Call to order

Roll call: Present were, Dr. Jeff Isenhour, Katie Lemons, Jo Herrera (commission staff) Tammy Covil, Andre Peek, Dr. Ted Scheik, Dr. Olivia Oxendine, Jeannie Metcalf, Denise Watts on phone. Ann Clark and Bill Cobey showed up 10 minutes late. Dr. Laurie McCollum was absent

Andre Peek: Opening remarks, review the agenda for the day.

Questions, additions or edits to the agenda.

NO

Andre: Agenda third item, the September minutes were posted on line, asked for comments or corrections, have none, asked for a motion to approve last month’s minutes.

Jeannie Metcalf made the motion to approve, the, 2nd by Katie Lemons.

Update on the time line:

Jo Herrera: The commission activities during October were mainly having teachers’ focus group meetings in various locations across the state. They are in the process of incorporating this feedback and writing a draft of the final report. Today the commission will be discussing and reviewing some of those recommendations and will hear from other commission members reports from their focus group feedback. Feels the commission is on schedule and they are positioned to submit their final report in December.

November 13th meeting they will review a draft of final report.

Ted Scheik: Asks about the work groups’ reports that have not been completed. States that those should be reviewed before the commission’s draft report is done. He will submit what he has tonight or tomorrow, however he has not incorporated his focus groups findings in his report yet.

Andre Peek; When the report is done, it will incorporate the work group findings, they have 60 days to complete that work. Today’s agenda includes feedback from stakeholders, teachers and commissioners.

Ted Scheik: Reiterates he has to work in the infusion of focus group information into his work group report.

Andre Peek: Notes actionable items to Jo for the timeline for these actions, they will follow up with a more granular timeline building up to final report
Olivia Oxendine: Wants to know what kind of report does the General Assembly expect, an Executive Summary and a 10 page report? Asks if the General Assembly has given any instruction on what they expect in the final report?

Ted Scheik: Wants the work group reports to be attached as appendices, to serve as evidence of their methodology and work into the report, in their entirety.

Andre Peek: Asks Jo to contact the committee from the General assembly to ask for guidelines for the final report. 2) Get the commissioners a time line for the completion of each of the committees to finalize their deliverables. 3) Collate all feedback and survey responses to incorporate into the draft final report.

Olivia Oxendine: Shares some of her raw data from last meeting, will get data to Jo, or get some help to review it. Jo will be in the middle of this data review.

Tammy Covil: Asks Jo if there was any more communication or contact to have focus group meetings in the Western part of the state? Some of the areas the Commission members are in? Appreciates Dr. Oxendine’s efforts in putting together 3 different focus groups, they were very informative. Having been present at all but one of these, it was interesting to note that they were able to identify some common threads throughout the focus groups, there was validation in terms of results. Had some surprising comments including scrapping the Math standards all together in the last focus group meeting. Is disappointed that some of those that wanted the focus groups have not done so.

Jo Herrera: Stated that since June she has been chasing people down, they were all reached out to, and either they didn’t respond to her or there were scheduling issues. They do not have any in the Western part of the state scheduled.

Tammy Covil: States that she wants this information included in the report that efforts were made to hold teacher focus groups and get feedback from the different regions in the state. That there was not a response from them. The Legislature and the State Board, need to know that those meetings didn’t happen, and wants it known that the Commission did do their part and made those efforts.

Olivia Oxendine: Adds that in an open session, or an informal moment, the State Board members will want to know why there were so few regional meetings across the state, asks whether we contacted the RESA directors in those areas.

Jo Herrera: Answer was yes.

Olivia Oxendine: Responded that usually those people respond. She said she was really surprised they did not follow through.

Andre Peek: This is the third time that this topic is being discussed. Input from the West was wanted. Stated that they did get contact information for the regions and several e mails were sent.
Offer was made. Wants to be sure this is documented so no one can say they didn't have the opportunity to speak or be heard.

Olivia Oxendine: Mentions the Triad Piedmont RESA contact would be Dr. Larry Kubble (?) the NW and SW regions have not had focus meetings either.

Andre Peek: There has been no response up to now, and it getting late in the process.

Ann Clark: States that SW Union County’s RISA is Rick VanDep, and has offered to host a meeting. She asks Jo to circle around again with Rick. Said that she sent e mails out to the superintendents asking for volunteers to host a meeting.

