

Meeting Notes
Quality Education Commission
Oregon Department of Education
255 Capitol Street NE Salem, OR 97310
Studio A Conference Room
Thursday, March 17, 2011
10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Present

Susan Massey
Sarah Boly
Beth Gerot
Lynn Lundquist
Frank McNamara
Duncan Wyse

Brian Reeder
Jenni Deaton
Morgan Allen
Tom Owen

Absent

David Bautista
Mark Mulvihill
Gail Rasmussen
Maryalice Russell
Peter Tromba

Welcome and Introductions

Reports

- Member Updates and Information:
 - Beth reported that Eugene has a new superintendent, Sheldon Berman. He previously worked in Hudson, Massachusetts and was highly instrumental in turning around a low performing school district. Berman was also recruited to work in Louisville, Kentucky, where he was involved with the Harvard ExEL program. This background will be beneficial for Eugene, as they are currently working on their ExEL program and theory of action.
 - Sarah shared that Beaverton is also wrapping up their search for a new superintendent to replace Jerry Colonna. A large number of qualified applicants applied for the position.
 - Lynn said that Crook County will have a new superintendent as well. A particularly major bill being discussed and considered is Representative Gelser's HB resolution 14, which would take away measure 5 restrictions.

This would allow school district tax rates to increase to 6.5% by vote of the school board, or 7.5% by vote of the people. The intent of this bill is to allow more room for local options outside of the school funding formula.

- Morgan Allen shared some legislative information and insights. The key education topics being discussed are school district consolidation, ESD change, the transportation funding formula, superintendent position appointed vs. elected, full-day kindergarten, and charter schools. There are at least 14-15 bills related directly to charter schools, with the primary objective being more formula money designated for charters. There are significant differences in thought as far as the education budget. Rep. and Dem. co-chairs are billions of dollars apart on their education budget numbers, and the governor is at approximately 5.7. In the governor's budget, human resources is the biggest cut and K-12 education is the second biggest.
- 40-40-20 customizable education is another governor priority. Higher Ed is more concerned about the state's intrusiveness into their business than the amount of money they will receive.
 - There is healthy skepticism from all education levels regarding the governor's structure change proposal. School districts are concerned about systematic change on top of everything else they are currently trying to balance.
 - There is overall wariness as all sectors are so underfunded relative to needs. Worry is that significant change would be made with no securities in place to ensure a successful outcome for students.
 - The new structure would join governance, delivery, and funding together.
- Sarah is hopeful that 0-20 will begin working together better for student transitions, and that the overriding message will change from "our schools are failing" to "bring to scale the exemplary things happening around OR." There is a disconnect between perception and reality all across the state.

Discussion:

- Develop QEC work plan for 2011-12:
 - Brian outlined and diagramed the "optimal resource path idea," mentioned in point 2b on the back page of the handout.
 - Given a set of resources to use through grade 12, what is the best timing of resource allocation to obtain the highest level of knowledge and skill accumulation for students?
 - Also, given the concept of diminishing returns, if we know the payoff at each level of knowledge accumulation, we can estimate

- the level of resources necessary to get the student to their highest accumulation point by grade 12.
- If students don't learn to their highest potential in their current grade level, it is less likely that they will be able to attain the optimal amount of information at the next level.
- Questions to ask:
 - Are we spending enough in the early grades?
 - Is there currently too much money allocated to one level over another?
- Beth mentioned that there would be exemplary schools across OR to highlight for their success in implementing this concept.
 - Superintendent Castillo's Celebrating Student Success Schools
- This concept should be able to build in subgroups such as SPED, ELL, high mobility, etc, using student-level disaggregated data.
- The "optimal resource path idea" looks at big picture trends and assumes that students retain and build knowledge as they move through grade levels. Should also be able to identify progress/practices and isolate variables.
- Our current assessment system tells below average students early on that everything's fine, due to the lower standards bar. When standards increase in high school, these students often struggle significantly.
- Sarah expressed that the lack of designated time for teacher collaboration is a missing piece.
- This kind of an analysis will make the case for necessary increased investment in early student preparation.
- An idea is to change the prototypes in the QEM to "instruction modules" that would represent the 3-5 primary functions of schools. These modules would blend in what we know of best practices.
 - Enlist help from COSA, OEA, etc.
 - Possibly survey teachers (use SurveyMonkey tool) to gather general information for the modules, and give the teachers a feeling of initial investment in the QEM.
- Duncan: evaluating how to effectively allocate money will point to the realization that system redesign is necessary.
 - 40% of OR children immediately go into some kind of public assistance program, and there is no design for this system. This is an area that cries out for restructure, and a reason why the governor is suggesting change.
- Duncan shared a presentation from Ways and Means; it is possible that the QEC could morph into the investment group for the governor's new plan.
- Uniform education data system: for this restructure, there would need to be a uniform and consistent set of standards and assessments throughout the continuum through Higher Ed.

- Currently there is no system to determine best value from available funds.
- Future QEC work could bring together research and efforts of other groups; allow the commission to take advantage of the good work that has already been done at the state and national level.
- Give more guidance in the QEM on “what to do.”
- Invest in work that will benefit both QEC and the governor’s investment board.
- **All present commissioners agreed to move forward with the optimum resource path idea for future round of work.**
- Brian will begin working on the functional modules to share at the next meeting, and will also create a scope of work outline.
- Communications Committee Report:
 - The communications committee was planning to meet in April, but commissioners agreed that the intended work of this committee will be accomplished with the distribution of the brochure that was created.
- November 2011 OSBA Conference:
 - Frank said that a workshop with an appealing title would draw more attention than a hot topics table.
 - Beth agreed that a workshop at the November 2011 OSBA conference would be a good idea to gain feedback for the proposed changes to the QEM.
 - Susan will take care of reserving a workshop spot at the conference.

Next Meeting Dates:

- Thursday, April 21
- Wednesday, May 18
- Thursday, June 16