

**Advisory Committee on Adult Education and Literacy  
To the Virginia Board of Education**

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**Meeting Date and Location:**

June 9, 2011  
James Monroe Building  
22<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room  
Richmond, Virginia

**Minutes**

**Advisory Committee Members Present:**

Dr. Thomas M. Brewster, Chair  
Ms. Elaine Callahan  
Ms. Carol Coffey  
Mrs. Deborah Hunley-Stukes  
Ms. Betsy Mathias  
The Honorable Kenneth R. Plum  
Dr. Paulette Richmond  
Dr. Troilen Seward  
Mr. Randall Stamper (Ex-Officio)  
Ms. Dawn Wells

**Others:**

Ms. Sarah Herzog  
Mr. Paul McLean

**Department of Education Staff:**

Ms. Nonie Barnstein  
Ms. Debbie Bergtholdt  
Mr. Kent Dickey  
Ms. Cynthia Finley  
Mr. Lan Neugent  
Dr. Michael Nusbaum

**Advisory Committee Members Absent:**

Mrs. Deborah Hinton  
Ms. Annette Loschert  
Dr. Bonnie Moore  
The Honorable Phillip P. Puckett  
Ms. Bette Sneed

**Full Advisory Committee Convenes**

9:30 a.m.

**Opening Remarks and Introductions**

Dr. Thomas Brewster, Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed members.

**Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made to approve the March 30, 2011, meeting minutes. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

## **Presentation and Discussion of Changes to GED Testing**

Mr. Randall Stamper, OAEL Director, presented an overview of the changes to GED testing and the testing program. The agenda for this meeting will address those changes in the areas of content, delivery, costs, and programs under the Office of Adult Education and Literacy that will be affected. This item will be on the Virginia Board of Education agenda for the June 23, 2011, meeting and will be presented by Dr. Thomas Brewster. Mr. Stamper provided a brief background history of the GED testing program and reported to the committee that the most pressing current considerations are cost changes that are occurring soon between the GED testing service and the vendor who provides test scoring.

Ms. Debbie Bergtholdt, State GED Administrator, presented information on the impending changes to the GED testing program. The presentation was broken down into four categories:

- Content – Common Core State Standards
- Delivery – Pearson VUE Testing Centers
- Costs – 2012 and 2014
- Impacted Programs

Dr. Michael Nusbaum, Adult Secondary Education Specialist, provided an overview of the impact that the proposed fee increases will have on test takers.

### **Questions and Answers**

Dr. Nusbaum responded to a question regarding outside funding for GED testing for ISAEF students. There are no state or federal grants that can be used for this purpose.

Mr. Stamper responded to a question regarding computer-based testing. Once tests become computer-based only, the portion of the population served who do not have computer access and skills will be impacted. Ms. Bergtholdt reported that teachers will require professional development to prepare for the content changes in GED testing.

A discussion was held regarding the proposed fee changes and the fact that the fees could increase again. The fee changes could affect how students pursue taking the GED; students may want to be more prepared to take the tests, in light of the fees incurred. On the other hand, there may be students who will move forward and take the tests, without adequate preparation and then face the consequences of having to take the tests, a second time. The fee increase could impact testing centers and how testing centers as they take this fee increase into account when establishing operating hours and test scheduling. The fee increase could impact the goals that have been established for Virginia's GED program as the number of students taking the GED tests could potentially decrease.

Ms. Sarah Herzog attended the meeting at the request of Senator Houck. Senator Houck has expressed concern that testing will not be available to a population of students due to the fee increase.

Mr. Lan Neugent, Assistant Superintendent for Technology, Career and Adult Education addressed the questions and concerns raised over the matter of fee increases being widely announced only to be followed by an additional announcement changing those fees. Mr. Neugent reported that the State Superintendent for Public Instruction and members of the Virginia Senate are concerned that fee increases could be detrimental to students seeking to take the GED tests.

### **Report to the Board of Education**

Dr. Brewster will present this item at the June 23, 2011, meeting of the Virginia Board of Education for their consideration and approval. Following that presentation, information will be provided via a Superintendent's Memo.

### **Adjournment**

The Advisory Committee on Adult Education and Literacy meeting adjourned at 10:55 a.m.