Andre: This offer has been out there for 60 days or more, if someone wants this to happen, there needs to be some sense of urgency to have this in the next 2 weeks, the Commission can’t delay everything else they are doing waiting for them to respond.

Tammy: Feels that there has been ample opportunity for those meetings to have already taken place. States that the meetings that she has attended so far have been attended by fewer teachers than she would prefer to see, there were lots of instructional coaches and administrators. There has been beneficial feedback but also notes a stark contrast between what the teachers feel comfortable saying and sharing and what the administrators have said. She witnessed a teacher being admonished by an administrator about what was being said. In some cases the teachers are being intimidated. If there are any future meetings, she wants there to be more classroom teachers and not so many administrators, as the teachers are where the rubber meets the road.

Andre: Will make one more attempt to do a SW meeting. They do appreciate the effort and planning in the meetings that have happened. Meetings were held in the Central Region, Sandhills, New Hanover, Pembroke, Richmond County and Moore County. They gathered some good information from these meetings, and felt that a good view of teachers’ experiences was shared.

Andre: Asks Olivia to summarize for the Commission some of the feedback on what she has gleaned from her 3 focus group meetings

Olivia passed around samples to show the questionnaire and kinds of answers that were offered. These were all different responses, and were just to get an idea on what was being reported by the teachers.

Her first focus group meeting was October 6, at Pembroke. It was attended by 3 school systems, 2 school systems could not make it because that was when we had the torrential rains. Andre was at this meeting. They also streamed these meetings on the web and had some conference calling. The next one was in Richmond County, (Hamlet) and had 4 school systems represented. Attended by around 35 teachers. She was pleased with the outcomes, each meeting had a few superintendents, some assistant superintendents, some instructional coaches, and teachers. She felt the people were candid at the meetings.
The third meeting was on the 15th, in Moore County. This was the biggest meeting with 50 or more in attendance. In all 3 meetings, maybe 90 teachers and administrators were involved.

Would like to pull together a summary of the comments, working with Jo.

What some of the teachers are saying is there are not enough resources, there is too much time spent on finding resources to align to the Common Core standards. A teacher commented about a textbook that was just assigned to a student had previously belonged to someone that was at that meeting, indicating how old the book was.

Areas of concern based on her raw data, had to do with no textbooks making it difficult for parents to help with homework. Too many standards, too complex, makes it difficult to design a cogent lesson plan. The complexity of the standards tends to be an issue. With respect to integrated math, the teachers don’t know where to begin and end, where to divide and subdivide math concepts.

Andre: Felt that this is a sequencing problem, Math I is basically Algebra I but when you get to Math II and Math III, then the sequencing is skewed, issues include there is no book, no map as to how this is supposed to work, instruction depends on basic sense of foundation that is not there.

Olivia: It is a scope and sequence issue.

Tammy: Shared a comment from teacher about Math II, who felt it was discombobulated, disjointed, that some topics flowed and you could build upon them, but because there are so many different math families, it seemed that they just appeared out of nowhere, with no prior relationship for kids to draw on. Confusion on how deep am I to go, if I don’t go far enough the child misses something. There is no clear direction, no map, and no navigation. Math was overwhelmingly one of the top subjects of discussion.

Olivia: By and large, ELA teachers feel that the students are not being well prepared in writing and composition, what is tested is taught, therefore when we left behind the 4th 7th and 10th grade writing tests, over time instruction in writing is waned, teachers say we do need something more direct and specific around pure composition opposed to pure essay.

Andre: Testing what is taught, was often characterized in focus groups, when there are a lot of standards and you know you are not testing all of them, then those standards get dropped.

Tammy: Testing is prioritizing your class time. Standards are not guideposts on what is important, testing is prioritized.

Andre: if there are 100 standards and only testing 50, only teaching 50

Jeff: If they are considering adding in more writing instruction, something else will have to go because there is not enough time now.

Tammy: Can’t continue to add more scope with less time.
Andre: Adds that we think we are teaching good writing and reading skills but one teacher pointed out that in reality, most of the kids are actually only seeing and reading power points. They get allot of informational text, but not learning how to write.

Jeff: Teaching writing takes time

Andre: Agrees, you have to spend time to evaluate and score, you can tell how well someone has learned by how well they can communicate that in writing.

