

Meeting Notes
Quality Education Commission
Oregon Department of Education
255 Capitol Street NE Salem, OR 97310
Studio A Conference Room
January 13, 2011
10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Present

Susan Massey	Brian Reeder
David Bautista	Jenni Deaton
Sarah Boly	Autumn Wilburn
Beth Gerot	Laurie Wimmer
Frank McNamara	Morgan Allen
Gail Rasmussen	Tom Owen
Maryalice Russell (by phone)	
Peter Tromba	
Duncan Wyse	

Absent

Lynn Lundquist
Mark Mulvihill

Welcome and Introductions

- New commissioner David Bautista, Superintendent of Woodburn School District, introduced himself and was warmly welcomed to the commission by Susan.

Reports

- Member Updates and Information:
 - Maryalice said that the one-page QEM communications flyer that was emailed to commissioners incorporated edits and suggestions offered at the October meeting. The flyer was distributed at the OSBA convention, and Maryalice said she will be sharing it at several future meetings she will be attending.
 - Morgan Allen said that over 600 bills have already been filed for education, and several “bad” bills seem to be resurfacing– in poor fiscal times, poor ideas from the past often come up again. The Education Coalition plans to introduce a bill regarding mandate relief, to ease burdens on school districts.

- Legislative Update – Autumn Wilburn
 - Session began on Monday morning, January 10, with the swearing in of new House and Senate members and organizational meetings. The Governor expressed optimism for this session in his inauguration address; that everyone would work together and collaborate well in the upcoming months.
 - Approximately 1,600 bills were introduced between the House and Senate on Monday and Tuesday. Roughly 120-125 education bills will be analyzed, with topics ranging from fiscal issues and task forces to placeholder bills. We expect another 1600+ bills to be introduced during legislative session.
 - The legislature has effectively recessed until February 1, when they will start with committee meetings:
 - House Education Co Chairs – Rep. Sara Gelser and Rep. Matt Wingard
 - Senate Education Chair – Senator Mark Hass
 - House Ways and Means sub on Education Co-Chair – Rep. Betty Komp
 - Senate Ways and Means sub on Education Co-Chair – Senator Rod Monroe
 - Ways and Means Chairs – Rep. Dennis Richardson, Rep. Peter Buckley and Senator Richard Devlin
 - The Senate Ed committee tentatively plans to meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1-3 pm, and the House Ed committee will tentatively meet on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 1-3 pm.
 - Frank asked if there seemed to be many high potency bills and Autumn responded that the Senate mentioned more priorities in discussions than the House. A few hot topic issues raised by the Senate were ESD reform and full-day kindergarten.

Discussion

- Communication's Plan/QEM Brochure:
 - Laurie Wimmer confirmed that OEA's edits and suggestions have already been incorporated.
 - Beth reported that OSBA didn't have any feedback to share on the brochure, but she noticed that it might be helpful to have the prototype school sizes included on the back page for elementary, middle and high.
 - Susan wondered if the bullets on the first page were ordered by priority, and Maryalice clarified that they had not been placed in any particular order; they were just key points pulled from the QEM.
 - Susan also mentioned that some differentiation between the 3 school levels on the back page might make the chart easier to read, and the contact section at the very bottom needs to be revised with Vic Backlund and Diane Rush gone.

- Maryalice said she would check into the possibility of taking this information and organizing it into a tri-fold design.
- Regarding the communication's rollout plan, Susan said it would be beneficial to move forward with the plan to punch up the commission's reputation.
- Maryalice would like to see more dialog between superintendents and the commission, and for superintendents to use the QEM report/QEM brochure as functional tools and not get caught up with the "big number."
- Discussion with new Education Policy Advisor, Nancy Golden:
 - *The commission is interested in the governor's view of education and underpinnings/themes/strategies for the future*
 - Nancy said that the governor's big-picture vision is a seamless 0-20 system that is powerful on both ends. This system would implement early investment, with students either attending classes on community college campuses, or high schools offering college credit classes to boost efficiency.
 - Create an investment board to look into options for creating this seamless system, and see what can be utilized from our current structures. Instead of K-12, this would be a whole education continuum.
 - Investigate what "return on investment" really looks like in education.
 - The governor is committed to bold change in education, understanding that the budget crisis could be a decade-long reality.
 - Even if resources were available, system change is still necessary, as we have not bridged the gap.
 - There are resources to be gained if we are clear on the outcomes, such as all students coming to 1st grade prepared and ready to learn. (Resources available from organizations such as United Way, who implemented a student intervention program in Springfield that yielded measurable success.)
 - Proficiency-based instruction is of interest to governor: if high school students can show they are proficient in their subjects, they may be ready to move on to next steps.
 - If the education system was changed, the QEM would have to change accordingly: the QEC charge would have to be reconsidered at the governor's level.
 - School districts would have to be engaged and willing to work together in this system change, as limited resources would have to be divided between districts and the redesign.
 - Incentive funds to districts: this can be a draw for districts that are ready and able to move forward and make changes, but for those that aren't, it could lead to potential inequality for students. The state has a certain level of responsibility to make sure every school district is granted equal opportunities for funding.
 - It may be more effective to offer incentives to regions, which would include both large and small districts.
 - Must find a balance for innovation at the state and district level: can't be too prescriptive, as that may crush innovation within schools.

