



Open Education Resources Advisory Committee

July 24, 2007 1:00 pm

Speaker's Conference Room, 6th Floor, General Assembly Building

- **Call to order, roll call:**

Senator John Watkins called the meeting to order. The chairman thanked the members for their participation and attendance.

- **Eric Jones, Director of High School Education, Henrico Public Schools:**

Mr. Jones presented a video of Henrico's experiences with open education resources and electronic/software based educational resources. At the conclusion of the video, Mr. Jones gave a power point presentation accompanied by his Director of Technology, Lloyd Brown. This presentation is available at the JCOTS website.

The presenters fielded questions by the committee pertaining to planning, teaching methods, and the information technology infrastructure. Members were interested in the current use of content created by Henrico County teachers. Mr. Jones stated that currently, education resources utilized by Henrico are 50% self-created and 50% commercial. Members questioned whether there are intellectual property concerns with content created by teachers. Mr. Jones explained that the majority of these concerns have dissipated as more teachers have developed content. One member of the advisory suggested briefing the teachers on the use of Creative Commons licensing.

Mr. Jones explained the benefits and drawbacks of both traditional textbooks and open education resources. A member questioned whether textbooks in any class are used in their entirety. Mr. Jones explained that the majority of classes do not use the entire textbook. Mr. Brown explained that the importance of infrastructure in using electronic materials. Henrico hosts 90% of the electronic materials used by teachers in the county. With respect to infrastructure, Henrico has found that by keeping such a large amount of material on their own servers, they are able to ensure quality and access is consistent. Although outside access is valuable, Mr. Brown stated that the less a student needs to reach the internet, the more confident he can be of the quality of the material and safety of the student.

Delegate Joe T. May, Chair

Senator John C. Watkins, Vice Chair



Operating and capital expenditures of the Henrico program were discussed. Henrico currently employs 84 information technology professionals, roughly 800 student computers per support technician. In comparison to school divisions that do not have a 1:1 computer/student ratio have about 400 student computers per support technician.

Members were concerned with Henrico's ability to filter content on its students' computers. Mr. Brown stated that the students' computers are now equipped with undeletable history and are constantly filtered, whether at home or at school. Despite his best efforts, Mr. Brown stated that he is only able to filter about 80% of the worst material, which is still a challenge in itself. A member inquired of the status of the schools' libraries and librarians. Mr. Jones stated that the librarians are known as media resource teachers and have become even more engaged with the students.

Mr. Brown explained that interest in the Henrico program has sparked over 4800 national and international inquiries to date.

Discussing the challenges of using electronic educational materials, Mr. Jones noted that the greatest success has been seen in science and history classes while math remains the most difficult to teach using electronic education materials.

• **Clint Hubbard, President, Virginia Publishers' Association:**

Mr. Hubbard provided a presentation on the background of textbook publishing and the current views of publishers. A copy of the presentation is available on the JCOTS website. Representatives from textbook publishers, McGraw-Hill (Donna Moody) and Pearson Education (Richard Herath), were available to answer questions on behalf of the Virginia Publisher's Association.

During his presentation Mr. Hubbard explained the textbook adoption differences between the southern states and the northern states. Generally, the northern states allow localities to purchase the textbooks they would like to use. The southern states generally have a state adoption process, which give them greater influence in controlling the content that is placed in the textbooks. Virginia has a hybrid system that includes both a state adoption process and the option for localities to perform their own adoption.

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Mr. Hubbard explained the South Carolina policy of utilizing a central repository of state textbooks. He stated this method helps textbook publishers in assessing demand because the state orders all the textbooks it needs at one time. Publishers have a more difficult time assessing the demand in the Commonwealth because the textbooks are purchased incrementally by localities. He stated that with a centralized purchasing system, publishers pay more attention to the needs of the purchasing state.

Members were interested in the publishers' business models used to market technology related supplemental materials. Mr. Hubbard explained that publishers present their supplemental offerings to localities and that generally adoption is dependant on the local committees' opinion of technology use in the classroom. Under the current system, the electronic materials are still considered supplemental or gratis with the purchase of the paper textbook.

Senator Watkins stated the need for the committee to be apprised of textbook publishers' future plans. He explained that without knowing where publishers' are heading in their development of technology supplements it is hard for the Commonwealth to develop a strategy. Mr. Hubbard responded that he would gladly organize a group to present on the business forecasts of several publishing companies.

A member asked the publishers when the sale of traditional texts with supplemental electronic materials may be supplanted by the sale of electronic materials supplemented with traditional texts. The publishers were unable to assess a time when this may occur.

• **Open Discussion:**

Members discussed the costs associated with adoption of technology related educational materials. Generally members concluded that the adoption of new materials may increase spending but the benefits to student instruction can outweigh the cost concerns. Delegate Nixon pointed out the very rich learning content of supplemental digital resources and expressed interest in the cost savings that might be associated with having a statewide content management system that could be used by teachers to develop and access teacher created content. Members stated that a program like Henrico's may indeed save money due to its own development of learning materials. One member of the advisory committee pointed out that localities often cut school spending when cost savings are achieved and that his acts as a barrier to greater efforts.



Members discussed the parents' desire that students be supplied with a traditional textbook to allow it to be taken home. This was identified as an issue that must be addressed through education efforts.

• **Public comment:**

Members of the public were given the opportunity to express their views about the Commission and its work.

One member of the public suggested the advisory committee investigate what Northrop Grumman and VITA are doing for the Commonwealth's elementary and middle schools.

• **Actions for the next meeting:**

The committee identified several potential agenda items for the next meeting, including:

- Presentation and/or demonstration of the \$175 laptop by the non-profit One Laptop Per Child;
- Presentations by separate publishers on their individual future business models, concerning traditional textbooks and marketing of digital content;
- Update on what other states are doing concerning open education resources and in-house content development;
- Comparison of state textbook purchasing policies;
- Assessing current student views of the adoption of technology in the classroom;
- Establish blog for advisory committee to share views and post comments between meetings; and
- Schedule next meeting to take place at a Henrico county school with demonstration of technology in the classroom.

• **Adjournment.**