

Meeting Notes
Quality Education Commission
Oregon Department of Education
255 Capitol St NE Salem, OR 97310
Conference Room 200A
Wednesday, October 9, 2013
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

QEC Commissioners Present

Sarah Boly
Colt Gill (by phone)
Ana Gómez
Greg Hamann
MaryAlice Russell
Julie Smith
Judy Stiegler
Hanna Vaandering
Doug Wells, Commission Chair

ODE Staff

Stephanie Parks
Brian Reeder

Guests

Andrew Dyke, ECONorthwest
Susan Inman, Educational Policy Improvement Center (EPIC)

QEC Commissioners Absent

Peter Tromba (on leave)
Beth Gerot

Member Updates and Information

- Hanna Vaandering commented that there is a lot of stress in the school system now with the new evaluation tools, common core, and different trainings happening around the state. She said there is joy in working with the students every day, in spite of large class sizes, and that's what keeps people coming back.
- Judy Stiegler mentioned that we can't forget the environment students are involved in and that bullying is an issue and something "out there" that we need to keep in mind as we do our work.
- Greg Hamann spent last week in Washington, D.C., working on strategies for implementing focus on success and graduation at the college level. He said the federal government's inclination seems to be attaching financial aid to the graduation performance rates of various education institutions.
- MaryAlice Russell talked about the process of putting together the Race to the Top Grant last year. Oregon was a finalist, and the grant was resubmitted with changes done based on feedback from readers. The grant was due the morning of the government shutdown.
- Colt Gill participated in the meeting by phone as there were media events in his district that he needed to be there for.
- Julie Smith is working at Chalkboard now supporting educator effectiveness work. She is still providing technical assistance to collaboration grant districts.
- Doug Wells works with the Children's Institute, where the work is focusing more on looking at the intersection between health and education. He said there is exciting work going on trying to find where the intersection is so full support can be provided to children from birth on.

Best Practices Research Proposal Updates

Sarah Boly discussed how we are about to bring experts on board to help assure that our research design is right. Susan Inman and Andrew Dyke, from EPIC and ECONorthwest respectively, were introduced and addressed questions around research that the commission is proposing. ECO Northwest has submitted a proposal for consideration. They will develop a statewide student model of postsecondary education and ultimately identify research pairs. There is high interest in involving EPIC (Educational Policy and Improvement Center) as well.

Sarah said that now is our opportunity to determine what needs to be done to prepare for the actual case studies that will occur in matched pair schools, and make certain that the Commission has appropriate input into conditions that would be accounted for when the regression analysis is done. The proposal should include consideration of income level, race, gender, level of ESL services, special education services, etc.

ECO would be developing a statewide model for postsecondary engagement, and use historical data available to develop predictions for every high school in Oregon to try and identify where schools are outperforming or underperforming relative to expectations, giving us something solid to start identifying best practices.

Susan Inman said that implementation of diagnostics puts the spotlight on instructional practices that might lead to postsecondary enrollment. She suggested that key indicators are in first generation college goers, who do not yet have the experience of a parent who has attended college.

There are some technical assistance pieces around this tool, which is complex because it is research-based. It is the least intrusive, but schools will have to engage in an online survey process. Data can be disaggregated, and indicators that are leading to students and moving them into postsecondary enrollment can be identified. We want to have information that is usable and actionable. Solutions can be implemented across the state once indicators are identified.

Susan went on to say that this is a step-by-step process, and the idea is to look at statewide data and narrow it down and focus on schools where there are likely to be lessons learned. The purpose is to help us identify those areas where we can actually make a difference. With a statewide look, we can figure out where things are going well and where they may be off track. Research-based instruments can be applied to look at what is happening in schools and highlight areas that have been shown to lead to a college going culture.

There was some discussion regarding the role of counselors, which Susan said is a piece of the puzzle, and a solid research design will give us information we need to spotlight college and career ready systems. We need to make certain instructional practices are the best they can be; this information will be very valuable to make the best of what we have.