Tammy: When you write, you have to reflect on what you have learned, it is a big part of critical thinking about what you have learned, and how you feel about it, and this is a huge thing we are overlooking.

Jeff: It is also very developmental, especially in the elementary grades. A very complex task.

Tammy: Writing is a process that develops over time, children’s developmental ability needs to be considered.

Olivia: You can't teach writing well without grading those papers and providing feedback, extensive feedback, there is the rub for the teachers. Do the teachers have the time to do this? You can't teach writing without spending hours reviewing the work.

Katie: The scope for a classic research paper in 11th grade, to do a 3-4 page report, is a month and a half process for a teacher to go through. Because of this, constructed responses are more common, it is a paragraph response, and is done quickly. Can’t teach writing when kids don’t know what a noun and a verb are.

Andre: To simplify standards, what we expect the kids to be able to do, and what a rigorous set of standards looks like is different.

Jeff: How to determine what is important?

Tammy: Fine literature is being shifted away from, there are more informational texts. Kids learn more about how to write a Facebook post. Where do the priorities lie? Do we recommend moving away from so much informational text and return back to traditional literature?

Jeannie: She is concerned that in high school, there is too much focus on informational text, when she looked at the suggested literature lists, there is no Shakespeare, none of the authors more than 20 years old. Wants to incorporate more traditional literature and less informational texts.

Andre: Questions Jeannie, do you want a standard to prescribe how you will instruct, you will do this?...points out that they sitting around the table know how to use informational text, they know how to discern what is important. Young people don't know how to do that now, they don't know how to pull the essence of the works out.
Olivia: About what is Informational text; she said to group on Thursday, if our students had textbooks, those would be informational texts. Social studies, Science, etc, is written in a genre of informational text style. It is a different type of reading than a book of literature. If you have a text book, the kids are reading informational text.

Tammy: There was a comment about the technology piece, teachers are spending so much time trying to find resources, when we asked them what are you looking for in resources, response they gave was they would like information on web that is appropriate, but they also asked for textbooks. It is more than Parents’ don't understand teaching is different from when we were in school, the frustration is not from not understanding their child’s homework, but as a parent, if I don’t have a resource in front of them to help them it is frustrating. Parents want the books so they can follow along and help the child and the teacher. Says it is Insulting not to expect the parents to want to follow along with the children.

Tammy: Teachers want a balance between technology, and books.

Jeff: Things go out of date, books and technology. A 20 year old book is obsolete and we are still using them.

Tammy: In math? History are those obsolete?

Jeff: Said yes, those things change, have interpretations that are different, new events happening all the time.

Andre: Parents get insulted with lack of books, especially when the parents are told to “google it.”

Andre: Teachers are collaborating more because they have to understand what the standard is asking. They still need books and technology. They like to be creative and collaborate. They still need resources, not just Google, where they can get different versions on what to do. What is the “gold” standard?

Olivia: There should be a common toolkit for every teacher to rely on in the state, it should be something common to each grade level. Our businesses in America would fail if workers didn't have essential tools to get the job done.

Olivia: Raw data finding that teachers said there is too much deviation in terminology for example, in the same standard the words theme, central idea, and main idea. This is a language issue.

Andre: Good overview, would like to see work groups go through all of their feedback to shape their reports. Each of the Commissioners needs to comb through the feedback and then they will gain consensus as a group as to what will be in the final report.

Tammy: Shared that she made a point of asking this question to math teachers during the focus group meetings. In High School math, comparing the traditional math vs integrated approach, and
whether they would support a return to the traditional math, overwhelmingly they wanted to go back to Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II, and they did support teaching those classes over a year long period instead of a block schedule so they could spend time for remediation. Liked the MN math. Most of the teachers were in agreement with Ted's math findings.

Ted: Points out that MN allows each school to pick their own textbooks, the implication is that they know there are books that fit their curriculum. Teachers in math also have to review and comment on math homework, just like ELA teacher. They also have to tell student what they did wrong.

Andre: Questions, are we biting off too much with the number of standards? What are the important things that will drive rigor in the system and give the students the right foundation to build on?

Next on Agenda: Open forum: People in the audience:

Ned McMillan: gave out packet of math reading problems: Said People miss this type of problem because we don't have a problem solving background. Part of the essence of problem solving is checking answers, check the work. This packet is from the work of Dan Kahneman.

