

**Minutes of the
North Carolina State Board of Education
Education Building
301 N. Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27601-2825
December 1, 2014**

The North Carolina State Board of Education met by conference call and the following members participated:

William Cobey, Chairman
Dan Forest, Lieutenant Governor
Janet Cowell, State Treasurer
Gregory Alcorn
Reginald Kenan

Wayne McDevitt
Olivia Oxendine
John Tate
Rebecca Taylor
Patricia Willoughby

Also participating:

Brady Johnson, Superintendent Advisor
Karyn Dickerson, Teacher of the Year Advisor

James E. Ford, Teacher of the Year Advisor

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTION

State Board of Education Chairman Bill Cobey called the December 1, 2014, conference call meeting of the State Board of Education to order. He explained that the Board was meeting as a committee of the whole via conference call, and the meeting was hosted from the Board Room in the Education Building in Raleigh. Chairman Cobey also noted that the meeting was being audio streamed. He welcomed online listeners and onsite guests.

The first order of business was to call roll. The roll call indicated that a quorum of members was participating in the meeting. Chairman Cobey explained that an audio tape of this meeting will be provided to the Board and advisors who are unable to be present today.

In compliance with the requirements of Chapter 138A-15(e) of the State Government Ethics Act, Chairman Cobey reminded Board members of their duty to avoid conflicts of interest and appearances of conflicts of interest under Chapter 138A. He asked if members of the Board knew of any conflict of interest or any appearance of conflict with respect to any matters coming before them during this meeting. There were no conflicts of interest communicated at this time. Chairman Cobey then requested that if, during the course of the meeting, members became aware of an actual or apparent conflict of interest that they bring the matter to the attention of the Chair. It would then be their duty to abstain from participating in discussion and from voting on the matter.

Discussion of AP US History and North Carolina Principles Course Content

A. Opening Comments and Discussion Format

Mr. Martez Hill (SBE Office Executive Director and Discussion Moderator)

Chairman Cobey welcomed the two presenters online – Mr. Larry Krieger and Mr. John Williamson. He reminded Board members that state statutes require that all North Carolina high school students take a semester-long course “American History I – The Founding Principles.” The Chairman stated that traditionally, students who want to take AP US History have been allowed to bypass American History I – Founding Principles because Founding Principles are taught in Civics and Economics, a course that is required of all students.

Chairman Cobey explained that there is now some debate in the field that the recently revised guidelines for the AP US History course may not cover The Founding Principles as thoroughly as under previous guidelines. The purpose of this presentation is to provide information that will aid the Board in better understanding the new guidelines. Chairman Cobey recognized Mr. Martez Hill to introduce the presenters, provide the format of the discussion, and serve as moderator.

Mr. Hill introduced the two national experts who represent opposite sides of the AP US History debate. Each presenter was given time to present, followed by time for them to respond to each other and answer questions from members of the State Board of Education.

- Mr. Larry Krieger (Retired North Carolina and New Jersey Teacher and Author, New Jersey)
- Mr. John Williamson (Executive Director of AP Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development, College Board, New York – former superintendent, curriculum director and AP English Teacher in Kentucky)

Mr. Krieger spoke first, calling on the State Board of Education to pass a resolution admonishing the College Board for not meeting the requirements of the state’s Founding Principles Act. The 2011 state law requires high school students to learn about individual rights, rule of law, equal justice under the law, creator-endowed inalienable rights, and other principles. Mr. Krieger prefaced his remarks by noting that the North Carolina Founding Principles Act (HB588) mandates the teaching of a course in “American History I Founding Principles” that includes instruction in specific documents and principles. According to Mr. Krieger, analysis clearly demonstrates that the North Carolina Founding Principles Act mandated documents and principles are not adequately presented in the current College Board AP U.S. History (APUSH) Framework. He stated that a North Carolina student who is taught the College Board APUSH Framework is quite unlikely to have been fully taught in any reasonable detail the key principles articulated by the North Carolina Founding Principles Act. He stated that the statute goes on to require “a clear understanding of the founding philosophy and founding principles of government for free people.”

After reviewing what is in the APUSH Framework and what is not in the Framework as it relates to the following key documents: The Preamble to the Founding Principles Act, The Declaration of Independence, The United States Constitution, and the Federalist Papers, Mr. Krieger stated that the newly designed APUSH Framework does not meet the test of “clear understanding.”

The Framework consists of 70 pages and, clearly, there is enough room to add more about the founders, according to Mr. Krieger. He urged the State Board to demand that the College Board revise the APUSH course because its 70-page framework omits the mention of “American Exceptionalism” that was in previous guidelines. He also noted that the Framework fails to mention the Magna Carta and the Mecklenburg Declaration, which is specifically mentioned in the statute in addition to other seminal documents that exemplify the development of the Rule of Law. Federalism – one of the ten key principles is also not in the Framework. Mr. Krieger cited Due Process as another glaring omission. Another omission is the Bill of Rights, which is also required by law. Mr. Krieger stated that the new course is designed to promote a globalist perspective.

Mr. Williamson prefaced his rebuttal by stating that the Framework is not a curriculum and was not designed to be a curriculum to include all of the examples a teacher could teach. He stated that Mr. Krieger pointed out at least 15 examples of required content that, in fact, is not required only illustrative, and not mandated by any means. Recognizing that Mr. Krieger spoke about documents not specified in the curriculum Framework, Mr. Williamson reiterated that this is a misunderstanding of the Framework’s purpose. He clarified that teachers actually select the documents they want to teach in their course to help them illustrate concepts, or perhaps states require certain documents to be taught such as the Federalist Papers, the Magna Carta, etc. The concept outlines statements rated by college history professors, and flexibility in the Framework is intentional. Mr. Williamson also stated that the alignment document was developed for and with North Carolina teachers. Missing concepts are covered in the learning objectives. He also countered that the while the word “Exceptionalism” isn’t specifically mentioned, the course touches upon it at several points. He stated that he personally believes in American Exceptionalism, but noted that the goal of AP classes is to replicate a college-level experience, where students are asked to form their own interpretations. Students can take AP exams to receive college credit.

