

**South Carolina Education Roundtable  
Minutes of the Meeting  
October 14, 2002  
Room 105, Gressette Building**

**Members Present:** Governor Jim Hodges, Superintendent Inez Tenenbaum, Dr. Sharon Buddin, Ms. Beth Burn, Dr. David Church, Ms. Betty Farris, Mr. Dalton Floyd, Sen. Warren Giese, Mr. Robert Heflin, Mr. Don Herriott, Dr. Louis Lynn, Mr. Nick Odom, Mr. Cleo Richardson, Sen. Nikki Setzler, Mr. Bob Staton, Mr. Reed Swann, Mr. Bob Thompson, and Ms. Traci Young-Cooper.

**Members Unable to Attend:** Dr. David Bomar, Mr. Hillery Douglas, Mr. Lawrence Gressette, Dr. David Longshore, Ms. Christi McCollum, Rep. Joe Neal, Dr. Gerrita Postlewait, Dr. Susan Shi, and Rep. Ronnie Townsend.

**I. Welcome and Introductions:**

Governor Hodges welcomed members and guests to the meeting. He explained that this would be the Roundtable's last group meeting and a decision would be made at a later to meet either in December or January in subcommittee groups. This session would include Doug McTeer's reviewing the "Wildest Dreams" from the September 18<sup>th</sup> meeting, an overview of Education Oversight Committee's Long-Range Plan and a presentation from Standard & Poor's School Educational Evaluation Services, Mr. Robert Durante, Director and Mr. Michael Stewart, Associate Director.

**II. Adoption of September 18, 2002 Minutes:**

Governor Hodges asked for a motion for the approval of the September 18<sup>th</sup> meeting. Mr. Bob Thompson motioned for the approval and Sen. Setzler seconded the motion. The minutes were adopted without amendments.

**III. Doug McTeer:**

Doug McTeer reviewed the "Wildest Dreams" list compiled by NGA categorized into four different sections.

**IV. Introduction of Presenters from S & P's Evaluation Services:**

**Mr. Robert Durante and Mr. Michael Stewart:**

Mr. Durante and Mr. Stewart made power-point presentations on how data information can be made in the decision-making process as well as in other areas of the educational system at the state policy level and the local level. They also provided information on and examples of the data work that S & P is doing in Michigan, Pennsylvania, and various other states.

**V. Questions and Answers from Roundtable Members:**

**Governor Hodges:** How will a framework for comparison be determined?

**Mr. Stewart:** We need to look at what types of data to collect, what types of data infrastructure to use and how this data can be brought together to effect policy development.

**Senator Setzler:** How are benchmarks on academic performance and spending to be determined?

**Mr. Stewart:** The State has already established standards and assessment instruments and is knowledgeable on the percentage of students meeting standards. Via the website, districts can be

compared to the state averages, county averages, and peer districts. Financial factors can also be involved – not what the district spends but what its capacity for spending is.

**Senator Giese:** What's the relationship between the PSAT and the SAT.

**Mr. Stewart:** The PSAT is usually offered a year before the SAT usually in the sophomore or junior year. It determines National Merit Scholars. More students take the PSAT than the SAT.

**Superintendent Tenenbaum:** What hardware and software does the State need?

**Mr. Stewart:** That's provided. We provide data warehousing.

**Superintendent Tenenbaum:** The state gives you data, you put it in the data warehouse and give it back to us on the website.

**Mr. Stewart:** Yes. We put it in the warehouse and analyze it.

**Mr. Floyd:** What about the reliability of data. Is some more reliable than others?

**Mr. Stewart:** That's always a concern among states. We have a data quality review process. We can determine that data is good enough to use but not excellent so we put it out with a warning. Sometimes the data is not usable.

**Mr. Floyd:** In performance funding, we use an audit function that checks data every few years. We found that we're not comparing apples to apples. Does it take several years to get quality data?