- Direction for Commission in future round of work:
 - Vision Statement for the Commission: Do we need to revisit it?
 - Charge doesn't mention anything regarding how the system might be improved.
 - Beth said it seems to assume that we're looking at brick and mortar schools only.
 - Peter: the model may be out of synch with what we'll have to do considering the budget. Still not enough "proof" on results of providing a world-class education with new technology.
 - May be elements of the model that districts find unrealistic.
 - Possibility of prototype based on what successful schools across Oregon are doing now, instead of an "ideal."
 - Sarah: start with the end result, the Oregon Diploma, and work backwards, examining what works best. Incorporate into an *Implementation Strategy*. Currently, districts do not have a shared vision/excitement around simple and effective implementation. This could provide accountability for teachers and students in the system.
 - Duncan expressed that there were two original purposes for the whole QEC/QEM process:
 - The first was around what funding levels would meet the standards at the time; put in this amount of money, and you can expect these outcomes, combined with best practices.
 - The second was a focus on the continuous loop system, to see how schools are using funds and performing.
 - Important to spread around best practices, so schools with similar funding levels can learn from each other.
 - Duncan feels that the continuous improvement cycle model should spread to the community college and university level as well.
 - From the perspective of higher education, Frank shared that the short-lived Higher Ed QEC equivalent struggled due to the lack of a data base structure that could be compared with the K-12 system. This made it impossible to achieve a similar model as the QEM for K-12.
 - In every round of the QEM, questions around "distribution" are a sticky net, such as the question whether or not money has to be used exclusively for its designated purpose. "Efficiencies" seem to be a valid area for further exposure; ESD consolidation may still be a sticky subject, but ripe for review.
 - Susan reminded that the role of the commission should not step into an area of responsibility held by the State Board. It is not appropriate for the commission to propose policy; rather advise on policy.
 - Duncan said he doesn't feel the commission infringes on the Board's role at all, and would encourage even more dialog between the two groups in the future.
 - Where is Oregon's education system today in relation to that vision?

- Uneven implementation of best practices, as some districts may be better equipped for implementation. This may be due in part to a difference in opinion between districts on what practices are really “the best.”
 - Peter prefers the term “evidence-based practices,” as it opens the door to best practices evolving and improving over time.
 - Frank said that schools have a tendency to get captured by fads that grab their attention; some of these fads under the umbrella of “efficiencies.” There are so many differences in concept around efficiencies, but districts often lump them together and label them the same thing.
 - In the Woodburn SD, David mentioned that the underpinnings of the “best practice” are observed, as they lead up to the successful results. Best practices can be a “world view” interaction between teacher and student; the underpinnings in the conversation, motivation, student attitude, etc.
 - There seems to be a missing link for communicating successful practices to districts.
 - Teachers and schools lack the time they need to look at evidence and determine whether their students are on proper track or not.
- Given where we are today and the revenue environment, what practices are needed to get Oregon to the Commission’s vision of a quality education?
 - “Practices” and “systems” are both needed.
 - Districts are required to report on the same things; it may be a more effective use of districts’ time to report on focused areas where they need an extra boost.
 - There are a number of disconnects between state and local requirements around reports, etc.
 - Sarah reminded that alignment must always be to the Oregon Diploma.
 - There could be a K-12 disconnect around the Diploma. Some elementary schools may not put a focus on the Diploma which may hinder children at early levels.
 - Frank presented the concept that the foundational ideas behind the Diploma may not have the same impact on a child with no financial hope for college. Will the students who may not be going on to college be just as well served?
 - David agreed that the reality is, not all students continue on to college. K-12 must create a consciousness of civic leadership and social justice for students, so they will be well equipped for whatever they do in the future.
 - Maryalice mentioned community colleges such as Chemeketa that offer helpful programs for students, such as 1 year free based on GPA levels. More partnerships with higher education such as this could be very beneficial for students.

- There is evidence that students who take early college/college classes in high school do better in their future.
 - Given scarce resources, what is the best path of resource use?
 - Have a database available that we can scour.
 - Identify key systemic practices that work in schools (obtain through profiles, school interviews, etc.) This would provide “flesh and blood” for the QEM report.
 - Summary of ideas for future report:
 - Focus on beginning with the end in mind (high school has generally been considered this “end” – high school shouldn’t be the end, but rather a transition place)
 - Kindergarten students are not coming to school prepared to learn.
 - Continuum with some key points of what works and what doesn’t; look for patterns.
 - What does “use of resources” look like as we phase them in?
 - Implement new governor’s thinking with long-term resource allocation.
 - “Optimal Path” of students going through the system:
 - Follow students over time.
 - Early investment important.
- Next Meeting Dates:
 - Thursday, February 24 – Studio A, 10am-1pm
 - Thursday, March 17 – Studio A, 10am-1pm

Adjourn: 12:50 pm