Using a PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Williamson provided a look at the APUSH course redesign. He explained that in 2013, North Carolina students qualified for \$42,539,026 in college credit through their AP scores. Seventy-nine percent of North Carolina’s AP students submitted their AP scores to North Carolina colleges and universities. He noted that professors from 80+ North Carolina Colleges/Universities and teachers from 190+ North Carolina schools created and/or scored the AP exams in 2014. Mr. Williamson reported that the revised course gets much better survey marks from teachers. He explained that the APUSH course was revised because teachers said the old course covered too many themes, forcing them to rush through teaching the nation's history. He said the new framework offers more flexibility for teachers and state curriculums to focus on specific topics. In addition, Mr. Williamson provided an example of the alignment guide developed by the College Board of the Founding Principles for NC APUSH teachers. He also showed that the College Board has acted in good faith by making APUSH more transparent by providing a side-by-side view of the old and the new APUSH framework.

Mr. Williamson stated that the new APUSH course framework was released to the public in October 2012, was authored by and has the overwhelming support of, AP U.S. History teachers and college level U.S. history professors. Since that time, we have received some thoughtful feedback. To address these concerns the College Board has clarified the instructions in the framework, started to rollout the most robust set of supporting materials for APUSH teachers in the AP Program’s 60-year history, and implemented a process for collecting feedback to ensure fidelity to college credit requirements and a

balanced view of America's history. In closing comments, Mr. Williamson shared attestations of support from each of the country's American history associations.

In his rebuttal, Mr. Krieger charged that the framework's writers are promoting an agenda that says America is not an exceptional nation but one nation among many in the global society. He called upon Mr. Williamson to include the words American Exceptionalism in the framework. He reiterated his earlier request to the State Board of Education to admonish the College Board for its framework and demand its revision.

Mr. Hill thanked the presenters and opened the floor for questions.

Chairman Cobey referenced an email about all of the public comments that have been coming in about the framework related to some revisions next summer. He stated that Mr. Krieger suggests that there are some omissions that could be easily added to the framework without much expansion and asked Mr. Williamson if the Board can anticipate that there will be some revisions to the framework. Mr. Williamson spoke about the development committee that will be reviewing all of the comments from the website, media etc., and they will make the ultimate decision about whether those items will be included in the course. The comment period ends February 28, which will allow the committee time to review and respond to the comments prior to summer. Lt. Governor Forest, referring to Mr. Williamson's comments about the objectives of the concept to provide focus to the teachers, asked why Federalism, Rule of Law, and Bill of Rights are not part of the objectives when teachers have the right and ability to pick and choose. Mr. Williamson stated that one would have to look at the particular learning objectives for him to explain it better. He then used Federalism as an example to provide the explanation.

Teacher of the Year Advisor James Ford explained that Exceptionalism is a relative conclusion that depends on the judgment of the person who is interpreting the history. He added that American history, just like every other history, is full of some amazing, exceptional accomplishments and triumphs, and some unspeakable failures and wrongdoing. With that in mind, Mr. Ford suggested that a more balanced approach might be more appropriate. A brief discussion ensued.

Representative Craig Horne shared that the Founding Principles Act is rather specific about what needs to be taught, and the General Assembly is concerned that the latest iteration of the College Board's standards is lacking foundations. Representative Horne asked how the legislature can be assured that those fundamental concepts of what makes America America are in fact going to be communicated. He added that, without cooperation from the College Board, there will be a move in the General Assembly (perhaps across the country) to require a history course prior to AP U.S. History, which may not be in the best interest of students. Mr. Williamson responded by explaining that the College Board has worked with North Carolina educators to develop an alignment document that shows where all of the Founding Principles would be covered in the AP US History course. He spoke briefly about the challenge of teachers to devote a semester of course time to cover the Principles because there are other concepts required for credit and placement. He added that the College Board would not object if the state made American History I a prerequisite.

In response to Board member Olivia Oxendine, Mr. Williamson spoke about what this course essentially teaches students about US History such as critical thinking and analytical skills. He added that, like other college course experiences, students will be expected to read sources from different perspectives

and formulate their own interpretations, look at patterns and trends overtime, and study the issues outlined in the framework from multiple points of view. Dr. Oxendine stated that adding Exceptionalism will add an abundance of opportunities for critical thinking, writing, and rich discussion. Mr. Williamson stated that the course includes concepts of American Exceptionalism and he could point those out to her. Mr. Krieger countered that the revised AP course is at odds with state law because the framework omits such state-required, foundational documents as the Magna Carta, the Mayflower Compact and the Federalist Papers. But Williamson reiterated that the framework wasn't meant to cover everything teachers would discuss. Mr. Krieger recommended that the State Board admonish the College Board, and if they refuse to make changes, require American History I prior to taking APUSH.

In closing comments, Chairman Cobey thanked the presenters for their time and presentations. He explained that the Board will now work with each other and the legislature to understand better the most effective way of teaching the Founding Principles that they believe will best serve all of North Carolina's students.

ADJOURNMENT

Indicating no other business, Chairman Cobey requested a motion to adjourn.

Upon motion made by Mr. Wayne McDevitt and seconded by Mr. Gregory Alcorn, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the conference call meeting of the State Board of Education on July 10, 2014. The vote was taken by roll call and there were no objections.