



# Education Reform Commission Meetings Update

The following are highlights and updates from August 12, 24 and 25 meetings of the full Commission and select subcommittees.

## **Education Reform Commission Meeting Dr. Charles Knapp, Chair**

Chairman Knapp started the meeting by stating that the Commission is in the second home stretch of its mission and asked each subcommittee chair to focus in on their recommendations. At some point the full committee must react to those recommendations.

### **Committee Reports**

#### **Expanded Education Options**

Committee is in final stage of drafting report. The draft will be on the Education Reform Commission's website for public review at the next full Commission meeting in September. Subcommittee meeting will be held to elicit public comment. Following public hearing, subcommittee will revise recommendations as appropriate and have a subsequent meeting to finalize and approve recommendations for submission to the full Commission.

#### **Funding Subcommittee**

(The committee will take up additional discussion of teacher training & experience at its August 27 meeting which will be covered by GAE.)

Side by side comparison of QBE/Student-based formula. Noted that comparisons are difficult because states include a variety of personnel and programs in the base and there is little consistency or comparability between states

Seven states have a base lower than \$3K (OK, SC, LA, UT) or higher than \$10K (MA, NJ, CT)

#### **Characteristics of Student Weights being considered by the committee:**

- K-3 (literacy) additional funds proposed for this category
- 9-12
- ESOL

- SWD
- CTAE
- Economic Disadvantaged
- Gifted
- Range of weights used in other states
- Median national weight
- QBE-related weight (Weights are being decided based on importance to our state)

(Committee member asked why are we not putting more funding in K-3—preparing kids to read. Proposed funding may not be adequate.)

- Local five mill share – school districts receiving QBE funding are required to levy the equivalent of at least five mills in property taxes to show their commitment to public education. These funds do not leave the district but they are subtracted from the district's QBE earned allocation.
- Equalization Grants – Georgia's method of equalizing the disparities in property wealth per student
- Sparsity Grants – allocated to school systems that do not earn sufficient funds through the QBE formula to provide a comparable educational program due to their FTE counts

#### **Remaining Issues to Discuss:**

- RESA Funding
- State Schools for Blind and Deaf
- Pre-School Handicapped
- Department of Juvenile Justice Schools
- Residential Treatment Centers
- Charter System Supplement
- State Charter School Funding
- Special Education Scholarships
- Virtual Schools

#### **Early Childhood Subcommittee Proposed Recommendations**

- Pre-K classes funding formula
- Expanding Pre-K access in Georgia
- Address Pre-K teacher salary issue by developing a pay structure based on Pre-K lead teacher's years of experience and credential
- Reduce class sizes to 20 children with a lead and assistant teacher
- Increase assistant teacher salary

- Combine benefits and non-instructional costs into a single, budget line item known as “Operating Costs”
- Increase Pre-K class start-up funds
- Provide bond funds for a pilot project to expand Georgia’s Pre-K classes in public schools where the need is the greatest

(Committee member asked if the Commission is looking to administer Pre-K differently than K-12. It was noted that there should be a seamless public education system—from Pre-K through grade 12.)

**Move on When Ready Subcommittee Proposed Recommendations**

This committee has narrowed their proposals to five areas:

**Competency-Based Learning – K-12**

- Cornerstone of personalized learning—not just through assessments
- Learning happens inside and outside of classroom
- Students move on to the next level as they pass competencies

**Reading for All**

- Accept importance of Pre-K
- Kindergarten has become more like first grade (readiness programs)
- Cross-grade grouping according to reading level

**Extending Postsecondary Options**

- Opportunity for students to explore their career and college options
- Accelerated opportunity for students to earn advanced credentials and associate degrees in varied settings

**Adding Multiple Graduation Pathways**

- Require the types of math that are mandatory in many career fields
- Math and literary pathways should reflect and prepare students for four-year University System of Georgia and two-year postsecondary programs

**Flexible testing**

- Tests to assess students’ degree of learning should be administered when students are proficient with competencies rather than at the end of the year
- Allow teachers flexibility to assess skills or concepts in multiple contexts and ways

**Teacher Recruitment, Retention and Compensation Subcommittee**

(see August 24 subcommittee report below)

The next ERC meeting is scheduled for September 24, 10:00 a.m. The full report of the August 25 meeting can be viewed at [Education Reform Commission](http://EducationReformCommission.org) website.

# Move on When Ready Subcommittee Meeting Update



## Tuesday, August 25, 2015

Committee discussed five action steps as outlined in the ERC report and funding of certain programs. There was a discussion of rolling out several of their recommendations through grants – innovative grants to fund these proposals.

It was noted that overlapping of programs was evident as the various subcommittees reported out at the earlier ERC meeting and that is okay as the state continues to work to make public education transparent and seamless.

Discussions going forward should refer to system as Pre-K-12.

The committee talked about the format it would use to present recommendations as follows:

- Recommendation: (two or three sentences)
- Rationale: (detailed explanation)
- What needs to be changed:
- Estimated cost:
- Example of where it has worked:

Next scheduled meeting: September 24, 2015 (after ERC meeting)

# Teacher Recruitment, Retention & Compensation Subcommittee Meeting Update

## Monday, August 24, 2015

The Commissioner's chair Dr. Charles Knapp, who was present at the meeting, instructed the subcommittee that time was drawing nigh and it is time to solidify their recommendations. Clarification of recommendations needs to occur in August and September.

