

Study Team
On
Local Leadership Quality and Engagement

Recommendations
To the
South Carolina Education Oversight Committee

October 19, 2000

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

October 5, 2000

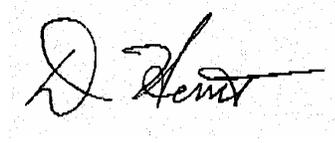
Mr. William Barnet, III, Chairman
SC Education Oversight Committee
PO Box 11867
Columbia, South Carolina 29211

Dear Bill:

On behalf of the Study Team on Local Leadership Quality and Engagement, I am submitting recommendations to improve educational governance in South Carolina. We believe that these recommendations form a critical component in the improvement of student achievement. Our work reflects confidence in the system to perform at a higher level.

We encourage you to study and take action on the recommendations. They require courage and commitment. Our state and our children deserve no less.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Don Herriott", is written over a light gray, textured background.

Don Herriott

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Study Group Charter

In late 1999, the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee (EOC) commissioned a study team on local leadership quality and engagement. A distinguished group of business leaders, school board members and educators (see page 6 for a list of team members) conducted this study and developed a set of specific recommendations on local leadership, as well as the identification of systemic issues and opportunities in other educational governance areas. This report concludes the work of the study team and was submitted to the EOC on October 19, 2000.

Methodology

A baseline criterion for the definition of "good governance" and expected study outcomes were established before the team began an intensive data gathering phase. Many research and best practice reading materials were reviewed (a listing of which can be found in Appendix A). Experts in the various areas of educational governance, both within South Carolina and in other states, were invited to share knowledge and experiences and to engage in dialogue with the group. A list of these experts is found in Appendix B. Of course, the study team itself was comprised of individuals possessing a wide range of experience and expertise.

Detailed analysis and preliminary recommendations followed data collection. This work was conducted within four subgroups of the full team. Integration and consensus of the subgroup reports, findings, implications and recommendations were prepared through full team meetings and through written feedback on report content.

Findings and Conclusions

As South Carolina and the rest of the nation awaken to a dawn after the twentieth century's education reform efforts, governance is an area that has been in the shadows. During the last 50 years, South Carolina has transitioned from over 1500 school districts to 86. In the 1950's, district governance was provided by a small number of trustees for districts comprised of a few schools. These trustees personally knew many of the parents, students, teachers and administrators. Community accountability included efforts such as holding town meetings. This form of local governance was appropriate for the time and met local social and economic needs.

The study team finds that our state educational governance structure and educational needs have evolved in many different ways, not always harmoniously and often without the benefit of a master plan. Today our state's educational governance structure can be described, at best, as a patchwork quilt and, at worst, as a fragmented system in which some excel despite the environment, most struggle through it, and few are aided by it. From any perspective the team concludes that bold steps are needed to enable our public education system to perform at an optimal level. Almost universally we hear dedicated and talented educators express frustration that their jobs are too encumbered in serving the governance system, not students, and that the cumbersome efforts are disproportionate to the system's end aims of public education.

The clear implication from our study is that flaws in the governance structure, from the state level to the local school district, preclude needed improvements in the entire system. While many of our findings and ideas are not new, in the past we have lacked the will and/or the means to change. The time to act in a systemic and comprehensive way is now.

Recommendations

The following recommendations represent the study team's consensus for systemic solutions that will free educators to educate, students to learn, and leaders to lead. Detailed rationale, implications and implementation issues can be found in the body of this report. We believe these recommendations will accelerate progress in student achievement and create an environment that promotes sound school operations and management. As stated above, educational governance is an inter-linked system and cannot be viewed as independent components. The recommendations must be viewed in this regard. Caution is warranted about partial implementation approaches. For example, one of the team's most controversial recommendations calls for fiscal autonomy. This cannot stand alone. Accountability to the voters includes electing all school boards, requiring minimum qualifications, requiring annual training to include fiscal matters; and even eliminating county boards must be viewed as integrated actions, not independent ones.

The following recommendations are presented to the EOC for its consideration:

Recommendation on School District Boards and Superintendent roles and accountabilities

1. In order to meet the challenges that local districts face in this era of accountability, state laws must be updated to codify the respective roles of superintendents and school boards. The current powers and duties of the school board as outlined in §59-19-90 and other statutes should conform to the duties outlined below:
 - Responsibilities of the school board: Select, work with and evaluate the superintendent; adopt "students first" goals, policies, and budgets; delegate to the superintendent the day-to-day administration of the school district, including student discipline and personnel matters; and evaluate their own leadership, governance and teamwork on behalf of children.
 - Responsibilities of the superintendent: Serve as the chief executive officer to the school board, including recommending all policies and the annual budget; support the school board by providing good information for decision-making; provide continuous leadership to ensure that the board policies and responsibilities of the board-superintendent team are addressed each day; oversee the educational program (curriculum, instruction, co-curricula, instructional materials, etc.); serve as the final authority for the hiring, assignment and dismissal of all employees.
 - Responsibilities of the board-superintendent team: Create teamwork and advocacy for the high achievement and healthy development of all children in the community; provide educational leadership for the community, including the development and implementation of a long-range plan, in close collaboration with principals, teachers, other staff and parents; create strong linkages with social service, health and other community organizations and agencies to support the healthy development and high achievement of all children; set districtwide policies and annual goals and long range plan for education; approve an annual school district budget; ensure the safety and adequacy of all school facilities; provide resources for the professional development

of teachers, principals and other staff; and periodically evaluate its own leadership, governance and teamwork for children.