**Mr. Stewart:** Our analysis doesn't rest on any one indicator. Several different criteria are used. Information will never be perfect.

**Mr. Richardson:** Districts within a cohort may have success but in comparison to the state they are not progressing. How do we help these districts with that cohort?

**Mr. Stewart:** We issue district level reports and for the state as a whole. And we raise policy issues and questions. What's important to communicate is that students have come a long way even though they are not meeting state standards. But still there has been progression. Understanding value added measures is important.

**Governor Hodges:** Will we be able to look at another state and see what they are doing? And look at comparable districts in other states.

**Mr. Stewart:** Yes. Interstate comparison can be done but right now we are limited. Each state has a different state testing program. We can provide comparisons with national tests such as NAEP. We've created structured definitions to help with comparisons among states.

**Mr. Staton:** What about individual classroom data?

**Mr. Stewart:** Right now that would violate the federal privacy act.

**Senator Setzler:** Will we see state funds or all funds reflected? What about local sales tax and additional revenue?

**Mr. Stewart:** All funds will be included. There will be a break out of revenue that shows where each source comes from.

**Ms. Young-Cooper:** Who will have access to this data? Is it for internal or external use?

**Mr. Stewart:** External. Everyone will be able to access it.

**Superintendent Tenenbaum:** Is this going to be self-reported data from the schools?

**Mr. Stewart:** Yes.

**Superintendent Tenenbaum:** Are you familiar with InSite which we've used for five years?

**Mr. Durante:** We did early comparisons. InSite is a great complement to what we're doing.

**Dr. Lynn:** Who are your competitors?

**Mr. Stewart:** In each State the Attorney General has named us as sole source vender. No one else is doing it for now.

**Dr. Church:** You've had experience with charter schools?

**Mr. Stewart:** Michigan and Pennsylvania represent 10% of charter schools nationwide. Under our contract we will do an analysis of 57 charter schools over the next three years. We are developing an analytical framework to allow comparisons among charter schools.

**Mr. Herriott:** How does Michigan and Pennsylvania use this information to improve performance?

**Mr. Stewart:** One district discovered that it was spending more on insurance than other districts. As a result they now have a new insurance contract and shifted the cost savings to instruction.

**Dr. Lynn:** Is there a link to higher education?

**Mr. Stewart:** Currently there is a K – 12 model. Interest has been expressed in extending it to higher education but we have not been contracted to do it.

**Governor Hodges:** It can be done easily.

**Mr. Stewart:** Yes. Higher education has more key indicators than K – 12.

**Mr. Staton:** How long has Standard and Poor's been doing this?

**Mr. Stewart:** We launched Michigan in May of 2001 and Pennsylvania soon after.

**Mr. Swann:** Does certain data come from the census?

**Mr. Stewart:** Some comes from the Census. DRI is the firm that updates that information every year. We also use other sources.

**Mr. Heflin:** What is the turnaround time?

**Mr. Stewart:** Once we receive the data we generate the report in six months.

**Dr. Lynn:** How should testing be weighted?

**Mr. Stewart:** Internally we use student results indicators. We give weight to the assessment system but look at the whole and weight criteria differently.

**Mr. Herriott:** Where are the land mines?

**Mr. Stewart:** Not everyone is happy with their state testing program. There are disagreements over testing and the form of testing. Concerns over quality of data are short term.

**Mr. Staton:** Do you have to do anything to make it consistent with No Child Left Behind?

**Mr. Stewart:** Michigan has asked us to help them with the data requirements for NCLB. We are the reporting mechanism.

**Mr. Staton:** You say the report will be ready in six months after receiving the data. Is that just at the beginning or six months each year?

**Mr. Stewart:** We start with three, four or five years of data. In subsequent years, it will be every six months.

#### **VI. Concluding Comments:**

Governor Hodges announced that as soon as a decision was made regarding the next meeting, that information would be forwarded to the members.

The meeting was adjourned.