The committee heard from Dr. Karen J. Wyler, Teacher and Principal Induction IHE Evaluation System Specialist at the GaDOE. Dr. Wyler spoke about the DOE's Race To The Top plan which created resources for use statewide in the areas of standards and assessments, utilizing data systems to improve teacher and learning, turning around lowest achieving schools. The state induction model is required for the 26 school districts that signed up for Race To The Top, but other school districts are encouraged to take a look at the plan.

The committee has narrowed its proposals to the three assigned areas:

### **Compensation/Recruitment**

- Competitive entry level salary commensurate with other professions. Look at proposing a dollar amount.
- New compensation models – provide systems multiple compensation models from which to choose or to use as examples to create personal models.
- Compensating teachers who mentor student teachers
- Year-long clinical practicums for student teachers
- More money in hard to staff areas

### **Retention**

- Protected planning time
- Find a way to represent the voice of teachers
- Create a strategy document that can be used by legislators to reduce the constant adoption of new legislation that get piled on to teachers

In September, the committee will add language to their narrow-downed recommendations. The next meeting is scheduled September 17, 10:00 a.m.

Committee chair allowed public comment. Melissa Ladd, GAE member from Coweta County, told the committee that teachers want to be respected and left alone to do their jobs. She spoke of the realities in her school and the need for the committee to understand what's happening in the real world of teaching.



## Funding Subcommittee Meeting Update

### August 12, 2015

T & E (Training and Experience)

Dr. Charles Knapp began this meeting by noting that the T & E component was continuing to be worked on by this committee and by the staff and would further be discussed at the August 27 Funding Committee meeting.

Meshing of recommendations of all five committees of the Education Reform Commission

Dr. Knapp also brought to the attention of this committee the responsibility of making sure that nothing in the any of the subcommittees' report recommendations is contradictory; thus, although the December 18 deadline may seem a long ways off, it is really not, in order to ensure that this committee's report is internally consistent and also consistent with the reports of other committees.

### Approval of minutes from July 16, 2015

Click [here](#) to read the approved minutes from July 16, 2015.

### Special Reports: State Comparisons

Click [here](#) to view the State Comparisons Special Report.

Matching four criteria (centering on 2013 NAEP scores), three states—Florida, Kentucky, and North Carolina—were identified along with Texas (because it met all criteria except one) and Tennessee (comparable based on demographic and economic indicators).

These comparisons revealed that two types of funding formulas were used: teacher allocation according to class size and foundation base formula plus add-ons.

One takeaway that was suggested is that similarities and differences exist with not two states being the same but that this data supports doing away with funding on T & E (training and experience).

### Summary of Base

One of the main items brought before this committee was a proposed student-based funding formula. Instead of focusing on the current QBE funding mechanism of FTE and segments, this proposed funding mechanism would focus on student enrollment, with districts receiving at least a base amount for each student enrolled. Students with "special characteristics" would garner more money.

Click [here](#) for a narrative explaining the proposed student-based funding formula that this committee discussed at this meeting.

In the proposed model, the base amount would be \$2,046.69 for a student in grades 4-8. As noted, this base amount does not include the following:

- training and experience (T & E) for teachers
- state health benefits
- Teachers Retirement System (TRS) contributions

This model is based on a 1:29 teacher-student ratio for a class in grades 4-8 in which students have no weighted characteristics.  
In this model, other ratios are as follows:

- counselors 1:450
- art, music/PE/foreign language 1:450 (one per 450 students in grades K-5)
- technology specialist 1:1100
- instructional operations \$85.50 (includes textbooks, technology, supplies)

Thus, based on the above, districts would receive \$1,383.25 for Direct Instructional Costs in the student base.

The amount for instructional costs (for such positions as a social worker, superintendent, and secretary and for facility maintenance and operation) in the student base is \$479.82. Additional student base elements include \$183.61 for media, staff development, nursing, and transportation.

Also shared was student base information from other states: An additional 37 state use some form of base funding for their formulae. The range of bases is \$1,614-\$11,525 with a median base of \$5,188.

### **Summary of Preliminary Weights**

The Funding Formula Committee agreed, with preliminary consensus, to weight the following student characteristics:

- Students in K-3;
- Students in 9-12;
- CTAE Students;
- Students with Disabilities;
- English
- Speakers of Other Languages;
- Gifted Students

For detailed information about proposed weighting of student characteristics, continue reading the linked [narrative](#).

The Committee agreed to have staff generate system scenarios based on the proposed funding base and preliminary weights for discussion at a subsequent meeting.

Local five mill share, equalization, and sparsity grant.

Click [here](#) to read the information presented to the Committee from staff.

Staff wanted the Committee's input on these three areas in order to generate additional data and models for future meetings.

The next meeting of the Funding Committee will be on August 27.

Additional meeting dates of the Funding Committee are as follows:

- September 23, 2015 10:00 – 3:00
- October TBD
- November 12, 2015 10:00 – 3:00
- December 3, 2015 10:00 – 3:00