[NOTE: The realignment of responsibilities noted here are drawn from Thinking Differently: Recommendations for 21st Century School Board/Superintendent Leadership, Governance and Teamwork for High Student Achievement by Richard Goodman and William G. Zimmerman, Jr.]

Recommendations on trustees' qualifications, training and effectiveness

2. All school districts should have boards of trustees that are elected.
3. All future candidates filing to run for a school board must possess a high school diploma or a GED in addition to satisfying other statutory requirements.
4. The state should collect information indicating the participation of new board members in the required orientation and impose a statutory penalty on members not attending the orientation.
5. Continuous education is critical if board members are to be able to keep abreast of ever-changing requirements facing their governance role. Each school board member should complete a minimum of six hours training per year, a portion of which must focus on fiscal matters. Funding for this requirement must be provided by the state.
6. School boards are required to go through a board assessment every two years and the Freedom of Information Act should be amended to allow the evaluation to be held in executive session.
7. All school district boards of trustees should have fiscal autonomy.
8. When a district is rated Unsatisfactory,
 - The board of trustees and the superintendent should engage in a training program to focus on roles and actions in support of increases in student achievement. Should the working relationship between the board of trustees and the superintendent dissolve to the extent that the board is considering dismissal of the superintendent, the matter should be referred to the State Board of Education. The SBE should be provided authority to serve as an arbitrator for personnel matters between a local board and a superintendent; and
 - The school district boards shall appoint at least two non-voting board members from a pool nominated by the EOC to protect the State's interests in districts that are rated unsatisfactory. These appointed members should have demonstrated knowledge and commitment to high levels of achievement and bring public service experience to the Board. These members serve in a non-voting capacity. The EOC role should be expanded to include recruitment and training of individuals to serve as appointed board members to districts rated unsatisfactory.
9. South Carolina should provide support to those school board-superintendent teams who wish to explore a system of policy governance. The General Assembly should provide \$100,000 annually for two years to fund a pilot program in several districts to determine the impact of using this model. The pilot program should have an evaluation

component to ensure that the model is measured and that all districts learn from the model.

Recommendations on non-district level Governance Level

10. The Office of the State Superintendent should be restructured to provide that the Superintendent is the Secretary to the State Board only. The statutes should be amended to establish a Secretary of Education as a member of the Governor's Cabinet, appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. Program leadership and administrative responsibilities currently assigned to the State Superintendent should be assigned to the Secretary of Education. The Secretary should serve on designated boards and commissions instead of the Superintendent.
11. The members of the SBE should meet minimum qualifications to include experience in governance and commitment to strong public schools.
12. County boards of education (other than county-wide districts) should be eliminated and their responsibilities placed with local district boards of trustees.
13. All legislation pending before the General Assembly should include a fiscal impact statement that details the potential impact on local revenue sources generally and specifically on school districts.

Recommendations for additional opportunities

14. There should be a study of the school district organization to determine the optimum enrollment to realize fiscal economies of scale and high levels of student achievement.

Acknowledgements

The study team appreciates the EOC's vision and leadership, which has provided us with an opportunity to shape a critical success factor in our state's educational reform agenda. Certainly we value the many outside experts who provided input and insight, as well as their strong encouragement to the group. We acknowledge the passion and skills of those involved in our state education system. This report is about the governance system and is certainly not intended to cast any negative shadow on those who work within it; to the contrary, we hope they view it as a positive change for them, our children and our State. We are confident that these recommendations are in direct support of the EOC goal of having South Carolina's student achievement ranked in the top half of the states nationally by 2010.

THE STUDY TEAM MEMBERS

The Study Team on Local Leadership Quality and Engagement was appointed by the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee in late 1999. Members of the team included the following:

Don Herriott, Chairman of the Study Team and Chief Executive Officer of Roche Carolina, Florence

Dr. David Barr, retired Vice-President, Florence-Darlington Technical College, Florence

Dr. Evelyn Berry, Executive Director of the SC School Boards Association, Columbia

Christa Compton, English Teacher at Richland Northeast High School and 2001 South Carolina Teacher of the Year, Lexington

Herman Gaither, Superintendent, Beaufort County Schools, Beaufort

The Honorable Paul Livingston, member, Richland County Council and former chairman of a local school board, Columbia

Dr. Louis Lynn, President of Enviro AgScience, Inc., Columbia

Dr. Ron McWhirt, Superintendent, Charleston County Schools, Charleston

Darryl F. Owings, Principal, Dorman High School, Spartanburg

Dr. Gerrita Postlewait, Superintendent, Horry County Schools, Conway

William Schenck, (at the time of the study) Chief Executive Officer, Fleet Mortgage Group, Columbia

Anne Suite, Administrative Officer and principal of a small business in Fort Mill, a former local school board member and past president of the SC School Boards Association, Fort Mill

Reed Swann, retired teacher, principal, and board member with over 40 years of service to public education, Treasurer of the SC School Board Association, Barnwell

and Dr. Jo Anne Anderson, EOC support to the Study Team

INTRODUCTION

The members of the study team were given the charge detailed below by the EOC Chairman, William Barnet.

Study Team on Local Leadership Quality and Engagement

The South Carolina Education Oversight Committee is charged with responsibilities to monitor and evaluate the functioning of the public education system and to make recommendations so that the system can be more effective and competitive. In collaboration with the Governor, the State Superintendent and other state and community leaders, the SC Education Oversight Committee, established the following goal to guide its work:

By 2010, South Carolina's student achievement will be ranked in the top half of states nationally. To achieve this goal, we must become one of the five fastest improving systems in the country.