Inside the packet (he zooms through this,) is his bio, he is retired elementary teacher. A numbers guy, he brought this up because he feels it is important that more emphasis being put on problem solving. Consider more problem solving. Says it is embedded in CC and is not a separate topic, doesn't think there is enough emphasis on this in CC. Not enough word problems. Refers to standards for mathematical standards, teachers are evaluated on this.

Geometry: right brain kids love geometry, you can reach kids if you have numbers and geometry. Algebra seems to be driving most high school math, Geometry is just as important. Feels it is under represented in CC.

Shares some NAEP data, 2 handouts, refers to 4th and 8th grade, in NC and MN. Looking at 4th grade, this compares white and black students, in 4th grade white kids do better, wants us to look at the achievement gap between black and white kids from MN and NC. Says NC is well ahead, last page is cost analysis in changing standards, admits it is subjective. Covers potential costs of resources, most of materials teachers are using are coming from publishing companies. Other issues with changing standards include re-educating parents, more stress on everyone, and demoralizing teachers. In holding focus group meetings, the silent majority will not show up. Teachers he talks to are content with the Common Core math standards and he says 88% of teachers like them the way they are. Wants to develop new assessments. Changing the standards will make teachers leave the profession. Result in lower test cores because of implementation curve, will cause learning gaps for kids, and penalize families that move. He said modifying CC is better than replacing the CC.

Tammy: Reading from his bio, asked Ned for proficiency scores from his students. He said he has been a level 5 teacher the whole time. (Guilford County schools)
Liz Berg: (forgot her notes): Retired teacher, 35 years, experience in elementary, middle and high school, has a master’s in elementary education. Has even been in Preschool. Had the privilege of dealing with all ages of children. In her experience, coming here from IL. She was shocked that handwriting was out of the school, because she knows that the hand trains the brain. Handwriting beginning in kindergarten, how important it is that writing begin in Kindergarten. Wants total repeal of CC. A comical question she hears is “What would teachers do without CC?” She says that is a slap in the face of every teacher she knows. Give her a book, don’t need to teach her how to teach, get a book, get a curriculum, and teach it. Teachers are prepared to do the job, just let them. Go back to reading, when you learn to read and spell, nouns and verbs, you learn those in 1st 2nd and 3rd grade, it takes time to learn. School should not promote social agenda’s. Make it fun, teachers can get the kids to have fun and learn at the same time. Said she was not allowed to correct the spelling of her first grade grandchild! A 4th grade boy was asked to write a sentence, and he couldn’t write his name! He never learned to write it correctly, it takes time. All the rush into Common Core and the social agendas that went along with it. Start with a simple book. Simple words, by third grade kids will be able to know how to write spell and read.

Jen Schrand: Actually came to talk about her kids! Lives in Wake County, has 3 kids, 8th grade is her oldest, and has a solid foundation in reading and math, because he got through elementary school prior to common core. Feels that CC is holding him back now, doesn’t like all the informational text, close reading. Disturbed about an approved web site ELA teachers get resources from, and in 7th grade her child asked her what rape was, this article was on the story of justice in prisons. Quite disturbing.

9 year old daughter. Currently in 4th grade. Up to 2nd grade, teachers have more flexibility, the 2nd grade teachers did what they needed to do, and her daughter did quite well, always in the top of her class and was reading well above grade level. In third grade, teacher flexibility is gone, because now you’re teaching to the test. Shares her daughter’s 3rd grade year. At the beginning of the year, she started having nightmares, some days, she would burst into tears as she got off the bus, and she was overwhelmed by the strategies in math. Common Core took away her love of school and her confidence. One day she told her “last year I was smart at math, but this year I am not”. In middle of year, she pulled her out and decided to home school, she was able to teach her a full year of non-common core math in 6 months. She was not the problem, Common Core was. Thankfully she had the means to be able to do this. Not every parent has that option.

