

NOTE: THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY THE FULL COUNCIL AT ITS NEXT MEETING. SHOULD REVISIONS BE MADE, THEY WILL BE INCLUDED AS AN ITEM IN THE MINUTES OF THAT MEETING.

Minutes of the Meeting of the
COUNCIL FOR EDUCATION POLICY, RESEARCH AND IMPROVEMENT

Wednesday, February 11, 2004
Tampa Airport Marriott
Tampa, Florida

Members Present: Akshay Desai Bob Taylor
W.C. Gentry Pat Telson
Diane Leone Elaine Vasquez
Bob McIntyre

Member Present by Conference Phone: Harold Wishna

Chairman Akshay Desai opened the meeting and welcomed the Council members.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the January 14, 2004, meeting were approved as circulated.

Chairman's Report

Chairman Desai announced that Dr. Rajendra Gupta has been appointed to the Council as a new member. Dr. Gupta replaces Mr. Jacob Stuart. Chairman Desai said that Dr. Gupta will join the Council at the next meeting. Chairman Desai announced that Dr. Renu Khator has been appointed as Provost of the University of South Florida.

Executive Director's Report

Dr. William Proctor said that he attended the Board of Governor's meeting on January 22, 2004. He said that he has been working with Dr. Nancy McKee, Dr. Zachariah, and Mr. Temple on Medical Education.

Dr. Proctor said he also attended the initial meeting of the Center for Performance and Accountability, which is a group established by Florida Tax Watch. He said that they will be reviewing the status of the reforms that have taken place in education and hopefully get involved in activities that help Florida "stay the course."

Dr. Proctor noted that he chaired a meeting of the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO), National Center for Education Statistics Advisory Committee. Items that were discussed: 1) an overview of the State Level Data Initiatives, 2) new resources of NCES, 3) an update on the activities of the National Postsecondary Education Cooperative, and 4) new SHEEO policy initiatives.

Dr. Proctor said that he also attended the NPEC Executive Committee in Washington, D.C. He said that this committee has a number of initiatives underway. He said that an exciting initiative is the State-Level Indicators Project. Dr. Proctor said that other projects being funded by NPEC relate to Student Success in Higher Education and Student Persistence and Completion. NPEC will sponsor a national conference on Student Success in 2006.

Dr. Proctor said that he will be presenting CEPRI's studies for the year to the House Education Appropriations Committee. He said that he will discuss the Council's studies, work plan, and other work that the Council has undertaken since the last legislative session.

Dr. Proctor reminded the Council that our next meeting will be on April 14, 2004, in Tallahassee. Chairman Desai asked the Council members what they would like to accomplish while in Tallahassee. The Council members agreed that they would like to meet with some of the Legislators on the Education Committee. Dr. Proctor said that this would depend on how much time the Legislators would have. The Council agreed to provide additional suggestions to Dr. Proctor concerning the April meeting.

State Board of Education Report

Ms. Sandy Pelham, Director of Standards and Resources, Office of Educational Technology, State Board of Education, discussed efforts of the Department to address the technology proficiency requirements of No Child Left Behind. She distributed background materials including the 2003 School Technology and Readiness (STAR) chart. The Florida Technology Literacy Profile and Educator Accomplished Practice #12 related to Technology, which was originally developed by the Education Standards Commission and subsequently aligned to the national standards adopted in this area. She indicated that one missing piece is an assessment tool to determine where our teachers are relative to the 2006 proficiency goal. Ms. Pelham stated that a competitive grant of \$200,000 has been awarded to Leon County to develop such an instrument and that private companies are also designing similar instruments. Chairman Desai asked about consistency and Ms. Pelham replied that if the instrument developed for the Department is good, the districts will make use of it. Chairman Desai also asked about current literacy levels and she estimated that less than 50 percent are literate and noted that this is a lower skill level than "proficiency." In response to Ms. Pat Telson, Ms. Pelham said that national standards have been identified for students, teachers, and administrators. Mr. W.C. Gentry noted that the Schultz Center has already developed an assessment instrument. Ms. Pelham replied that she and Ms. Melinda Crowley, Chief of Educational Technology, will be visiting Duval County later in the week to meet with Superintendent Fryer and others on this issue.