Sarah Boly commented that ultimately we assume that counselors will emerge from this research as being important; we need case studies because we need to get reliable information. We need observational data; we need to take a look at what is actually happening on the ground with counselors who are making a difference. Our hope is that we can quantify and put a dollar figure on the number of counselors, training needed, other resources needed, and work all this into the model.

Brian Reeder suggested that it is time to discuss specifics of how counselors help students and how they impact student successes.

Ana Gomez mentioned that we need to understand the necessities in different regions as there are different conversations in different regions. She invited Commission members to become involved in panel work around the state.

Greg Hamann said he was supportive of doing this work. He said research helps us know what things will truly make a difference, and that at the community college level they emphasize advising, but don't really know what kind of advising makes a difference. He indicated there is a need to be able to disaggregate according to population, and to know what works. Right now, intelligent guesses are being made, because it can't wait, but any research to help focus resources in areas of greatest impact is important.

Sarah Boly wants to attach a dollar figure to that, and would like to set forward a short, powerful, substantiated list with actionable recommendations. It is important to keep in mind that this is information gathering, not program evaluating. The purpose is to identify hot spots and find out what is actually happening in schools to inform best practices.

Julie Smith indicated that in theory it is understood that we need to focus on Oregon, but asked if there wasn't value in looking outside of Oregon at regions with similar demographics. What outcomes are they having? She said we need to be able to come up with best practices for different geographic/political areas in Oregon, and do our best to bridge without creating a divide.

Greg Harmann said that it is the nuances we find in Oregon that we need to look at. He spends a lot of time talking with others in the country at the community college level, and agrees there is a lot to be learned. He said we have to be careful not to become myopic, however.

Sarah said we can conduct our own research in Oregon but can't elsewhere. We should include a statement to that effect in the document, indicating what kind of involvement we want. She said whoever is contracted to conduct this work will help guide the Commission through this. There are a world of resources available once we launch the project as diagnostics have been done nationwide.

Doug Wells made a motion to have the QEC give the Oregon Department of Education a green light to find a vendor to do this work, affirming that we want ODE to move forward with the contracting process. All present voted in favor. The motion passed.

Foundational Information on Equity Lens

Discussion took place regarding the Equity Lens document. Hanna Vaandering voiced concern about the equity stance not addressing the poverty issue in Oregon. Julie Smith responded that the issue of poverty is mentioned in the document as a descriptor in grouping for two growing disparities and that discussions have been focused on the socio-economic aspect of this as well as populations of color. Maryalice Russell said that her district has closed the achievement gap with subpopulations, and their biggest challenge is poverty. She agreed that it is important to include in the document.

Doug Wells moved that the Quality Education Commission's *Equity Stance* document be approved, with the understanding of elevating focus on the poverty aspect of it. All voted in favor. The motion passed.

QEM Cost Model Update

Brian Reeder presented a “first cut” of a pre-K funding model for Oregon, affirming that it is a system with different providers, both public and private. He developed the program with an assumption of number of students and resources needed to provide a high quality program. The intent was to begin with a true costing model to see how much it would cost to provide a program, whether it be fully public or in a mixed private system.

Brian indicated that the research is telling us that having qualified teachers in a pre-K setting is extremely important. The qualifications for those providers are not certified teachers, which is dramatically different than what is seen in a K-12 setting. He said that research has suggested that a BS degree is desirable.

He also discussed the capitol cost component, saying that many different entities have pre-K programs, and capital costs in their structures have to be covered. He said it made sense to build that in any cost formula from the beginning, when discussions whether it will be community-based or school-based take place, and how will it be paid for if a classroom in a school is used. MaryAlice Russell said that space is an issue, and factoring this in should diminish concerns.

Brian said there is a lot more work to be done with the data, but he wanted to put something in place to start the conversations. Hanna Vaandering encouraged him to join in discussions with the Early Learning Council and how this might dovetail with their work. Brian said he would be talking to Jada Rupley, ELC’s Executive Director, over the next few months.

QEC Meetings

Quality Education Commission meetings take place the second Wednesday of every month. The next meeting is scheduled for November 13, 2013. There will be no meeting in December.

Miscellaneous

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.