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Notes on the state board of education...

March 2-3, 2005

Special Note: To review background materials on each item, please go to http://www.ncpublicschools.org/sbe_meetings/0503_sbagenda.html. Click on the appropriate agenda category, High Student Performance (HSP); Quality Teachers, Administrators and Staff (QP); Effective and Efficient Operations (EEO); Healthy Students in Safe, Orderly and Caring Schools (SS); or Strong Family, Community and Business Support (FCB).

Issues Session - Report on High School Exit Measures from the Ad Hoc Committee on Academic Rigor, Relevance and Relationships (HSP 8) - Staff members from the DPI Curriculum and School Reform and Accountability Services divisions presented results from an online survey and six regional meetings held in January to collect the opinions of educators and the public concerning the new high school exit standards framework. Results from these activities were presented to assist the Board in its decision-making concerning how to implement the framework. Responses from the meetings and survey showed that the most popular implementation plan would require students to pass at least four of the five required end-of-course tests and to complete a senior project. The senior project would be developed, monitored and scored locally using rubrics developed or endorsed by NC DPI. The re-testing and review process that was most favored would be consistent with the current retesting opportunities for end-of-grade assessments at grades 3, 5 and 8. Students would be given a maximum of two re-test opportunities. The second re-test opportunity would be preceded by focused intervention/remediation. The review process that was most favored would allow on a course-by-course basis, for a student who does not meet the passing criteria for the EOC assessment, but passes the course, to have a review of the student's documentation given after the second retest.

Next steps for implementing the new standards will require the development of proposals to change State Board of Education policy. In addition, change in some current statutes will be required in some state laws.

Evaluating the Validity of the ABCs (HSP 6) - A provision in HB 1414 requires a comprehensive review of the ABCs standards and that modified standards be in place for the 2005-06 school year. This month, Board members reviewed for the first time the findings of this comprehensive review and considered a proposal for new ABCs formulas. The review was performed by DPI staff and also by the external Technical Advisory Committee, a standing group of recognized experts in testing and psychometrics. Findings from the analysis of the original formulas showed several issues around the original formulas that included: a saw-toothed pattern of growth as cohorts move through the grades and results that are not necessarily tied to new curriculum implementation. The end-of-course formulas also drop some students from the calculations, are complex, and are difficult to adjust when curriculum changes occur. To address these issues, the review proposes that new ABCs formulas be considered. The proposed formulas will expect students to perform in the current grade level at least as well as they typically did in the last two years.

The new formulas would continue to measure the growth of individual students from year-to-year, but in a different way to address the issues that have been identified.

- The saw-toothed effect will be solved by using two-year averages to find the typical performance of each student.
- A change scale that adjusts to the difficulty of the curriculum will replace the current equating studies required when curricula and test editions are changed.
- The EOC formulas will be simplified and fewer predictors will be used to enable more students to be included.
- Reading and math will be uncoupled. Reading performance will be used to predict reading; math will be used to predict math.

The result of these proposed changes would be more stability, fewer fluctuations between years, a clear indication of change in curriculum implementation, expectations that adjust to the curriculum and simpler formulas.

The Board will have this item on its agenda as a discussion item in April and a possible action item in May. In the interim, the proposal will be discussed with local superintendents, the Compliance Commission for Accountability and other constituent groups. Additional details, including the PowerPoint presentation given at the March meeting, are available at http://www.ncpublicschools.org/state_board/ under Breaking News.

Action Agenda Items

- **Proposed Modifications to the State Competency Testing Program to Include Alternate Means and Measures Including Alternate Assessments for HB 801 (HSP 1)** - The Board approved the following nationally standardized tests as competency screens and as a means to meet the competency standards in the State Competency Testing Program: The California Achievement Test, fifth edition; Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, Terra Nova, and the Stanford Achievement Test 9. In addition, the Board approved the use of assistive technology accommodations on the verbal edition of the competency test. Use of the accommodation must be documented in the student's current Individualized Education Program (IEP) and the accommodation must be independently and routinely used during instruction and similar classroom assessments. Scores from the following tests can be used as alternate means or measures for meeting the competency standard: NC Algebra I End-of-Course (EOC) test, NC English I EOC, the SAT, the PSAT, and the ACT. As long term measures to the current competency tests, the Board approved a plan that would include a redesigned NC Alternate Assessment Academic Inventory, a form of grade 8 NC Computerized Adaptive Testing System, and identification of performance-based tasks (at grade 8 level) from commercial publishing companies.
- **Waiver Requests Under the Innovative Education Initiatives Act (HSP 2)** - Waivers were approved under the Innovative Education Initiatives Act, which authorizes innovative programs in high schools and community colleges (specifically the early college high schools and New Schools project) and allows waiver of certain state statutes that impede high school reform. As a result of the calendar waivers that were submitted, the DPI will seek additional funding to establish a reserve fund to cover documented excess transportation costs LEAs incur because of the calendar differences between these schools and other public schools. Also, funds will be sought to exempt these schools from the minimum size requirements to support a principal position. A waiver also was granted to the Davidson Middle College High School Program that will exempt the principal of this school from having a North Carolina principal's certificate.
- **Changes to ABCs Growth Standard for 2004-05 School Year (HSP 3)** - The Board did not take action on a proposal to change the ABCs growth standard for the 2004-05 school year.
- **Revision of Essences for the NC Standard Course of Study - Mathematics (HSP 4)** - Revisions were approved to the mathematics extensions of the NC Standard Course of Study. These extensions are designed to align instruction for students with certain disabilities with the Standard Course of Study. These revisions will be incorporated within the NC Alternate Assessment Portfolio and staff development will be provided.
- **Renewal Recommendations for Charter Schools Established in 2001 (EEO 1)** - Crossroads Charter High School received a 10-year charter renewal.
- **Transfer of Charter for Grandfather Academy Charter School (EEO 3)** - The Board approved the transfer of the Grandfather Academy charter to its parent company, Homes for Children.