Switching gears, when she learned she could speak today, she asked other parents for feedback. Wants to share the experiences of 2 kids in the same 4th grade class, one gifted, and one average. The gifted child comes home and doesn't understand his homework, his parents don’t understand it either, but the teacher sent home you tube videos to help them figure it out, so he usually ends up doing pretty well. The average child, even with extra help, never quite understands what she is to do, she dreads going to school, gets physically ill because she is so nervous. The day she was to have a math test, she woke up with a stomach ache, her Dad took her to school, she was crying, the school
receptionist asked what was wrong, Dad told her she was nervous about her math test, the receptionist said this happens often. What are we doing to the kids that they are getting sick over a math test? How did we end up in a place where only the academically gifted have an easy time with their homework? So many parents tell her about their kids crying while doing their math homework. This is insanity. Thanks commission for their work trying to rid us of Common Core.

Andrea Dillon: Has a child in Wake County schools. Thrust is on the impact to her child. Has a Third grader, is holding her 5 year old out of kindergarten, even though he has the skills needed, because she doesn’t want to put him in harm’s way, which is how she looks at Common Core. In Math there is too much emphasis on strategies. Her son has a natural aptitude for math and he knew lots going into kindergarten, but once he was in school, especially in 1st and 2nd grade, strategies started to hinder his ability to understand basic things like 20 plus 25, the teacher would be introducing multiple strategies, he couldn’t do what he wanted, but had to do the exact strategy being taught or he wouldn’t get credit. Sometimes 5 or 6 different ways. When she tried to help him with it, he would burst into tears, and tell her I am NOT ALLOWED to do it that way. They were drilling him to do strategies instead of what worked best for him. He began to think that he was the problem, his inability to understand the convoluted strategies was his problem, not the other way around. His Mom told his teachers he would do the math the way he could, what was easiest for him, if it didn’t match up with what was in the classroom, she was sorry. Teacher replied that was fine, but told her on EOG’s he would have a problem. Would be done the way Common Core wants it to be done. So he will be out of luck.

ELA: Noticed there is an emphasis especially in K-3 drilling on writing instead of competency and mastery of reading, as a classroom volunteer had the one on one interaction with kids. That was only part of the day, the rest of the day the kids had to write sentences on all they did, reasoning on their thoughts. These are 5, 6, and 7 year olds. They had Kindergartners and first graders learning possessive pronouns, they had to sort them on a blackboard, she watched this wondering why they were learning the finer points of the English language? And these were 6 and 7 year olds!

3rd grade was where things got interesting, because they had the EOG. Her son’s grade in fluency which had a target level of 70, was 107, and he was doing great and reading at the 4th grade level, 10 points above what the target Lexile was. However, the reading comprehension part he did poorly at, they had to read block passages 4 or 5 of them at a time. This turned into a stamina issue. Not really what they are comprehending, they are just trying to get through these things, up to 10 questions a piece, in these giant block paragraphs. Kids get overwhelmed, and feel like they can’t do this, so it is a stamina thing. By the time her son got towards the end, he just wanted it over, because of that he just barely made the cut off. One question worse he would have been forced in the read to achieve, even though he was reading at a 4th grade level. She feels to be effective the kids should first master reading to write competently, to have a broad basis for reading before writing can be done with competency and style, and have a broad base built up in foundational years. She has seen the kids looking beat down, they look like they don’t want to be there, her son used to love books, and he
doesn’t want to read for fun anymore. It has affected his self-esteem, all this comes from developmentally age inappropriate material K through 3 particularly. She has saved lots of school papers from her son and will share with commissioners if need be.

Tiffany Birkner: Wants the Commissioners to listen to the Parents, they are the ones on the front line. She has 3 sons, educated her kids in NC public schools, oldest in college this year, seen pre and post CC, tells us she is sorry for her 2 sons that are caught in the mess of CC. Her kids won’t get a 2nd chance for an education, please get rid of CC as soon as possible. Kids are losing years. Feedback that she heard, informational text too much, no classics. High School teachers telling them the kids can’t write, says her son can’t write. Her kids are all advanced and she feels that Common Core is dumbed down. Teachers told her last week that they don't have time to challenge the advanced kids, they don’t have time to supplement the curriculum because what will be evaluated on the EOG’s are the basics and what is going to be on the test. It is all about the test. Since CC, watched her kids lose their love for learning. The obsession with testing, the teacher’s creativity has been diminished. Teachers are glorified test administrators. She is at the school all the time, knows the teachers, knows the curriculum pickers, she says there is a lot of political pressure not to speak out against CC. Feels it would create a hostile work environment and career suicide if they do. Doesn’t feel the Commissioners will get the full story from teachers because this is a fact. Her sons at every level of the grade, 7th and 10th now, and one in college, all different schools, so it is not the implementation, it is the standards, it is dictating what is done. Standards are dictating the curriculum. The standards are 100% dictating what the teachers do on a day to day basis. They have to teach to the standards to the test period. Educating the kids is at the bottom of the priority list, all about teaching to the test, It is sad that education has come this, that, her kids are being told what to think, not how to think. CC claims creativity, and flexibility, and this has been exactly the opposite as far as she is concerned. Makes the kids feel stupid. Wants the commissioners to listen to the parents, begs them to have CC gone and let her kids go back to loving school and learning again. Feels like the only kids getting educated today are those in private schools and home schooled. Her kids have no grammar, because there is no time to teach it. No essay writing ability, no classic literature. Level of writing will hurt them later on in college. Parents are frustrated.

