

MINUTES
(Draft – Not Yet Adopted By Task Force)

Education Roundtable

August 19, 2002
Room 105, Gressette Building

Members in attendance: Governor Jim Hodges, Superintendent Inez Tenenbaum, Dr. David Bomar, Dr. Sharon Buddin, Ms. Beth Burn, Ms. Betty Farris, Representative Ronnie Townsend, Mr. Bob Thompson, Mr. Bob Staton, Ms. Susan Shi, Senator Nikki Setzler, Mr. Cleo Richardson, Dr. Gerrita Postlewait, Ms. Traci Young-Cooper, Mr. Ralph Odom, Representative Joe Neal, Ms. Christi McCollum, Dr. Louis Lynn, Dr. David Longshore, Mr. Don Herriott, Mr. Robert Heflin, Mr. Lawrence Gressette, Senator Warren Giese, and Mr. Dalton Floyd.

Members unable to attend: Dr. David Church, Mr. Reed Swann, and Mr. Hillery Douglas.

Governor Hodges began the meeting by welcoming members and guests and by explaining the mission of the Education Roundtable which is to look at where we are in K – 12 and higher education and where we need to go, to collaborate on the development of state policies to improve the quality of education, to examine best practices and to maximize educational opportunities provided through the No Child Left Behind Legislation.

Members then introduced themselves. Jim Watts, SREB Vice President for State Services, gave a presentation on the need to set goals, the need for leadership in reaching the established goals, importance of preparing students for the next grade, the next level of education and for post-secondary education.

Dr. Jo Anne Anderson, Director of the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee, discussed the work of the EOC over the past four years, the current problems within the education system and the need for clear expectations.

Ms. Inez Tenenbaum, State Superintendent of Education, discussed South Carolina's education accomplishments and stated that the SREB goals had been adopted by the State Department of Education. She then discussed how they had been matched to Department initiatives.

The presentations were followed by a question and answer session. Representative Joe Neal asked Jim Watts if equity funding should be an issue? Mr. Watts stated that strong principals, veteran teachers who know their subject content and know what needs to be taught are most important to a school's success. The equity issue needs continuing review.

Mr. Bob Thompson asked how the State can develop an effective, efficient system for higher education governance? Mr. Watts stated that no one had found the answer to that, but that many different models are being examined.

Senator Nikki Setzler asked what other states were doing to align their institutional programs to job market needs? Mr. Watts suggested that data be compiled to determine the areas of supply and demand. Then the institutions should be asked to respond.

Dr. David Longshore asked what other states have policies in place to recruit teachers for the neediest areas. Mr. Watts replied that incentives such as salary need to be offered as well as smaller class sizes.

Governor Hodges brought up the issue of re-educating adults whose jobs have become obsolete and how high school and higher education programs can work together to prepare these unemployed adults for new job opportunities. Mr. Watts stated that Kentucky is using a promising model. The two year institutions, especially, must be very responsive.

Senator Warren Giese asked if the public understood the severity of the education statistics and the effort needed to resolve the problems. Dr. Anderson stated that the EOC is touring the State talking with civic groups as well as school and parent groups. The public doesn't recognize the magnitude of the need but the public is also unaware of the progress made over the last few years. Many organizations and individuals want to be involved but aren't sure what to do.

Mr. Bob Staton mentioned that only one-fourth of families in South Carolina have children in school. There is a need to gain the support of everyone, including those who do not have children in school.

Mr. Cleo Richardson expressed concern over how average yearly progress, under No Child Left Behind, is to be measured. Will each state have a different method of measurement? Mr. Watts stated that this is a concern. The message needs to get back to Washington that states must be consulted as guidelines are developed.

The Governor established the next meeting date as September 18, 2002, to be held in Room 105, Gressette Building from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.