Among the objectives by which the EOC intends to accomplish the goal is that the EOC would "serve as a catalyst and form study teams on a) improving local leadership quality and engagement and b) the utilization of resources, specifically the utilization of educators, facilities and time to meet the 2010 goal."

Therefore, the Education Oversight Committee has formed a study team on local leadership quality and engagement to examine the authority, structure and functioning of educational leadership in South Carolina and to make recommendations for changes that lead to effective systems yielding significantly higher school results. The examination should encompass interactions among governing bodies or entities, fiscal and programmatic authority, the impact of structure and size on fiscal capacity, qualifications and methods of selection of individuals serving in governance roles, and the relationships among governing bodies to include the district board of trustees and the district superintendent.

The expected outcome of the study group is a report containing the following:

- ❑ Specific recommendations for local leadership improvements;
- ❑ Rationale and alternative analysis of recommendations;
- ❑ Identification of systemic issues, opportunities and general recommendations in other governance areas;
- ❑ Brief analysis of implementation challenges and requirements;
- ❑ Appendices that provide detailed backup data/worksheets, important and representative publications, study approach and methodology and list of references (interviews, research and publications).

The Education Oversight Committee anticipates receiving a report with recommendations from the Study Team by October 15, 2000.

Between January and October 2000 the team met and studied the current South Carolina educational governance structure and those of other states. A panel of national leaders in educational governance was convened to supplement the reading and study of the team.

These leaders shared models that are under study or considered effective in other states. Also, several SC experts in governance provided information and insights to the study group. The report and recommendations of the study team follow. These recommendations are offered with the unanimous approval of study team members. Their adoption by the EOC and the General Assembly is urged.

THE CHANGE IMPERATIVE

South Carolina must alter radically the results of its educational system. To do less is to *fail our children*. Historic undereducation has created a state with depressing levels of student performance and adult opportunity and has left the state with a declining corporate presence.

Workforce Concerns

South Carolina is at the verge of becoming a “branch office” state, reactive to priorities and decisions made in corporate offices located in other states. Without a vital economy that can sustain itself through expected economic swings, South Carolina’s citizens are unable to achieve their economic, civic and social potential.

“With nationwide unemployment approaching 4 percent, the US labor market is tight. On top of that, with smaller family sizes, fewer people will be entering the workforce in the future. And, as the baby boomers slide nearer retirement, the average age of an American worker is now over 40. All of this portends a labor market that will drive businesses in ways heretofore unimagined. More than ever before, business location decisions will be driven by the quality and availability of workers, and the winners in this new paradigm will be those communities which are producing the best and brightest workers” (Expansion Management Magazine, 1999).

In research for the South Carolina Department of Commerce (1999), Ross Boyle found wide differences in the intra-state economic vitality. The I-85 corridor is the most vital, yet continuing to be dependent upon manufacturing as its base (textiles and automotive-related firms). The coastal regions of South Carolina appear to be quite prosperous because of the visible tourism industry; however, deeper analyses of tourism-related businesses indicate that the jobs are mostly low-wage and unskilled. Boyle’s work indicates the following:

- The SC per capita income is 23 percent below the national average; statewide, 19 percent of income is derived from transfer payments (e.g., social security, family support);
- The largest job gains are in service areas (i.e., temporary help, trucking and warehousing, and tourism);
- Rural unemployment is twice as high as urban (5.5 percent to 2.7 percent); the per capita income is 17 percent lower in rural SC and, as much as 23 percent of rural income is from transfer payments;
- 70 percent of SC residents live in metropolitan communities, but only 63 percent of public school students live in those communities (This suggests that a disproportionately larger share of children are growing up in the poorer, less educated regions of South Carolina); and
- In SC, 7.9 percent of individuals are in jobs that require more education than they possess; in rural SC, 14.5 percent are in jobs that require more education than they possess.

Unfortunately, some of these rural economies are not sharing in SC’s current good times and as the economy slows, individuals in jobs for which they are educated minimally or who do not have skills that transfer easily to other work are often the first to be laid off. A quick review of the unemployment statistics by county demonstrate the risk that rural counties face (see Appendix C).

Student Performance

The relationship between living in an economically disadvantaged community and receiving a quality education has been documented in work conducted by the SC Education Oversight Committee (EOC). Although there is a strong association between student poverty and school performance, the EOC studies document that the association is linked because students from poverty receive a substantially different education than children from economically advantaged homes. Schools with large populations of economically disadvantaged students are significantly more likely to have teachers with a bachelor’s degree only, fewer years of experience and higher absentee rates. The teachers are more likely to be on annual contracts and to have been working in a particular school for a short time period only. The students are not exposed to the full range of the curriculum (i.e., fewer students are in the advanced curriculum and often a larger percentage of students are classified as disabled).

In South Carolina, the distinction between racial groups and poverty status is often blurred. The economically disadvantaged student group (identified by a composite of Medicaid eligibility and free/reduced price lunch program participation) includes an over-representation of African-American students and the African-American students perform at lower levels on state assessments than do their peers in other racial/ethnic groups. The performance difference is often ascribed to the impact of poverty; however, further examination of the SC 1999 Palmetto Achievement Challenge Tests (PACT) scores reveals shocking disparities in student achievement between racial groups within the same economic status. The table below shows those data. Note the difference, by English/language arts and mathematics of students with the same economic status, but different racial/ethnic group membership.

