



Participants: Newton Thomas, Lloyd Jackson, Laura Boone, Dan Foster, Edward George, Beth High, Lisa Ketchum, Gayle Manchin, Tim McClung, Charles McElwee, Kemp McElwee, Paul Miller, Howard Seufer, Howard Swint, Allan Tweddle, Dana Waldo, Lori Wiggons, Rebecca Randolph

I. Introductions

Introductions were made as members joined the call and the meeting was called to order at 3 p.m. by Newton Thomas.

II. Approval of January 2011 Minutes

Mr. Thomas called the groups attention to the minutes provided from the January 2011 committee meeting. Lloyd Jackson made a motion to approve the minutes which was seconded by Edward George. The motion was approved.

III. Presentation

Mr. Thomas introduced guest presenter Charles McElwee. Mr. McElwee introduced himself and his observations of the changes in education from his perspective from a student to today. He noted changes in discipline and environment. He noted the significance of a negative personal education experience in the form of a “bad” teacher that did not focus efforts in the classroom and avoided instruction time.

Mr. McElwee continued by acknowledging his employer Robinson McElwee for their generosity in allowing him to contribute civically with his research project in education. He noted that one “cannot be a credible advocate or reformist without in depth knowledge of the subject matter” for which they advocate. He explained that with regard to education, there are three critical areas to understand: the management of public schools, the classroom teacher and the setting.

Mr. McElwee noted that the global economy is the key setting for any consideration of education in West Virginia – source, manufacture and sell everywhere. He pointed to the devaluing of education in West Virginia when compared to other countries such as Japan.

Mr. McElwee reviewed PISA’s 2009 U.S. and WV results. He noted that the data reviewed are limited to math results in the 2009 tests focusing on the percentage of students performing at the advanced level and at the proficient level (a considerably lower standard of performance than the advanced level).

With regard to proficient level he explained that Shanghai topped the list with a 75 percent math proficiency rate, well over twice the 32 percent rate in the United States, and well above the 51 percent rate of Massachusetts, the top performer in the United States. Singapore, Hong Kong, Korea, Finland, Taiwan, Liechtenstein and Switzerland had percentages proficient in math higher than Massachusetts.

He said that WV had a proficient percentage rate of 18.5 percent in math with only three states having lesser percentages: Alabama, New Mexico and Mississippi. Russia had a higher percentage rate than West Virginia.

Mr. McElwee noted that again, Shanghai was far ahead of any other participant in the 2009 PISAs, with an advanced percentage rate of nearly 45 percent in math. The average U.S. percentage was about 7.5 percent, with WV at 2.2 percent, next to last among the states, with Mississippi being the lowest at 1.6 percent.

He continued by discussing CSOs in West Virginia, the evaluation of teachers and West Virginia's education culture. He also noted that it is common place in West Virginia to place blame at the foot of the classroom teacher.

Mr. McElwee discussed whether the qualities of a good/great teacher were innate or could be learned. Mr. McElwee reviewed what he feels are qualities of a good/great teacher:

- Compassionate, inspiring, and caring of students, making them feel important, welcomed, and personally connected with the teacher. (Innate)
- Passion and competency for teaching the subject matter. (Partly innate; partly teachable)
- Believes that students can learn and has high expectations of them. (Largely innate)
- Has the respect of students as being genuinely interested in their learning and as being firmly and steadfastly in control. (Largely innate)
- Encourages students to think critically, to effectively communicate, and to be creative and collaborative. (Partly innate; partly teachable)
- Has excellent skills in diagnosing student problems and intervening with appropriate solutions. (Partly innate; partly teachable)
- A sense of humor. (Innate)
- Periodic self-examination of what is working and what is not working in the classroom with remedial measures taken. (Partly innate; partly teachable)
- Occasionally inquires why am I a teacher? Is it for the money or for the joy of it? Is my enthusiasm waning? What, if anything, can I do to make teaching a more satisfying experience for me? (Largely innate)

Mr. McElwee suggested that predictive research may be a tool worthy of use in identifying quality teachers. He posed for thought the question: should determination be made via testing to identify students for admission into teaching programs and also by would be employers during the hiring process of teachers?

