



Attendees: Newt Thomas, Judy Sjostedt, Pat Getty, Mike Keener, Jorea Marple, Charles McElwee, Matt Tyree, Karen Price, Pat Kusimo, Bob Dunkerley, Justin Reber

I. Introductions

Committee Co-Chair Newton Thomas welcomed those in attendance and explained that the intent of the meeting is to define a role for Vision Shared in improving West Virginia's Education System that would also translate into the achievement of the committee's goal of West Virginia leading the nation in reading and math scores for grade four and eight students.

II. Progress & Pressing Issues

Review: Governor's Education Audit

Mr. Thomas introduced Dr. Jorea Marple who offered her thoughts on the purpose of public education. Dr. Marple explained some primary purposes of education are:

- Economic – preparing children to be adaptive and innovative in a public setting
- Culture – helping students understand the world in which they live and the value and how to understand diverse cultures

Dr. Marple continued by explaining that we must teach children what they need to know, hold high behavioral expectations of students and send a message that it isn't simply the school that is responsible for behavior which translate into community and workplace behaviors. She noted a number of initiatives currently underway to get to a point of personalization and targeting the improvement of the individual. Raising standards, changing assessments and making the experience more relevant for students is a priority, Dr. Marple explained.

Dr. Marple noted also that another priority to communicate the importance of attendance. Linkage has been established with the judicial system she explained, to enforce attendance policies. Further, she explained that flexibility is needed to help teacher/schools meet the needs of students. She touched the need to review requirements for graduation that would enable some students to pursue vocational programming while in high school and provided additional statistics regarding some of the state's positive educational positions.

Dr. Marple discussed legislative priorities including OPEB; programming she explained is being cut in order to pay the OPEB dept. The second issue, she said, is teacher salaries. Dr. Marple explained that in the next five years, as many as half the teachers in the state will be eligible for retirement and that each day a number of waivers are signed to grant teacher certifications for

those that do not meet requirements. She said that if key stakeholders don't come together for a plan, there is no opportunity to improve.

Dr. Marple explained that technology is the great educational equalizer. She explained that despite the technology available our students don't have access in schools. Improved technology would provide the opportunity to quickly measure test scores and performance, deliver online course work, and level the playing field for West Virginia students. The proposal presented to the legislature was that for \$22 million annually, provides 1:1 technology for six grades over for years. She explained that it has to occur for West Virginia to become competitive.

Dr. Marple concluded by discussing the Governor's Education Audit. Many of the findings she noted reinforce the direction the State School Board has already adopted. She further explained her hope that the audit does not serve to halt progress by overwhelming the system with change. She explained that the report needs to be filtered carefully and the information reviewed for accuracy.

Mr. Thomas cited the overwhelming nature of the flow of information and negative performance of West Virginia children. He explained that despite the money that continues to go into the system, no improvement is evident. Dr. Marple responded by explaining that West Virginia is a state of high risk factors - for example, in one year the poverty rate for children increased by five percent. In this instance she noted a support system is needed for children in poverty. Teen pregnancy numbers and other risk factors impede the State's ability to make improvement.

Discussion ensued regarding the past flawed practices of measurement. The assessment practices for measuring proficiency, said Dr. Marple, are changing. Reading she noted is an example of a fundamental building block for education that children aren't grasping as they once did. This is due in part she explained, to the fact that adults reading as a model for children as they once did.

A question was posed regarding the overall health of children, in citing the lack of physical education and fitness as a negative impact on strong mental capability. Dr. Marple explained that eight counties are piloting programs to retrain cooks to prepare meals from scratch and feed all without cost. Further, meal time is being restructured to encourage positive interactions at meal time and to value the food consumed.

Judy Sjostedt questioned the logical starting point for cleaning up education and the role of Vision Shared? Dr. Marple explained that a culture of caring and a place students enjoy being must be established as a first step. Leaders like Vision Shared, she explained, must help others understand and value education. Dr. Marple explained however, that there isn't a simple solution - the community must understand the looming crisis she concluded.

Dr. Pat Kusimo noted that teachers leaving may also be an opportunity for positive change. That there it really starts with the children in the womb. Further Dr. Kusimo explained that more time is needed in the classroom. A healthy child, stimulated in the right way with the social skills needed to achieve are essential Dr. Kusimo explained. She noted that this must

start early. Dr. Marple explained the structure from Pre-K to grade three is strong, but it falls off.

Mike Keener explained that teaching is harder now in West Virginia than ever before. That poverty rates have climbed. He explained that so many children come to school without parenting or a foundation for learning. Dr. Keener explained that good teachers get the tough students and are more critically judged. He said a system is needed that provides structure, task time and the support of West Virginia families. One in five children are impacted by drugs and experience developmental issues. Additionally incoming teachers are struggling to pass testing requirements – most capable aren't taking the career path to teach because the wages are so low compared to the cost of education.

Dr. Keener explained that you must maximize social capital and hold teacher accountable. Rural schools, he explained are at a disadvantage because of the lack of desire for teachers to remain in these areas. Dr. Marple explained that the root problem is a crisis looming. Dr. Kusimo explained that the Education Alliance is it is looking at the entire system of compensation. Discussion ensued.

Several suggestions were made. Bob Dunkerley explained that education and fixing it is an “everyone” issue and that building a culture of care builds a culture of success. He explained there is a need to prioritize and that fair isn't always equal with regard to education. Dr. Marple noted that there is work on the calendar in terms of balancing time in the classroom. Cabell County has committed to moving to year round academic calendar within twelve months. Mr. Thomas explained that perhaps Vision Shared could help support the increase of supply of teachers. Karen Price explained that we have to start early to educate students about job opportunities and how to prepare for what is or will be available.

Ms. Price briefed the group on a partnership of The WV Department of Education with the West Virginia Manufacturers Association. The program will provide a certification in manufacturing and direction in getting students to understand preparedness.

Charlie McElwee noted that Dr. Marple is doing a fantastic job. He further explained that any problem in our educational system lands at the feet of the legislature. Actions he said are politically driven, not educationally driven. Mr. McElwee said a full scale review is needed to understand the core of the problem; West Virginia needs to start over.

Dr. Marple noted that the merging of school districts would eliminate high degree of waste and redundancy for the states. Mr. Thomas explained that his would free up additional funding for teacher compensation. Discussion ensued regarding statutory policy. On a positive note, Dr. Marple explained that there is no greater thing we can do as a community than to make life better for the children we leave behind.

Discussion ensued regarding the effects the OPEB solution will having on the money available for the classroom.

Education Alliance Update

Dr. Kusimo explained that there is a need to start with a “blank slate” educationally. A system must be created she explained, to address the deficits children possess when they enter the system. Dr. Kusimo cited a study that indicated that socio-economic issue is not the biggest factor on student success; instead teacher quality was identified as the difference. The Education Alliance will focus on the educational delivery of the audit and the creation of communities that support high learning. Dr. Kusimo explained that this requires several components, instructional days, technology, and building the community. The Education Alliance will promote a legislative agenda to effect improvement.

Mr. Thomas explained that a time study in North Carolina indicated that teachers spend only 40 percent of their time in the school teaching. Discussion ensued.

Research/Priority Update

Deferred to next meeting.

III. Timelines, tasks, and next steps

Mr. Thomas explained that the difficult job is to develop a solution to the problems we are facing.

IV. Meeting Schedule (additional meetings will be scheduled as needed)

Tuesday, May 8, 2012	3 p.m.
Tuesday, August 7, 2012	3 p.m.
Tuesday, November 6, 2012	3 p.m.

V. Adjourn

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.