**Percent Scoring in Each Score Category
By Race and Lunch Status
Grade 3-8 PACT 1999
English/Language Arts**

Race	Lunch Status	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced
White n=33154	Free	41.2	42.0	15.7	1.0
Black n=83370	Free	59.0	33.4	7.3	0.3
White n=11850	Reduced	30.7	45.1	22.4	1.8
Black n=11346	Reduced	43.1	42.7	13.5	0.6
White n=121879	No support	16.7	39.6	37.4	6.3
Black n=26030	No Support	36.3	43.4	18.9	1.5

**Percent Scoring in Each Score Category
By Race and Lunch Status
Grade 3-8 PACT 1999
Mathematics**

Race	Lunch Status	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced
White n=33186	Free	52.2	39.1	7.1	1.7
Black n=83540	Free	71.9	25.2	2.6	0.4
White n=11856	Reduced	41.5	44.3	11.3	3.0
Black n=11371	Reduced	59.2	34.9	5.0	0.9
White n=121764	No support	25.2	46.1	19.6	9.1
Black n=25968	No Support	52.1	38.4	7.5	1.9

Performance on PACT tests by all students falls well below the performance target for the state. The table below shows the percentage of students at each tested grade level scoring Below Basic, Basic, Proficient and Advanced. The State Board of Education has established Proficient as the level of performance indicating students are prepared to go to the next grade.

Student Performance on 1999 PACT
 Percentage of students scoring at each level
 (Note: Proficient is the target level of performance)

Grade	English/Language Arts				Math			
	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced
3	35	37	26	3	44	38	13	5
4	35	37	26	2	45	37	13	5
5	35	39	24	2	47	37	12	4
6	37	39	21	3	47	37	11	5
7	37	39	21	3	48	36	11	5
8	38	41	19	3	49	36	10	5

When student performance on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) is examined, there has been little encouragement until 2000. But SC remains at the lowest ends of performance comparisons. Not only do South Carolina students perform less well than their peers in other states, state performance is ranked near the bottom among SAT-testing states and even our best students do not do as well as their peers nationally. (South Carolina Department of Education, 1998 and 2000).

South Carolina is experiencing an educational crisis----and the crisis impacts more upon African American children than on any other group (even when students of similar economic status are compared.) Without changing achievement in school, South Carolina is doomed to another generation of low performance and economic struggle. The state is in danger of permanently impairing its citizenry.

Governance Reform

"Good governance does not guarantee success but bad governance goes a long way to block success" is a quote attributed to longtime management leader Pete Drucker. South Carolina's education governance structures are rooted in the needs of the state fifty years ago. A system focused on the future acknowledges the need for strong results but flexible strategies to achieve those results. This report does not support unchecked administrative license, but it sees little justification for rigid structures, parochial views and inconsistent visions.

A REVIEW OF GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

South Carolina school districts are subject to several layers of governance. All school districts are subject to the authority of the state and the federal government; however, there is considerable variation in the roles of county governing bodies and/or legislative delegations with respect to school districts.

Differing structures and purposes accompany each layer of governance. Although each layer of governance and/or funding intends to promote and strengthen the educational system, school districts frequently suffer under the challenges of implementing programs serving multiple agendas.

Inconsistent Fiscal Authority

South Carolina school districts are funded through per pupil and categorical allocations dispersed from federal, state and local revenue sources. The interaction among state and local revenue sources, the authority to establish and utilize revenue sources and the lines of authority and accountability for the utilization of revenue are often inconsistent.

State revenues for education are allocated from the state's general fund, the Education Improvement Act special fund, the trust fund receiving revenues from the Barnwell facility, and the sale of bonds for school construction. Both the Barnwell Trust Fund and the bond sales are used for capital needs, not recurring programming needs. Therefore, state revenues for education rely upon dedicated revenues (e.g., the sales tax, soft drinks tax, etc.) and other general fund revenues.

The majority of state funds for education are distributed through the Education Finance Act (EFA). EFA funds are distributed through a formula that considers the value of property in a school district in proportion to the value of property statewide, the cost of educating different categories of students, and an annual inflation factor. Although funds are distributed on a 70-30-percentage division statewide, there is variation in the percentage of state EFA funds a district receives. One district does not receive any allocation; other districts receive in excess of 95 percent of their funding from the state. The second principle vehicle for the distribution of funds is the Education Improvement Act (EIA) which allocates funds for nearly 80 programs and uses per pupil allocations as the methodology. Finally, there are smaller General Fund programs that distribute funds to school districts, again, using per pupil or per district allocation methodologies.

Local districts bear the other costs of education and, consistent with the accreditation provisions of the Education Finance Act and the accountability provisions of the Education Accountability Act (EAA), are responsible for the quality of the education program. Although it has never been exercised, districts losing accreditation through the State Department of Education could lose EFA funding. Revisions to the state accreditation criteria are to incorporate the school and district-rating system provided for in the EAA. When districts fail to maintain the local effort as required by the EIA, then EIA funds are in jeopardy of being withheld.

School districts draw upon property taxes for local revenues. Currently, twenty-two of the eighty-six school districts have total independence in fiscal matters. Thirty-one districts have limited authority; that is, the districts may raise millage rates with approval of a county council,

legislative delegation or referendum; six districts operate within a statutory cap on millage. Twenty-seven districts have no fiscal authority. The legislative delegation bears that authority in three districts; county council has that authority in twenty districts; and four districts must set the millage through approval granted at a town meeting. Districts without fiscal autonomy are unable to plan beyond the current operational year; without long-term control of resources, boards of trustees and administrators cannot implement the changes necessary to alter performance.