Jerry Egolf: Thanks Commissioners for the opportunity to address them again. Last June, he shared the North Carolina Education Plan’s replacement standards for Common Core. As far as priorities, been doing this a long time, some organizations calls the standards, terminal and general standard, before you start, one of the biggest question is what do you want them to learn, did anyone do that this with CC? Teachers Administrators, Parents? You can’t just throw something at them and expect that to be right.

Since June, followed the commission and the 2 working groups, we have revised our standards and our version 2.2 is stronger than MN Math and MS ELA standards. We have included In the ELA standards, cursive writing, diagramming sentences, and mind mapping the older grades. We have taken recommendations they talked about with the Math working group incorporated on top of the
MN framework, we have taken the matrix from the ELA and overlaid them on our ELA standards. We have also divided it into three phases, K to 5, which we treat as a foundational or basic phase, the middle school grades, 6 through 8, as the next level and introduce higher and more complex ideas and high school is a college and career readiness phase. We also talked to lots of teachers, and we have the support of the Classroom Teachers Association of NC as well as other states interest, has a letter from CT, that they are over the Moon, quote un quote with what we sent them, if the Commissioners want to see it. At Jo’s request he sent a copy for the advanced review of the Commission, but he wants to read it into the record, he shares letter from Sandra Stotsky:

To Gerald Egolf

Today at 2:37 AM

Thank you for giving me an update on what is happening in North Carolina and for the opportunity to look at your efforts to strengthen the education of all students in the state. I think you have done an excellent job in integrating your work on critical thinking with well-organized content standards in English language arts.

My only suggestion would be to work out a general strand, together with some specifics at various grade levels, for the research paper. That was one of the strengths of the old Massachusetts ELA standards and a feature of the 2013 set I assembled. It is vitally important for students to learn how to generate an open-ended research question and to locate the best sources or means (or informants) for addressing that question.

I am impressed with the careful work you did and hope it makes it way intact into recommended documents for the state. It is particularly impressive in the way it provides strands that distinguish among the major genres of reading material (fiction, nonfiction, poetry, drama, and information), together with a solid vocabulary strand, so that all students learn how to read analytically (between the lines) and with critical thinking.

Sandra Stotsky

END of comments

Andre thanks speakers: 10 minute break:

Tammy: Says House Representative Pittman asked to say a few words.

Larry Pittman: Representative from district 2. Has been a leader of this movement. Feels that he needs to share some information for the record. He recognizes the sense of frustration from comments today on why this isn’t already done. In his original legislation, it would have been done by now. His bill passed twice in the house, there would have been much more vigorous work done between this Commission and the State Board to end this. As the bill got watered down from a 6 page bill to a 4 page bill, basically removing 2 pages of legislation that he put in to assure that this commission would have some authority. The Senate bill basically allows them to ignore what the
commission recommends. Delays were built in, that he did not intend in his original legislation, to those that are frustrated, he shares it, appreciates them being here but what he has seen in this process is that there has possibly been a more thorough study done that may have been done if the process had gone faster. He feels the Commission has been very thorough and very open minded in seeking input. He is sorry for the lack of input from some areas of the state, and hopes maybe they can get some information from them. He appreciates them letting the parent’s talk... that was how he got into this in the first place, he was inundated with parents, their frustrations and problems it was causing their children. Their weeping and not wanting to go to school because of how hard CC has been on them and made it hard for them to learn, he felt compelled to do something, it is why he started this whole thing. Along the way had one school board member wanting him to talk to teachers, he said he would be tickled to do so, but it never happened, because teachers were afraid they would lose their jobs if they did. That shouldn't be, regardless of the merits of the standards, for a teacher to be afraid to speak their mind should never happen in this state. He hopes moving forward, we can do something to change that. A pastor by profession, as he has progressed, he doesn’t write his sermons like he used to, he was taught in college and seminary, it was drilled into their heads about good writing, if you want to be a great writer, read, read, read, and especially read great writers. The impression he has from CC is the cart is before the horse, you want kids to write before they know how to read. Phonics is the bricks and mortar, this has to be the starting point, you have to have phonics, and then words get put together, basic grammar and then let them read. Bring in writing later. He would like to see that changed, basics and reading first, work into the writing,