Mr. McElwee reviewed the structure and management of the public school system. He explained that although the Governor as Chief Executive of the State should have the ultimate authority in running the educational system, the state statute provided no authority. He further noted that in total there are 388 entities, agencies or programs that have some degree of involvement in the teacher development process of classroom teacher. These include:

- WV Board of Education

- WV Department of Education
- Center for Professional Development
- Department of Education and Arts
- Professional Development Project
- Educators' Professional Standards Board
- WV Professional Staff Development Advisory Council
- Three-Year Plan....
- Eight Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs)
- Eight Regional Staff Development Councils
- Fifty-five Professional Staff Development Councils
- Fifty-five County Boards of Education

Mr. McElwee introduced the idea of IT or technology in the classroom to assist with the standardization of level appropriate content, and to provide a challenging environment to both students and teachers. He noted that centrally produced and delivered content would be possible if IT was more effectively integrated. Programs could be offered to students of various skill levels and aptitude and teachers could be trained to work with students at these varied levels. He noted his desire that further study move quickly regarding IT and classroom integration.

Mr. Thomas thanked Mr. McElwee for an informative presentation noting that the compilation of information researched and presented by Mr. McElwee should be viewed as a "situation analysis" for work in education in the state moving forward. He asked Mr. McElwee what could be contributed to the education system to add the most value. Mr. McElwee stated that that a well structured management system would be most beneficial. He also noted significant shortfalls in the teacher evaluation system.

Mr. Jackson spoke about a book titled *Class Warfare* which points out education standards today measure process rather than learning. He further noted resistance in changing the evaluation process. Mr. Thomas explained that in this case there is a necessity to develop individual management plans and improvement.

Discussion ensued regarding a proposed education summit to be hosted by Governor Tomblin and the need to review successful programs in other parts of the country and the world. Alan Swettle discussed a highly successful model for kindergarten in a California school, but also pointed out that Ontario has an excellent school system and would be more conducive to researching and communication than many other high performing areas of the world.

Tim McClung noted that what is missing in education is the student's voice. He explained that as a state West Virginia suffers from an engagement gap and that survey's and studies have been conducted (most recently in 2008) but the data is never used effectively in addressing the issues.

The group discussed potential and broad based survey solutions that would provide general feedback about the student educational experience posing questions regarding core items like maintaining a timely class schedule, access to extra help and programs, perception of environmental safety, etc.

Gayle Manchin noted that education must more effectively measure what students are learning, not based on standard expectations, but instead the progress they are able to make in a defined period of time. Ms. Manchin noted that the system is too focused on standards over outcomes and that teacher must also have content knowledge. She also agreed with Mr. McElwee's assessment of the need to develop tools to identify quality teachers. Mr. McElwee pointed to low pay in West Virginia as well as low levels of respect for teachers as barriers to attracting and retaining good/great teachers.

Dr. Foster referenced a complete wipe out of the educational system in New Orleans post Katrina and the effectiveness and improvement in rebuilding it from the ground up. The new system, he explained, has more of a charter school feel with more autonomy at the local school level.

IV. Future Directions

Mr. Thomas concluded that based on the research report provided by Mr. McElwee and the discussion of the committee that two key areas of focus for the education committee moving forward might be:

1. Management process
2. Teacher evaluations

Mr. McElwee noted his feeling that an important role for Vision Shared is to urge Governor Tomblin to provide the leadership necessary and take the lead in the examination of public schools in West Virginia.

In the interest of time, Mr. Thomas noted that the committee would continue to meet at least quarterly and begin to develop an action plan and agenda integrating the key areas of focus as it works toward its goal relative to grade four and eight reading and math score improvement.

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

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

VI. Adjourn

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 4:54 p.m.