An examination of fourteen years of actions on millage rates suggests that millage rates in fiscally autonomous school districts have risen less and at a slower pace than millage rates in schools districts with limited, capped or no autonomy. Districts with millage caps experience erosion of base funding over time when the value of the mill does not keep pace either with inflation or with state requirements for matched costs. Districts with millage caps tend to budget to the cap each year; districts that must appeal to another body frequently ask for higher millage because they anticipate not receiving their full request. Despite the potential for a penalty upon districts that fail to maintain the EIA-required local effort, no district that has failed to maintain local effort has been penalized. Repeatedly, the State Board of Education has waived the requirement. Despite laudatory efforts to equalize funding among some school districts in multi-county districts, these systems may be vulnerable to continuing differences in quality, if not in per pupil revenues. Too often districts have continued to operate, but at a lower level of quality, thereby compromising the futures of the very students they serve.

Despite extraordinary responsibility for the achievement of high levels of education results for young people, school district boards of trustees are caught in a labyrinth of funding restrictions. Working within a matrix of state requirements for programs and matched funds, districts find themselves not only without authority to draw upon the local revenue base, but also without knowledge of the totality of the revenue base. Economic incentives to attract business and industry to communities often restrict the taxes imposed on new businesses and industries and/or recover the county or municipal infrastructure costs. Education, perhaps one of the more costly infrastructures, often is excluded from the negotiations or recovery of costs. Quite simply, new jobs either for construction or management of business facilities result in greater numbers of students for the local districts. These students require school facilities, teachers, instructional materials, etc. Yet school districts are the last to receive the revenue benefit.

The size of a school district impacts upon its ability to support and provide the infrastructure for strong schools. Planning and reporting are extraordinarily cumbersome in small districts. Allocation systems based on pupil counts and program requirements that remain constant regardless of district size reduce the efficiency and efficacy of efforts.

The alignment of responsibility, authority and accountability often is compromised. Without clear direction, school districts and those who work with and for them are vulnerable to the weaknesses of scattered efforts. With these concerns in mind, the Subcommittee examined the roles of the Governor, the State Superintendent of Education, the State Board of Education, county and district boards and the superintendent.

The Role of the Governor

South Carolina's governor is the chief executive of the state and bears the general responsibility for the operation of state government and the circumstances under which South Carolinians live. The Governor appoints the heads of state agencies and, to a limited extent, operates a Cabinet style of government. [Note: At this time the Department of Education is not formally within the Governor's Cabinet.] The Governor initiates the budget process with the development of an Executive Budget that is forwarded to the General Assembly for consideration. The Executive Budget presents the Governor's agenda for the state and, because it must be balanced against revenues, outlines his priorities. The principal role of the Governor in the improvement of the state's education system is persuasive in nature; that is, promoting an agenda through public attention and priority status in the budget, advocating key legislation, and aligning other government resources toward that agenda.

The Governor neither nominates nor appoints the State Superintendent. Each is an elected constitutional officer, serving terms of four years. The Governor does appoint one member of the State Board of Education and serves on the Education Oversight Committee (or appoints a designee to serve coterminous). The Governor also appoints business and education representatives to the Education Oversight Committee.

The Role of the State Superintendent

The State Superintendent is a constitutional officer with duties prescribed by the General Assembly. The seven general responsibilities are stated below:

1. Serve as secretary and administrative officer to the State Board of Education;
2. Have general supervision over and management of all public school funds provided by the State and Federal governments;
3. Organize, staff and administer a State Department of Education, which shall include such division and departments as are necessary to render the maximum service to public education in the state;
4. Keep the public informed as to the problems and needs of the public schools by constant contact with all school administrators and teachers, by his personal appearances at public gatherings and by information furnished to the various news media of the State;
5. Have printed and distributed such bulletins, manuals, and circulars as he may deem necessary for the professional improvement of teachers and for the cultivation of public sentiment for public education, and have printed all forms necessary and prepare for the administration of the State Department of Education;
6. Administer, through the State Department of Education, all policies and procedures adopted by the State Board of Education;
7. Assume such other responsibilities and perform such other duties as may be prescribed by law or as may be assigned by the State Board of Education.

South Carolina is one of nine states that elects the chief state school officer in a partisan election. Six states conduct non-partisan elections; 9 chief state school officers are appointed by the Governor, and twenty-six superintendents are appointed by the State Board of Education.

The State Superintendent serves as a leader in a profession that is increasing both its technical and political dimensions. The differing dimensions create multiple and differing demands upon the position.

The Role of the State Board of Education

The State Board of Education is composed of seventeen members, sixteen appointed by the legislative delegations representing the judicial circuits and one appointed by the Governor. The appointment rotates among the counties within each judicial circuit. The only requirement for membership on the State Board of Education is that the individual be a registered elector of the State. The State Board of Education has numerous general and specific responsibilities assigned by the General Assembly. The general duties include the following:

1. Adopt policies, rules and regulations not inconsistent with the laws of the State for its own government and for the government of the free public schools.
2. Annually approve budget requests for the institutions, agencies and services under the control of the Board as prepared by the State Superintendent of Education prior to being submitted to the Budget and Control Board and to the General Assembly.
3. Adopt minimum standards for any phase of education as are considered necessary to aid in providing adequate educational opportunities and facilities.
4. Prescribe and enforce rules for the examination and certification for teachers.
5. Grant State teachers' certificates and revoke them for immoral or unprofessional conduct, or evident unfitness for teaching.
6. Prescribe and enforce courses of study for the free public schools.
7. Prescribe and enforce the use of textbooks and other instructional materials for the various subjects taught or used in conjunction within the free public schools of the State, both high schools and elementary schools in accordance with the courses of study as prepared and promulgated by the Board.
8. Appoint such committees and such members of committees as may be required or as may be desirable to carry out the orderly function of the Board.
9. Cooperate fully with the State Superintendent at all times to the end that the State system of public education may be constantly improved.
10. Assume such other responsibilities and exercise such other powers and perform such other duties as may be assigned to it by law or as it may find necessary to aid in carrying out the purpose and objectives of the Constitution of the State.