Mr. Bob Taylor noted that there are three areas where technology and early learning potentially intersect: 1) The direct impact of technology on early learning, e.g. Sesame Street and Blue's Clues; 2) The training of early learning teachers already in the classroom; 3) Work with the Colleges of Education on pre-service training related to the effective use of technology. Ms. Pelham indicated that her office would be happy to work with the Council on the identification of policy issues and research related to these three areas and noted that instructional television is also part of the Office of Educational Technology. Mr. Gentry observed that a lot of work has been done and stressed that reinventing the wheel be avoided. He asked why consistent reporting could not be required, and Ms. Pelham said that the annual survey that is now collected by the State Board of Education on a voluntary basis has a 94 percent response rate. The members thanked Ms. Pelham for her excellent presentation.

Board of Governors' Report

There was no report at this time.

Master Plan

Funding Issues – Mr. Bob Cox made a brief presentation on the process by which Legislative Appropriations committees operate before and during session. The discussion on the Work Plan for the Funding Committee was delayed until the April meeting.

Leadership Issues – Dr. Simmie Raiford presented the Work Plan for School Leadership Initiative. She said the plan is to conduct a three-part study on the nature and challenges of educational leadership in Florida at the superintendent, school board, and school principal level. The three parts of the study would include: 1) A statistical profile of school superintendents, boards and principals, focusing on areas such as average salary, tenure in office/position, gender, ethnicity, and previous experience in education; 2) An examination of school leadership innovations in the areas of professional preparation, recruitment, training/professional development, appraisal, and “pay for school performance” policies/initiatives; 3) An exploration of “best practices” in school management, focusing on issues such as staffing of “hard to staff” schools, compensation, resource allocation, differentiated policies and practices at high and low performing schools, and the role of the district/board/superintendent in school reform and improvement.

Dr. Raiford said that in addition, staff proposes convening several panels of district and school-level leaders from across the state to get their reaction/response to the proposal and to share a “condition of leadership performance” perspective. She said that staff also proposes talking with superintendents, other district administrators, and State Board of Education staff to determine the degree of impact of the Deferred Retirement Option Plan (DROP) and the resulting outflow of administrators heading for retirement.

The Council members were in agreement that their interests rested mainly in the third component of the proposal which, in addition to examining what is, should also explore what could or should be in terms of high performance management in public schools.

Career Education – Ms. Tara Goodman briefly presented the conclusions and recommendations from the Master Plan Committee on Career Education and Development which were completed in March 2003. Council staff was asked to work with the members assigned to this Master Plan issue for a follow-up discussion at the May Council meeting.

Early Childhood Education – Dr. Pat Dallet referred to the summary prepared by Dr. Glenda Rabby of the work of the Universal Pre-K Council and the State Board of Education that had been discussed at the January 2004 meeting of CEPRI. He said that staff work in this area would include more than Universal Pre-K (UPK) and that the points raised by Mr. Taylor earlier would be addressed. He introduced Ms. Pam Gillette, Early Childhood Director, Brevard County Schools, who observed that several factors should be considered with regard to early learning and technology, including limited funding and equipment as well as the current literature, some of which questions the appropriateness of computers in the early grades. In response to Mr. Taylor, she suggested assembling district and university representatives involved in the field for a work session.

Ms. Elaine Vasquez asked about the impact of language (ESOL) on development. Ms. Gillette said that while this is less of an issue in Brevard, it is certainly a critical concern in some parts of the state which should be addressed to some degree by the UPK initiative.

Ms. Marjorie Murray, who oversees early childhood education for Seminole County Schools, discussed results of the School Readiness Uniform Screening System (SRUSS) that indicated a higher percentage of students who had participated in pre-kindergarten were prepared to go on than the general population. She said these findings are important for students from low-income families. She said that language differences are an issue and if they are addressed with four year olds, the necessary learning is more likely to occur. Ms. Murray said that some draft legislation currently being circulated appears to place priority on private providers for UPK services. She suggested that whatever policies are adopted should be based on current, sound research, and a level playing field should be established for both public and private providers.

Ms. Telson requested that staff obtain statewide SRUSS results broken out by type of provider. Mr. Gentry and Ms. Diane Leone asked if the Council needs to act quickly on this issue. Dr. Proctor said that while the full report on early learning should be prepared for the next session, staff would obtain all proposed legislation on UPK for this session, compare this with the recommendations made by the BOG and the SBOE, and share this information with the Council for consideration this session.

Mr. Cox said that the current approach grew out of welfare reform in an attempt to effectively blend federal, state, and local funding sources. He said that this may be less a curriculum issue and relate more to structure and funding. The members agreed to monitor this area closely.

