

Commission on Civics Education
Tuesday, January 3, 2006
House Room D, General Assembly Building,
Capitol Square,
Richmond, Virginia
2 p.m.

Meeting Summary

The Commission on Civics Education, established by House Bill 1769 as an advisory commission in the executive branch of state government, held its second meeting on January 3, 2006.

Members Present

The Honorable William Roscoe Reynolds
The Honorable Robert Tata
The Honorable R. Lee Ware, Jr.
Stephen R. Adkins
Carmela C. Bills
Dr. Stephen G. Bragaw
Thomas C. Coen
Dr. Sheila G. Hill
Glen H. Hoptman
Dr. Sean O'Brien
J. Westwood Smithers, Jr.
Ginger Stanley
Kenneth S. Stroupe, Jr.

Members Absent

The Honorable Frederick M. Quayle
The Honorable Kenneth C. Alexander
The Honorable Beverly J. Sherwood

Other Persons in Attendance

The Honorable James H. Dillard
Matt McGuire
Greg Werkheiser

Ex-Officio Present

Dr. Patricia I. Wright

Ex-Officio Absent

The Honorable Mark R. Warner
The Honorable Timothy M. Kaine
The Honorable Judith W. Jagdmann
Thomas Jackson
Dr. Barbara A. Perry
David E. Johnson (Designee for The Honorable Judith W. Jagdmann)

Department of Education

Dr. Linda Wallinger
Jim Firebaugh
Dr. Beverly Thurston
Joel Dexter
Betsy Barton

Welcome

The Honorable Robert Tata called the meeting to order at 2 p.m. and completed the roll call. The minutes from the September 28, 2005, meeting of the Commission on Civics Education were approved.

Presentations and Discussions

DOE Staff:

- Presented an overview of civics instruction in the commonwealth focusing on the *History and Social Science Standards of Learning*, the Standards of Learning Curriculum Framework, the enhanced scope and sequence, and the Standards of Learning test blueprints.
- Described the Board of Education Diploma Seal for Excellence in Civics Education, which students may earn with a Standard Diploma or an Advanced Studies Diploma.
- Presented information about Linking Leadership to Instruction: a Leadership Development Curriculum and the Virginia Character Development Project.
- Described the department's online resources and Web sites related to civics education.

A short discussion followed the presentation. Commission members wanted to know how civics information is disseminated to teachers. SOL testing dates were discussed. Commission members also discussed the types of civics knowledge being tested. This included both the constants of government and information about current elected officials at a variety of different levels of government.

Tom Coen:

- Reported on a *civics election survey* completed by 50 percent of the history and social science leadership at the fall 2005 Virginia Consortium of Social Studies Specialists and College Educators meeting.
- Reported that (according to the survey) most divisions include civics in grades K-12 and use a variety of instructional methods.
- Reported that most textbooks do not present Virginia specific state and local information.
- Indicated that the school division leadership in history and the social sciences was appreciative of the commission's interest.

DOE staff:

- Presented a draft copy of a second civics survey developed for a larger audience to encompass a wide range of questions related to civics education.
- Reported that the current draft of the civics survey was intended as a starting point and the focus and audience was up to the commission.

A recommendation was made to send the final survey to local history and social science supervisors. Discussion about the best way to gather information on civics ensued, especially as related to a statewide survey. It was decided that discussion would continue over the development of the survey.

Matt McGuire (government teacher at Maggie L. Walker Governor's School for Government and International Studies):

- Presented information about mock elections in Virginia's schools.

- Pointed out difficulties in levels of participation with many different organizations that offered their own mock elections.
- Proposed that a single organization be promoted for use in conducting a statewide mock election.
- Stressed the value of the Model United Nations, Model Judiciary, and Model Congress programs.
- Proposed Virginia High School League recognition for competitions for those programs, including paid sponsors and standardized rules for the contests.

Commission members asked questions about the consequences of having multiple mock elections. They also explored the benefits of narrowing mock elections to one source. There were questions on how the competitions would be handled and whether there could be more of a focus on local elections. Mr. McGuire responded that it could be done with support from a variety of organizations and that, in his opinion, it would be a positive change. Also discussed were concerns over hesitancy on the part of teachers to bring representatives of actual campaigns into the classroom.

Greg Werkheiser (founder of the Virginia Citizenship Institute):

- Suggested creation of a Virginia Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools.
- Proposed joining with the Sorensen Institute and other organizations to sponsor a state conference on civics.

A brief discussion followed of the advantages of the proposals.

Creation of Sub-Committees

Glen Hoptman proposed the creation of four sub-committees to look more closely at specific aspects of civics education. The sub-committees are Instruction and Curriculum, Professional Development, Civic Education, and Service-Learning Programs. Commission members volunteered for membership on the sub-committees as follows:

Commission Member	Sub-Committee
Adkins, Stephen	Civic Education
Bills, Carmela	Instruction and Curriculum
Bragaw, Stephen	Civic Education
Coen, Tom	Instruction and Curriculum
Dillard, Jim	Service-Learning Programs
Hill, Shiela	Service-Learning Programs
O'Brien, Sean	Service-Learning Programs
Smithers, Westwood	Civic Education
Stanley, Ginger	Professional Development
Stroupe, Ken	Civic Education
Ware, Lee	Instruction and Curriculum

Adjournment

Delegate Tata adjourned the meeting at 4:02 p.m.