

**Commission on Civics Education
Tuesday, August 5, 2008
Virginia Historical Society
Richmond, Virginia
10 a.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 ninth meeting on August 5, 2008.

Members Present

The Honorable James H. Dillard, II
Jeffrey A. Finch
Glen H. Hoptman
The Honorable William Roscoe Reynolds
J. Westwood Smithers, Jr.
Kenneth S. Stroupe, Jr.
Richard C. Sullivan, Jr.
The Honorable Robert Tata
Kathryn Williams

Members Absent

The Honorable Kenneth C. Alexander
Dr. Stephen G. Bragaw
Thomas C. Coen
Dr. Sheila G. Hill
The Honorable Stephen Newman
The Honorable Beverly J. Sherwood
Ginger Stanley
The Honorable R. Lee Ware, Jr.

Other Persons in Attendance

Rena Berlin
Clint Hubbard
Maggie Massie
Michael Wildasin

Ex-Officio Present

Dr. Felicia Dyke (Designee for Dr. Billy K. Cannaday, Jr.)

Ex-Officio Absent

Jean Bankos (Designee for The Honorable Timothy M. Kaine)
Dr. Mark E. Emblidge
Jeremy Greenfield (Designee for The Honorable Bill Bolling)
Alison Landry (Designee for The Honorable Robert F. McDonnell)
Dr. Barbara A. Perry

Department of Education

Betsy Barton
Joel M. Dexter
Beverly Thurston

Welcome

The Honorable Robert Tata called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m. and confirmed the roll call. The minutes from the December 5, 2007, meeting of the Commission on Civics Education were approved.

Presentations and Discussions

Glen Hoptman:

- Presented information about the upcoming 2008 *Virginia Civics Education Summit*.
 - The *Summit* will be located at the Capitol Building on September 19, 2008, during Civics Week.
 - The Agenda for the *Summit* includes several well known speakers.
 - David Wilkins – Kirkland and Ellis Professor of Law, Harvard Law School
 - Lee Rainie – Director, Pew Internet and American Life Project
 - Dr. Joseph Kahne - Dean of the School of Education, Mills College
 - Topics will include “The Hidden Dimension of Civic Education and Engagement”, “Virtual Civic Engagement”, and an update on the new Civics Standards of Learning and Curriculum Frameworks.
 - A tour of the Capitol Building will be available.
 - There will be other speakers, and modifications of the agenda can be expected.
 - Much of the *Summit* will be Web-cast and available for viewing across the Commonwealth.
 - Virginia Tech will provide conference services.

There were questions from the Commission concerning which rooms at the Capitol would be available and best used for which parts of the *Summit*. It was suggested that one of the larger rooms would be used for the presentations and the other for presentation of materials and as a location for lunch. There was also discussion of the handling of registration and finances for the *Summit*. There were several different proposals for handling this aspect of the *Summit* and staff from the Department of Education will follow up on the suggestions. Some doubt was expressed about the feasibility of the model for a panel discussion following the third major speaker. It was decided that a reorganization of that part of the day would be implemented. Several other potential speakers were also discussed.

Michael Wildasin:

- Presented an overview of the new *Virginia Standards of Learning* and Curriculum Frameworks for Civics.
 - The new Curriculum Frameworks addressed the need to balance what might be desirable goals for civics with the amount of time that teachers actually have to teach the subject.
 - The Curriculum Frameworks also attempt to stress citizenship skills and civic engagement.
 - There is a strong civics strand throughout the K-12 curriculum.

Commission members wanted to know when the two main “civics” courses are taught. Virginia and United States Government is almost always taught during a student’s senior year. Civics and Economics is taught at a variety of grade levels, but the vast majority of school systems teach it in either seventh or eighth grade. There were also questions about changing the course title for the twelfth-grade course and about the

type of civics instruction in lower elementary grades. It was pointed out that as early as third grade there was already mention of civic involvement.

The Honorable Robert Tata:

- Nominated The Honorable William Roscoe Reynolds as the new Chairman of the Commission.
- Certified the unanimous election of Senator Reynolds as Chairman.
- Proposed that Glen Hoptman stay on as Vice Chairman.
- Certified Mr. Hoptman's unanimous selection as well.

The Honorable William Roscoe Reynolds:

- Requested new business.
 - The Legislative Education and Development Office will be offering a two-day training session for pre-service teachers November 20 and 21, 2008.
 - Members of the Commission are invited to attend.
 - Negotiations are ongoing with publishers for a book or ancillary materials to be used to teach Virginia government.

Discussion followed on possible avenues for publication of the Virginia government book. There are no commitments from publishers so far. Most publishing companies focus on producing a general government book that can be marketed throughout the United States. There were also questions about producing a supplement, but the majority thought that it would be better to include details on Virginia in the Government textbook itself. There was a call for a meeting sometime in November.

Adjournment

The Honorable William Roscoe Reynolds adjourned the meeting at 11:35 a.m.