Jo: one more person to speak.

Hal James: Comes from Craven County. He belongs to an organization that has had representatives here at every one of their meetings, as well as going to the school board meetings in our county. He wanted to point out that the duties of the commissioners is to set, educational standards that will guide the students of NC. That responsibility was passed on to them by the NC legislature to determine the standards of education that meet the needs of NC, a sovereign state. The US constitution, crafted by our founders to guarantee that the sovereignty of the states joining the union would never be impugned. Nowhere in this document can we find the authority of the Federal Government to involve itself the education of the citizens of the several states, the US Department of Education shouldn’t exist. Proponents proclaim CC was put together by Governors and state education directors, no so. The mission of CC is to control students, and what they are to be taught. Some messages sent via CC include, parents can't help you, they are wrong, the founders were cruel white supremacists who enslaved the native people, the morality and religion of your parents and grandparents doesn't not belong in 21st modern century, America has a history of cruel treatment of other nations, there is no American exceptionalism. America should accept world government. He asks the commissioners to read Tragedy and Hope 101.

Andre: overview of recommendations, https://docs.google.com/document/d/1cCm6kqVpzCkZhEvEgCShMiOAlZo9wSwUSi64q48jFYg/edit?ts
The Commissioners are debating the merits of the preliminary recommendations, a lot of discussion, some argument, and nothing decided, it all makes for really boring reading).

**ELA: recommendations:**

Olivia: Feels they need to have additional recommendations, not getting specific enough around some of the points that have emerged. Scope and sequence concept should be applied. Take a look at 1–5 or 8, rethink the location of standards, one would say what are the implications for testing, she believes that standards and curriculum should drive testing, not the other way around. May look at moving a standard from one grade to another, says many of the problems are based on being developmentally inappropriate.

Andre: Look at sequencing as it relates to the lower grades, likes the approach, phase one two and three, make sure proper foundation is done. Writing and grammar.

Olivia: What she would do if she had this charge. She would talk to the teachers, see the host of standards, told the story of a few of the teachers that got together during the summer to go over the standards and reworked them. They looked at terminology and streamlined the ELA terms and decided when the best time to teach theme is. Refine the recommendations.

Katie: standards should be a very obvious blueprint.

Andre: teacher collaboration is good, teachers like flexibility but need a higher starting point so they don't waste teaching time trying to decide what standards are asking for.

Olivia: Recommendations need to be clear, it will be the department to deal with. Be clear with the terms that are used, so everyone can understand. Stay away from education jargon. There will be many different groups reading these standards and they need to be clear to all of them.

Andre: A strong message is they need to be understood by the layperson.

Tammy: #8 to address, Olivia commented on it, not expand the boundaries, Tammy sees it delving into curriculum.

Katie: Maybe teachers collaborating together

Tammy: Unpacking documents. Would be better to have them as examples within the standards.

Olivia: Think about getting the basics right first, getting them rethought, better scoping sequence applied, let's deal with the basics before we integrate with another content area, implies that we are also making judgments and possibilities about ELA being integrable with Social Studies.

Andre: Separate the standards from curriculum and strategies, That does not imply the standard cannot stand alone. You have flexibility on how to get there.
Jennie Metcalf: Grammar issue: left out of CC. Will they suggest standards that will be included in the NC ELA standards? SAT does accesses grammar, so it needs to be taught. Who will be responsible for actually writing those?