Timeline for Initiatives – Mr. Taylor reviewed a proposed outline for the work to be done which the members endorsed. Individual members agreed to focus on one or more of the initiatives as follows: Under Instruction, Ms. Telson will take the lead on Early Childhood Education and Ms. Leone will take the lead on Career Education with Ms. Vasquez and Mr. Bob McIntyre also involved. Mr. Gentry will be the lead person on structure which encompasses both Funding and Governance/Leadership initiatives. Mr. Taylor will also assist in this area and take the lead on Broad Bases Support. Dr. Proctor then called on staff to review the current status of each of the initiative areas.

Presentation by Mr. Gerry Hogan

Mr. McIntyre introduced Mr. Gerry Hogan, board member and past chairman of the Pinellas Education Foundation. Mr. Hogan said that he has been involved with the Education Foundation for ten years. He said that he supports Career Education and believes that this is one of the most important parts of the education system in Florida, and it is falling through the cracks. Mr. Hogan said that he has visited Pinellas County and the bay area talking to people about workforce education, and he has learned a lot. He said that in Pinellas County they are struggling everyday to fill qualified jobs, e.g. trained automotive technicians. In any given day in Pinellas County there are 250 jobs open for automotive technicians. This specific career typically has starting salaries between \$40,000 and \$50,000, and often edges up to \$100,000 a year. Mr. Hogan said that after talking with contractors in the state, there is a shortage of masons, plumbers, electricians, carpenters, and cabinet makers of trained skilled employees. Mr. Hogan said he hears from companies that they cannot fill jobs, and education is not doing its job in producing for employers the kind of people they need to help grow this state.

Mr. Hogan said that the foundation underwrites a program called Scholarships for Adult Vocational Education (SAVE). This program is a dropout retrieval program. Every student in SAVE is a high school dropout. The Education Foundation, with community support, has been able to convince the student to come back and get a high school degree (GED) and obtain career training and a degree from the vocational area training centers in Pinellas County. Mr. Hogan said that 90 percent of students who enter the SAVE program graduate with a high school diploma and with a vocational certificate within 12 to 24 months. These students are then placed in a job that fits their career training. Mr. Hogan said that Pinellas Technical Education Center (PTEC) has an 82 percent placement rate and the students get a job in their chosen career.

Mr. Hogan presented charts on funding for Pinellas County. He said that Pinellas County has had a 35 percent reduction in vocational technical staff. Mr. Hogan said they have plenty of classrooms but not enough teachers. He said that what vocational education lacks in this state is a high visibility, well connected spokesperson. Chairman Desai said that this issue has a direct impact on all the businesses statewide and asked Mr. Hogan if he had approached Enterprise Florida, Associated Industries, or certain other trade groups to be the champion. Mr. Hogan said that while some of the people on the Education Foundation Board are on these different organizations, he has not specifically addressed these groups with his presentation. He said that in Pinellas County the Foundation has met with industry specific organizations. Mr. Hogan said that an important issue is that 70 percent of the students enrolled in the Pinellas County Vo-Tech program are at, or below, poverty level. He said that the program is delivering training to those that need it most. He said that last year the program placed approximately 2,000 students in jobs. Mr. Hogan said that, based on government statistics, 7 of the 11 fastest growing careers do not require a college degree. These top jobs require a vocational certificate or training. Mr. Hogan said he supports community colleges, but he asked the Council to recognize that funding for community colleges is not the total solution to the workforce challenges faced by Florida.

Mr. Hogan urges the Council to continue to support the Education Foundations. He thanked the Council for their time in allowing him to speak.

Annual Yearly Progress, Florida A+ and NAEP

Dr. Proctor asked the Council to review and give comments on the draft, To The Point, related to NCLB and the A+ Plan. Dr. Proctor said that while he was in Washington, D.C., he learned that our A+ Plan is a hot topic with other states. He noted that the Utah Legislature is considering not accepting federal money which is contingent on compliance with No Child Left Behind.

The Teaching Profession

There was no report at this time.

Publications

Dr. Proctor introduced Ms. Corvetta Ashe to the Council members. He complimented her for the work she has done on formatting all the Council publications.

Other Items of Interest

There were no other items of interest at this time.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 14, 2004, in Tallahassee.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m. on Wednesday, February 11, 2004.

William B. Proctor
Executive Director