Discussion Agenda Items

- **Changes to NC Accountability Workbook for LEA Improvement Status and Appeals Process (HSP 5)** - Changes to the NC Accountability Workbook for designating local education agencies for Improvement Status and providing an appeals process for LEA determination were discussed by the Board this month. The changes indicate that for an LEA to enter Improvement Status, the LEA must not make AYP in the same subject area (reading/language arts or mathematics even if due to the 95 percent rule) in each of the following grade spans (3-5, 6-8 and high school) for two consecutive years. The Title I Committee of Practitioners is designated as the review body for an LEA appealing its consideration for LEA Improvement Status. The LEA will have two weeks to appeal and the State Board of Education would authorize the State Superintendent to make a final determination for the LEA.
- **Presentation of 2005 Invitation to Submit Textbooks for Evaluation and Adoption in North Carolina (HSP 7)** - Textbooks will be considered for adoption in 2005 in English Language Arts, K-12. The invitation to publishers to submit textbooks will be presented for action in April and can be viewed online at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/textbook/2005invitation.pdf>.
- **State Board Definition on Academic Rigor, Relevance and Relationships (HSP 9)** - Board members considered a proposed policy that would define academic rigor, the topic that has been the subject of the SBE Ad Hoc Committee on Academic Rigor, Relevance and Relationships. The policy states that "all students will graduate from a rigorous, relevant academic program that equips them with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to succeed in both post-secondary education and 21st Century careers and to be participating, engaged citizens. Academic rigor and relevance are based on established expectations that ensure that all students develop the capacity to master content that is complex and challenging." The policy also sets out expectations for the role of students, administrators and educators in pursuing academic rigor.
- **Preliminary Framework for Implementing Teacher Quality Initiatives (QP 2)** - Recommendations on teacher quality provided from the Select Committee on Lateral Entry, the SBE Task Force on Teacher Retention, the Professional Development Initiatives and the Board of Governors' Task Force on Teacher Supply and Demand are incorporated into an implementation framework presented this month. The framework includes actions, activities and programs, along with timelines, for each recommendation.
- **Revision of Interim Initial Licensure Reporting Requirements (QP 3)** - A revision of interim initial licensure reporting requirements would replace the statewide submission of interim requirements for converting an initial license to continuing license with on-site monitoring by a state team at the LEA level. This recommendation is in response to a Board decision in December 2003 to re-evaluate the interim reporting requirements for years after the 2004-05 school year.
- **Proposed Revision of Program Approval Standards (QP 4)** - Institutions of higher education would be required to designate a coordinator for alternative licensure programs under proposed revisions of program approval standards. The proposed changes are based on feedback from institutions and a committee of teacher educators.

Information Agenda

- **Update from the UNC Office of University School Programs on Efforts to Increase the Supply of Teachers (QP 6)** - Dr. Richard Thompson, Vice President of the University-School Program at the University of North Carolina Office of the President, presented an update on university system efforts to increase the supply of teachers and address shortages. The university system has set target goals for its constituent institutions to increase alternative enrollment and traditional enrollment of teacher education candidates, and to assist with teacher retention.
- **Student Health: A Key to Student Achievement (SS 1)** - Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Carmen Hooker Odom addressed the Board this month and congratulated the Board members for adopting the healthy active kids policy, the 100 percent tobacco-free schools policy and the Eat Smart project. She also described the progress that had been made in terms of lowering the ratio of school nurses to students and the goals set out in Gov. Mike Easley's budget this year to continue progress in student health and learning.

Good News

- **World View: An International Program for Educators** (Bob Phay, Director of World View and Kenan Professor at UNC-Chapel Hill; James Peacock, Chairman of World View Board, Former Director of University Center for International Studies, Former Chairman of UNC Faculty and Kenan Professor at UNC) - World View is a project of the University of North Carolina to help public schools in their efforts to educate students about the world by integrating a global perspective into curriculum, providing support for immigrant students and students who speak English as a second language and promoting international travel. To date, 103 local school systems have participated in the six annual programs that World View sponsors. These include an annual symposium on global issues, an Annual Latino Seminar, an Annual International Seminar, a global leadership program and a workshop for partners.
- **Improving Reading Performance of Children with Disabilities** (Mary Watson, Director, Division of Exceptional Children) - Students with disabilities have made strong gains in reading in various school districts across the state that have participated in the State Improvement Grant programs for exceptional children. This month, Haywood County Schools' Exceptional Children Director Sharon Burgin and Director of Reading Instruction Lynn Bailey presented the results of their work with the Wilson Reading System over the past five years. Students with disabilities in the participating schools have made gains that were higher than the gains of other students. Testimonies about the effectiveness of the multi-sensory approach to reading instruction were presented through student letters and notes. Policy implications include strengthened and different content in teacher education programs regarding reading instruction, greater parent coordination and the recognition of academic success.

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