The authority of the State Board of Education is exercised generally through the regulatory process. Proposed regulations are established in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act, which requires that regulations be (1) approved, (2) disapproved or (3) lapsed into effect with no action by the General Assembly. The State Board of Education fulfills a critical role in ensuring that the public has the opportunity to be heard on the implementation of educational programs and policies. The Board does find itself vulnerable to potential conflicts with other governing entities. For example, although the State Superintendent is required by law to perform duties assigned by the Board, the Board does not have authority to appoint or remove the Superintendent. While the Board is responsible for the regulation of the educational system, it does not have final approval of the regulations, nor appropriates the resources, nor employs the individuals primarily responsible for carrying out the prescribed actions.

Neither the State Superintendent of Education nor the State Board of Education has the authority to remove a member of a district board of trustees; only the Governor has the authority to remove an official from office.

The State Board of Education (SBE) approves improvement plans and authorizes intervention support to schools and districts with unsatisfactory performance. Yet the SBE does not have

authority to ensure that the local board of trustees and/or the district administration commit to substantive change. Substantive change requires commitment to stay the course of change over time and often within an atmosphere of questions and intra-district organizational politics. Superintendents implementing change strategies often find themselves working in a tempestuous environment with little employment protection. Currently the SBE does not have authority to support intervention strategies by protecting consistent leadership. There may, in fact, be the need to extend the authority of the SBE to serve as an arbitrator between boards and superintendents to sustain leadership over time in districts and schools moving from unsatisfactory to acceptable performance levels.

The Role of the Education Oversight Committee

The Education Oversight Committee (EOC) bears responsibilities related to the state's accountability system but also to the effectiveness of public education. An entity of the General Assembly composed of eighteen individuals representing the education, business and political community, the EOC is required to accomplish the following:

1. Review and monitor the implementation and evaluation of the Education Accountability Act and the Education Improvement Act programs and funding;
2. Make programmatic and funding recommendations to the General Assembly;
3. Report annually to the General Assembly, State Board of Education, and the public on the progress of the programs;
4. Recommend Education Accountability Act and EIA program changes to state agencies and other entities as it considers necessary. The EOC serves as an evaluator of strategies not an implementation body.

The Role of Local Boards of Trustees

The roles and responsibilities of school boards in South Carolina are in large part determined by a statutory scheme, which evolved during the first half of the twentieth century. In 1950 South Carolina had in excess of 1500 school districts; many districts had only one or two schools and were governed by small boards of trustees. Some districts had as few as three trustees. The trustees normally lived in the school community, where they knew many of the students and their families.

The consolidation efforts strongly encouraged by the administration of Governor Jimmy Byrnes (1950-55) came about in order to address, in practical terms, the enormous task of providing new school facilities and, at the same time, attempting to bridge the gap between the deplorable condition of the State's segregated black schools and their white counterparts. This mid-century school district consolidation effort resulted in the reduction in the number of districts from in excess of 1,500 to 92 districts for the State's 46 counties. South Carolina has 86 school districts as a result of a recent consolidation in Orangeburg County.

In a number of instances, county boards were simply merged with the remaining school districts, and the popularly elected county superintendents eliminated and replaced by superintendents selected by the local school boards. These new consolidated boards were given the same plenary powers, as outlined in §59-19-90, to hire employees, provide facilities, establish curriculum, define discipline, and educate students as their predecessors—the smaller district boards.

During the second half of the twentieth century, most education reform in South Carolina was initiated at the state level through legislation, along with the numerous rules and regulations adopted by the State Board of Education, to organize schools' instructional programs, establish minimal standards, and impose regulations considered necessary or desirable for modern education. Local school boards had little role in this process. Today, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, South Carolina school boards operate educational programs which are subject to extensive rules and regulations promulgated by the State Board of Education and approved by the General Assembly. In other words, the model has become overburdened with compliance with minimal focus on results.

Since the passage of the Education Accountability Act of 1998, the focus on standards and educational outcomes has brought attention to local school operations and governance issues. The urge to reform operations has not been as strong as the urge to raise expectations for immediate and constantly improving results, leaving local authorities to do a modern job with the tools of yesteryear. A local school board's roles, duties and responsibilities must be compatible with, and adequate to, the tasks and accomplishments expected by the General Assembly. An alignment of the expectations placed upon public schools and an assessment of the tools necessary to meet accountability expectations appears necessary.

In the last twenty years, increasingly rigorous graduation requirements and student learning standards have turned the accountability spotlight to the school board. The school board must assure a systemwide culture in which excellent teaching and successful learning can take place. This means reporting to the community how students are doing and what actions are addressing perceived deficiencies. This is a new role for school boards because in the past boards have not been encouraged to play an active role in raising student achievement. Today the public sees the board as its representative and expects that the board will make wise choices focused on having all children achieve at higher levels.

