

Minutes: Board of Education
Committee to Implement the No Child Left Behind Act
Date: November 6, 2002

The committee convened to receive presentations and comments on reading education from representatives of five teacher preparation programs within the state and to receive information regarding implementation of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001.

The first presenter was Dr. Lynn Wolf of Averett University. Dr. Wolf stated that state teacher preparation programs were doing well in teaching comprehension, fluency, and writing instruction. However, some programs are not focusing enough time on certain key elements in reading instruction. Dr. Wolf felt that preparation programs should spend more time on the structure of language, phonemic awareness, and phonics. Dr. Wolf also stated that a test is needed to measure whether pre-service teachers are receiving the information and training and that professional development is needed for in-service teachers. Dr. Wolf indicated that professional development should include not only in-service teachers, but central office staff and higher education staff as well. Dr. Wolf stated that those individuals responsible for textbook adoption need training on what appropriate reading instruction involves in order to know what to look for in a quality textbook.

When Dr. DeMary inquired into how Dr. Wolf felt that more attention could be given to language structure. Dr. Wolf stated that this could be done in the existing framework of teacher preparation programs by adjusting the time spent on key elements and by setting a timeframe for the achievement of certain skills and knowledge regarding language structure.

The second presenter was Dr. Donald Langrehr of Radford University. Dr. Langrehr stated that teacher preparation programs should focus on basic skills, provide explicit training in phonemic awareness and phonics concepts, institute formal testing of pre-service teachers in the areas of phonemic awareness and phonics concepts, use the PALS assessment as a teacher training tool, require teacher candidates to practice explicit instructional strategies, and require teacher candidates to apply instructional strategies in tutorial and classroom settings.

The third presenter was Dr. Charles Watson of James Madison University. Dr. Watson stated that stronger ties between K-12 in-service teachers, school divisions, and institutions of higher are needed to provide effective mentoring of new teachers, to provide incentives for schools to develop professional development partnerships with institutions of higher education, to provide incentives for school divisions to enter into research partnerships with institutions of higher education, to provide additional resources, and to provide incentives for family and parental involvement in reading. Dr. Watson also felt that reading specialists should be required in the Standards of Quality (SOQ).

The fourth presenter was Dr. Jane Massey-Wilson from West Point public schools and the Advisory Board on Teacher Education and Licensure (ABTEL). Dr. Massey-Wilson stated that ABTEL was studying an assessment of reading instruction for pre-service teachers and presented the committee with a definition of a good reading teacher. The definition included the capability of knowing how to group students for reading, how to teach students based on their instructional levels, knowing the five essential areas of reading instruction, knowing how to pace students, and knowing the importance of using assessments to measure progress. Dr. Massey-Wilson indicated that to prepare good reading teachers, preparation programs need to provide training in

the five essential elements, in grouping and teaching students, in pacing students, and in disaggregating data. Dr. Massey-Wilson also stated that institutions of higher education need to receive feedback from schools on the success of new teachers and that the PALS should be revised and made stronger in order to identify more students having difficulties with reading.

The fifth presenter was Dr. Nancy Cooley from the State Council of Higher Education of Virginia (SCHEV). Dr. Cooley stated that she would support and advocate for the practices discussed by the previous presenters. Dr. Cooley felt that there should be data collected on how many reading instructors are needed in higher education and that it may be appropriate to have a reading specialist in residence at SCHEV.

After the presentations on reading instruction, the committee received information on the implementation of NCLB Act. Dr. Thomas Elliott presented the committee with information on the current reading specialist endorsement and noted that this had been reported as a critical shortage area in Virginia. Ms. Linda Poorbaugh provided the committee the status of the Reading First Grant. Ms. Poorbaugh stated that there were five components of the grant application that were still being revised but the revisions would not result in substantial changes to the grant application. Dr. Cynthia Cave provided the committee with an overview of the NCLB timelines for board actions and the status of the persistently dangerous schools policy and process. Dr. Cheryl Magill presented the committee with the work of the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) committee and the proposed process for determining AYP in Virginia. Ms. Roberta Schlicher provided the committee with information on the assessment of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students, a list of Title III sub-grantees, and a list of LEP assessment instruments.