateness of the Common Core standards drafted handout.

Oxendine and Isenhour also set out a timeline that included a presentation to the full Commission in February to present the findings of the DPI educator survey. Commission members agreed that this will act as just one data point. Oxendine will also present to Commission members with the recommendations and findings of the State Board of Education Sub-Committee on Standards and Assessments.

Commission members discussed how standards should be able to stand alone and investigate if pedagogy is in the standard.

The Commission would like to study other states standards, national best practices and look at the Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) research.

The charge of Oxendine and Isenhour's subgroup is to ensure standards are developmentally appropriate.

Commission would like to merge all subgroups work into one single timeline.

Copyright Issues: Presentation by State Board of Education Staff Attorney Katie Cornetto.

Commission members were given a synopsis addressing their concerns with the copyright and possible lawsuit if editing the Common Core standards.

If the Common Core standards are changed in any fashion, they will not be able to be called Common Core standards. The Common Core Standards have a public license and state can adopt the standards in whole or in part. If adopted in whole, the standards must be called Common Core Standards. If adopted in part/portion, the state must give attribution to NGA and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO).

Representative Speciale and Representative Pittman addressed the Commission and stated that the main purpose of SB812 was to replace Common Core standards, not rebrand and/or edit.

Commission members discussed the possibilities breaching the current contract, obtaining a waiver from CCSSO and NGA, and as using the Common Core standards as a baseline to create the new State standards.

Report from Standards Simplification Work Group: Report by Commission members Tammy Covil (ELA) and Ted Schieck (Math).

Work group chairs summarized their charge to ensure that standards framework and unpacking document are easily comprehensible to teachers, parents, and laypeople—that they do not contain unfamiliar terms, unnecessary encumbrances, and other complications. Standards should provide guidelines for teachers, but not prescribe how they undertake classroom instruction. Commission members discussed the differences between standards and curriculum.

Individual Commission members suggested that because of copyright issues, they cannot recommend a revision of standards, but have to recommend a new set of standards. Commission members agreed that they need to make a decision on whether to create new standards altogether or start with existing standards and revise or modify as needed. Members discussed existing standards they could work from, including those used by the state of Massachusetts and others. Commission members acknowledged the need for caution in implementing new standards, given that teachers would need time to learn standards, ensure classroom resources were available, et cetera. This caution should be balance against the urgency of working from strong, rigorous, state-controlled standards.

The Commission discussed the need to give local education agencies additional flexibility around implementation of high school mathematics. Members of the Commission acknowledged that sequencing and composition of standards in high school is flawed, and expressed eagerness to return to traditional math sequencing. Commission chairs suggested that Commission should submit a recommendation to provide additional flexibility to LEAs in this area as soon as possible, and discussed the need for evidence and data to support this recommendation.

Teacher Survey Data Presentation: Robin McCoy of the Department of Public Instruction presented data from teacher surveys responding to and commenting on the strengths and weaknesses of existing standards.

McCoy shared that the Department’s intention in implementing this survey was not to gauge whether or not teachers *liked a particular standard, but to decide if a standard should be kept or not.*

Moving forward, McCoy shared, the Department is working with partners to analyze the data for trends and information from an objective lens. They will also review individual comments for additional information.

Commission members asked if longitudinal teacher survey data was available for the last three to five years. Although this was the first survey of its kind, McCoy acknowledged, the Department does have data about standards implementation and whether teachers had the resources and support they needed during implementation.

Commission members noted that respondent satisfaction with math standards decreased in the higher grades.

Report on Teacher and LEA Flexibility: Report by Commission member Katie Lemons.

Lemons highlighted the need for teacher flexibility in teaching the standards due to the diversity of students teachers will have: individual students necessarily have different skill levels, and teachers should be able to approach them where they are and provide needed instruction to push them to a higher level, rather than presenting only out-of-reach information.

Lemons summarized three impediments to teacher flexibility: rigid standards, assessment, and difficulty of providing individualized instruction to each student.

Lemons cited the Commission's purview as dealing with the clarity and quantity of standards, their developmental appropriateness, and how students are assessed. She noted that the further from the classroom decisions are made, the less power a teacher has.

Lemons presented a draft timeline for undertaking standards flexibility work, noting that it was ambitious, given all that the Commission had to do. The Commission's goal, Lemons noted, should be to hear from teachers about central issues with flexibility in standards implementation and where flexibility is most needed by the spring, so the Commission can incorporate this information in the restructuring and redesign of the standards.

Commission members expressed concern that if individual teachers have enough flexibility, they will underestimate the abilities of students and hold them to low expectations. They acknowledged that it was school administration's responsibility to evaluate teachers and decide if they were holding appropriately high expectations. Commission members agreed that the benefits of flexibility outweighed the risks.

Meeting Closing: Co-Chair Andre Peek engaged the Commission in a conversation around the three work streams being pursued, evaluating if these were the correct work-streams for moving forward. Commission members agreed that these were the appropriate work-streams, but acknowledged that timelines and work-stream efforts would likely converge in the near future.

Commissioners discussed the necessity of transitioning from learning to writing recommendations in the near future.

Commission members highlighted potential of having experts come to speak at upcoming meeting, and agreed that they should identify questions and topics for presentations to presenters ahead of time. Commission voted to bring Stotsky and Milgram to present in March. Commissioners asked that State Board of Education representatives look into having the Commission website posted prominently on the Department of Public Instruction website.

Meeting Adjourned: Commission members made a motion to adjourn, and meeting ended at 5:05pm.