There have been numerous attempts to improve public education during the last twenty-five years. But one important dimension has largely been overlooked: school district leadership, governance and teamwork between them.

Strong, collaborative leadership by local school boards and school superintendents is a key cornerstone of the foundation for high student achievement. This leadership is essential to forming a community vision for children, crafting long-range goals, developing plans for raising the achievement of every child, improving the professional development and status of teachers and other staff and ensuring that the guidance, support and resources needed for success are available.

If South Carolina is serious about improving student achievement and maximizing the development of all its children, then local school board members must work cooperatively and collaboratively to mobilize their communities to get the job done. Over the span of a year, the 646 school board members in South Carolina direct expenditures in the eighty-six school districts of some \$4.8 billion. They oversee a body of teachers and administrative staff numbering 53,380. These operations are carried on for one purpose: to educate the state's 669,342 students. The work of the board is done in a public setting which often attracts critics, pressure groups, and, of course, the media.

With more and more demands at the local and state level for accountability, closer scrutiny is given to the qualifications for and training of local school board members. After a review of requirements in the nation, common eligibility requirements emerged. Candidates must be 18 years of age (Kentucky and Missouri have a 24-year age requirement); they must be a resident of the district they represent (with varying time lengths); and they must be a registered voter. Most states do not have education requirements; however, Kentucky, Oklahoma, West Virginia; and Tennessee require a high school diploma or a GED. This requirement is under consideration in several other states. Careful consideration must be made to determine whether an education requirement could stand a legal test. According to *Lee v. Clark* 224S.c.138.77S.#2d48591953, "A state is clearly vested with the power, derived from the tenth amendment of the United States Constitution, to prescribe reasonable qualifications of candidates for or holders of public office, including members of an education governing board. In establishing those qualifications, however, a state legislature may not arbitrarily deny any citizen or group of citizens an opportunity to qualify for board membership." At least 30 percent of adults in South Carolina have less than a high school diploma.

Several states have laws that call for mandated training of school board members. These states include Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and South Carolina. Development for board members usually consists of orientation for new board members and continuing education programs/requirements for veterans. Courses generally place an emphasis on state codes of laws, strategic planning, school finance, conflict resolution, board duties and responsibilities. The number of hours for orientation programs ranges from six to sixteen and for continuing education for veteran board members (usually an annual requirement), the range is six to twelve hours. Currently South Carolina requires training for members newly elected or appointed after July 1, 1997.

Too often the line between governance and administration becomes blurred when school board members try to manage the day-to-day operations of a local district. The nature of such involvement usually impedes the superintendent's capacity to act in ways he or she deems appropriate to achieve the district's goals. However well intentioned this involvement might be, school board members find themselves in the minutiae of operational issues rather than focusing on a long-range vision that represents the will of the local community for its students. The respective roles of these parties must be clarified in order to empower the superintendent to achieve the results specified by the board, as long as s/he acts within appropriate parameters as defined by law and the trustees.

OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

South Carolina's educational needs go beyond the purview of one agency or division of state government. The current structure fails to acknowledge the complexity and relationship of factors outside the control of the classroom, school, district or the state education agency to the success of educational programs and services.

The Governor does not have authority over the public education system unlike the health, human service, transportation and other agencies of the State. However, the Governor does have responsibility for the general conditions and circumstances of the state that relies upon the strength of the educational system.

The focus of the State Superintendent and/or the State Board of Education on teaching and learning issues is appropriate. But the purview of the State Superintendent and/or the State Board of Education is narrower than the crisis facing South Carolina.

There is no line of accountability for the State Superintendent of Education, other than directly to the voters, and the issues which compel voters may not be related to the quality of agency administration or the provision of technical services.

The complex issues surrounding community resources, educational practices, and student achievement go beyond the role of any one governing agency.

Although legislative delegations, county councils, and county boards exercise authority over certain school districts, they bear neither responsibility nor accountability for school results. The system of education is not governed in a systematic fashion. Rather than having consistent responsibilities and authority, school districts are loosely aligned with one another within the boundaries of law and/or regulation with no dominant pattern.

The current intervention approaches do not include changes in the composition or training of school board members of underperforming districts.

The alignment within the state is inconsistent at best. Authority should be commensurate with responsibility and accountability.

IMPLICATIONS

Systemic flaws in the governance structure, from the state level to the local school district, preclude improvements in the entire system. If we take bold steps now, we can create change in the system. But we cannot wait. Not only will we fail to achieve the 2010 goal, another generation of talent will be lost.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In order to meet the challenges that local districts face in this era of accountability, state laws must be updated to codify the respective roles of superintendents and school boards. The current powers and duties of the school board as outlined in §59-19-90 and other statutes should conform to the duties outlined below:
 - Responsibilities of the school board: Select, work with and evaluate the superintendent; adopt "students first" goals, policies, and budgets; delegate to the superintendent the day-to-day administration of the school district, including student discipline and personnel matters; and evaluate their own leadership, governance and teamwork on behalf of children.
 - Responsibilities of the superintendent: Serve as the chief executive officer to the school board, including recommending all policies and the annual budget; support the school board by providing good information for decision-making; provide continuous leadership to ensure that the board policies and responsibilities of the board-superintendent team are addressed each day; oversee the educational program (curriculum, instruction, co-curricula, instructional materials, etc.); serve as the final authority for the hiring, assignment and dismissal of all employees.
 - Responsibilities of the board-superintendent team: Create teamwork and advocacy for the high achievement and healthy development of all children in the community; provide educational leadership for the community, including the development and implementation of a long-range plan, in close collaboration with principals, teachers, other staff and parents; create strong linkages with social service, health and other community organizations and agencies to support the healthy development and high achievement of all children; set districtwide policies and annual goals and long range plan for education; approve an annual school district budget; ensure the safety and adequacy of all school facilities; provide resources for the professional development of teachers, principals and other staff; and periodically evaluate its own leadership, governance and teamwork for children.

