

Academic Standards Review Commission Meeting Minutes

March 16, 2015

1:00-5:00PM

State Board of Education Conference Room

Department of Instruction

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

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

Co-Chairs, Meeting Overview, Budget, Staffing, Timeline: Co-Chairmans Andre Peek and Tammy Covil provided an overview of the meeting agenda, including a change in order which allowed visiting experts to jointly receive questions. Covil noted that the Commission had received raw data from the Department of Public Instruction on Mathematics and ELA standards. Covil also provided an update on the process of Senate Bill 14, which would provide funding for the Commission, explaining that it was in the Senate for concurrence. Peek reviewed the charge of the Commission. Covil and Peek introduced speakers for the day.

ELA Standards Presentation: Dr. Sandra Stotsky, Professor of Education Reform at the University of Arkansas, presented to the Commission on her experience as a part of the Common Core State Standards validation committee.

Stotsky expressed her dissatisfaction with the Common Core development and validation process, noting that she found both its writers and validators under-qualified for the task.

Stotsky also described several flaws she saw in the standards, most importantly the lack of content defined in the standards. Stotsky explained that the success she had seen in Massachusetts while serving as Senior Associate Commissioner in the Massachusetts Department of Education could be attributed to the state's efforts to reform teacher licensure regulations and assessments. She noted Massachusetts' work with teacher licensing programs, professional development, and schools of education.

Stotsky provided the Commission with recommendations for improving North Carolina's standards, including: recruiting higher education faculty to develop entrance exams for North Carolina's institutions of higher education, offering different types of diplomas for high school students concentrating in specific fields, and restructuring teacher and administration training programs in NC institutions of higher education.

Math Standards Presentation: Dr. James Milgram, Professor Emeritus of Mathematics at Stanford University, presented to the Commission on his experience as a part of the Common Core State Standard validation committee.

Milgram noted his research on the United States' underperformance in mathematics compared to our international peers. He argued that, in order to provide a competitive education, the group writing North Carolina's math standard should have strong representation of serious research

mathematicians. Milgram pointed to the lack of standards-writing experience among the writers of the Common Core State Standards, and presented several problems he saw as a result of this lack of experience.

Milgram contrasted the complicated CCSS mathematics standards with the simplicity of standards in Russia. Milgram stated that the CCSS are over-complicated and convoluted, requiring students to understand concepts beyond their developmental capacity. Milgram also discussed the number of standards in the United States as compared to international peers.

Standards Implementation: Dr. Kevin Perks, District Services Program Associates for Learning Innovations at WestEd presented about standards implementation.

Perks spoke to a few primary topics, including the role of standards, how educators use standards, the support teachers need, and the impact new standards have on schools and districts.

Perks argued that standards are the foundation on which education is established, that they are not curriculum, but the basis for curriculum. Perks noted that he has seen a continuum of implementation in schools he has worked with, highlighting that teachers have to discuss and process standards in groups in order to ensure strong implementation. He underlined the need for support for teacher collaboration to ensure appropriate digestion, sorting, and application of the standards. Finally, Perks noted that standards can have minimal or great impact depending on the strength of these supports.

Questions with Presenters: Commissioners were given time to ask questions of the Commissioners. In the course of the conversation, presenters made the following points. Dr. Milgram noted that Minnesota was a national example for mathematics standards. Milgram and Stotsky spoke to the lack of developmental experts on Common Core writing and validation committees. Perks noted the need for an additional set of standards for Limited English Proficient students. Milgram and Stotsky argued that there was a need to completely rewrite the standards, rather than modifying existing standards. Milgram claimed that an integrated mathematics course sequencing for high school was better if teachers are prepared to lead integrated instruction; however, in North Carolina's case, he recommends using traditional curriculum until teachers are prepared to teach integrated math. Milgram also noted that it would be advantageous to have standards that match international expectations, but that the Common Core State Standards do not, in his opinion, do this. The Commission also discussed the relationship between number of standards and the rigor of the standards and the appropriate amount of time to allot to ensure that standards are adequately revised and implemented.

Math and ELA Work Streams Discussion: The Commission reviewed their goal to implement separate Math and ELA work streams. Laurie McCollum will lead the ELA work stream, with Katie Lemmons, Olivia Oxendine, and Denise Watts as participants. Ted Scheick will lead the Math work stream, with Jeannie Metcalf and Jeffrey Isenhour as participants. Ann Clark will choose a work stream upon her return.

The Commission discussed procedures and process for the work streams, including: the need to have work stream group meetings recorded so they can be posted on the website, the need for a

common protocol about what standards to review, the necessity of involving additional stakeholders, and methods for review of standards. Olivia Oxendine presented a drafted review matrix, underscoring the need for strong documentation of the process to present to the State Board of Education when making recommendations. Oxendine described the three types of information that would be coming to the State Board for their consideration: one from the ASRC review process, one from teacher surveys on the standards, and a third from DPI review of standards. Commission members discussed the need to hire staff members to perform detailed, complex analysis for them, with staff bringing the information to the Commission for review.

Commission members agreed to adopt Oxendine's draft matrix as a framework for standards review and to adjust the matrix as needed within their committees. Commissioners will use DPI survey information to inform the beginning of their review.

The meeting adjourned at 5:03p.m. EDT.

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