[NOTE: The realignment of responsibilities noted here are drawn from Thinking Differently: Recommendations for 21st Century School Board/Superintendent Leadership, Governance and Teamwork for High Student Achievement by Richard Goodman and William G. Zimmerman, Jr.]
2. All school districts should have boards of trustees that are elected.
3. All future candidates filing to run for a school board must possess a high school diploma or a GED in addition to satisfying other statutory requirements.
4. The state should collect information indicating the participation of new board members in the required orientation and impose a statutory penalty on members not attending the orientation.
5. Continuous education is critical if board members are to be able to keep abreast of ever-changing requirements facing their governance role. Each school board member should complete a minimum of six hours training per year, a portion of which must focus on fiscal matters. Funding for this requirement must be provided by the state.

6. School boards are required to go through a board assessment every two years and the Freedom of Information Act should be amended to allow the evaluation to be held in executive session.
7. All school district boards of trustees should have fiscal autonomy.
8. When a district is rated Unsatisfactory,
 - The board of trustees and the superintendent should engage in a training program to focus on roles and actions in support of increases in student achievement. Should the working relationship between the board of trustees and the superintendent dissolve to the extent that the board is considering dismissal of the superintendent, the matter should be referred to the State Board of Education. The SBE should be provided authority to serve as an arbitrator for personnel matters between a local board and a superintendent; and
 - The school district boards shall appoint at least two non-voting board members from a pool nominated by the EOC to protect the State's interests in districts that are rated unsatisfactory. These appointed members should have demonstrated knowledge and commitment to high levels of achievement and bring public service experience to the Board. These members serve in a non-voting capacity. The EOC role should be expanded to include recruitment and training of individuals to serve as appointed board members to districts rated unsatisfactory.
9. South Carolina should provide support to those school board-superintendent teams who wish to explore a system of policy governance. The General Assembly should provide \$100,000 annually for two years to fund a pilot program in several districts to determine the impact of using this model. The pilot program should have an evaluation component to ensure that the model is measured and that all districts learn from the model.
10. The Office of the State Superintendent should be restructured to provide that the Superintendent is the Secretary to the State Board only. The statutes should be amended to establish a Secretary of Education as a member of the Governor's Cabinet, appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. Program leadership and administrative responsibilities currently assigned to the State Superintendent should be assigned to the Secretary of Education. The Secretary should serve on designated boards and commissions instead of the Superintendent.
11. The members of the SBE should meet minimum qualifications to include experience in governance and commitment to strong public schools.
12. County boards of education (other than county-wide districts) should be eliminated and their responsibilities placed with local district boards of trustees.
13. All legislation pending before the General Assembly should include a fiscal impact statement that details the potential impact on local revenue sources generally and specifically on school districts.
14. There should be a study of the school district organization to determine the optimum enrollment to realize fiscal economies of scale and high levels of student achievement.

IMPLEMENTATION

The schedule for implementation provides the following:

2001

- The General Assembly adopts legislation codifying the respective roles of superintendents and school boards in accordance with Recommendation One;
- The General Assembly adopts legislation establishing the Office of the Secretary of Education and restructuring the duties of the State Superintendent, beginning in January 2003;
- The General Assembly adopts legislation establishing more detailed qualifications for membership on the State Board of Education;
- The General Assembly adopts legislation confirming the new relationship of the SBE, the Secretary of Education and the Governor;
- The General Assembly adopts legislation to require nonpartisan election of all school boards;
- The General Assembly adopts legislation requiring all school board members to possess a high school diploma or a GED in addition to satisfying all other requirements;
- The General Assembly should eliminate all county boards of education;
- The General Assembly provides for significant training for district board members to include long-range planning and fiscal management and imposes a penalty for non-participation;
- The General Assembly adopts a plan for implementation of fiscal autonomy in all school districts;
- The General Assembly should grant the SBE authority to serve as arbitrator in disputes between the superintendent of a district rated unsatisfactory and the local board;
- The General Assembly should grant the EOC authority to identify, train and nominate additional qualified individuals to serve as members of boards in districts rated unsatisfactory; and
- The General Assembly adopts the requirement for a fiscal impact statement. All legislation pending before the General Assembly should include a fiscal impact statement that details the potential impact on local revenue sources generally and specifically on school districts.

2002

- With the structuring of intra-district representation, the General Assembly establishes a pattern for election of school district board members and submits plan to Department of Justice, with full implementation upon approval of the Department of Justice;
- Funding should be provided for a study of optimum district size; and
- Funding should be provided for a pilot of policy governance.

2003

- School boards must begin board assessment within revisions of the Freedom of Information Act; and
- Funding should be provided for a pilot of policy governance.

Appendices

Appendix A: Bibliography

Appendix B: Distinguished Panel Members

Appendix C: Unemployment Rates Ranked by County

Appendix D: Fiscal Authority of SC School Districts

Appendix E: Five Year Comparison of SC School Districts with Varying Degrees of Fiscal Authority