Andre: If we believe grammar is not there, then that is the recommendation that goes in the report.

Olivia: There is a basis for that, capture grammar in a writing recommendation. Writing and grammar are part of CC if you go out to the CC state site, (on the web, the unpacking documents) when you get into the writing, she thinks her charge says they would look at the reading component, and look at writing later. (wow)

Group: Not what they see, they see the entire ELA component.

Katie: Work group will get back together and look at the grammar.

Andre: Adds to Katie’s thought process, saying, have a section saying here is our recommendation for reading and writing........

Olivia: Says getting the proper scope and sequencing will answer and resolve a lot of the angst about the ELA.

Katie: And repetition and clarity about when do I teach this, and this.

Andre: Asks if there are any more comments on the tentative list of recommendations.

Jeff: Wants to know if they are going to get more specific in the bands.

Olivia, need to go back and re think #7, because they need to for their own purposes word band.

Katie: Wants them to be specific as to what is done in each grade, this is what is done in 9th grade, this is what is done in 10th. Etc.

Cobey: Doesn’t think you can give recommendations unless you give specific examples of what is meant by simplify standards, pull out several of them and say this is jargon, and this says the same thing written a different way. The topic of resources came up, but it is not because the Board of Education has not asked for more resources, it is because the legislature has increased resources, but they have not increased resources up to the level they were pre-recession. They have been given flexibility to take textbook money and use it for digital resources, all for flexibility, especially in districts without strong tax base, feels it is appropriate to speak to resources in the report.

Olivia, Tied to that thought, thinks there should be a statement in the recommendation around the way the local school districts manage their resources, something amiss. When you have 15 sixth grade teachers from the same school going to the google store in the afternoon all downloading different material to teach the same standard that says something is wrong and there is no central approach to managing resources.
Bill: Homebase is not what it can be unless there is money to populate that resource. An approved list of resources. Talking about resources created by publishers, textbook manufacturers that is put on HomeBase.

Andre: Some teachers want to use different sources. Looks at 20 different districts with 20 different approaches, Olivia says you have that locally with varying degrees of quality. No one knows how to consistently execute a standard.

Olivia: You will have that many approaches within a single school, there will be different teachers with different resources with differing degrees of quality.

Andre: Points to be made, look at how you are going to organize, and address #7, and address the word "band". We don’t like bands because it is nebulious mot clear. Have a standard not span more than one grade year.

Tammy: In the review process was there a state that reflects some of these recommendations you are making?

Olivia: The reviewed standards are all prior to CC, those states today look very much like NC except for VA.

Katie: Reviewed 5 states, thought they were more grade specific, couldn’t remember for sure if any of them used bands.

Tammy: In that case, it seems like a good idea to look at those as examples in the report. If they address the problems.

Jeannie: Feels strongly that she would like to see them bring in more of a balance between literature and informative text. Put some literature back in middle and high school.

Katie: This is a process of changing the mindset of teachers and students, they are reading in math, science, history. Working on that now, make people understand that they are doing this outside of the English class.

Andre: Need to be specific, simply saying they are not diminishing informational reading, it is a topic that is addressed in other classes. Concentrated time spent on impact areas.

Olivia: Find a way to blend a few of the recommendations.

Andre: Let’s be as actionable as possible, don't leave anything to interpretation.

Jeff: 7 and 2 are connected with the word essential. Composition and grammar can be identified as essential components.

Olivia: to Katie: #2 begs the question difference between goals and standards.
Katie: 2 gets to the essential standards, determining what is essential, reduce jargon, scope and sequence correct and all is clear.

Olivia: Get 2 and 7 to be clear.

Andre: Emphasis on reading at the lower grades, writing, more grammar.

Jeff: The word goals is used in multiple places, then minimum goals, minimum standards, what is the difference. Needs clarification.

Olivia: Ca. had rich framework in theory of knowledge that drove the standards, goals and content.

Tammy: Doesn’t think it would be beyond the scope of the commission to say…. Here’s an example of what we are talking about, give the State Board a concrete evaluation.

Andre: So they can evaluate the merits of our recommendations.

Ann: As it gets into a document. Be sure the document is in complete sentences. Suggested language of recommendations. Use specific action verbs. Will pass these on to Katie. Prioritize, establish, etc.

**MATH:**

Ted: #1 seems redundant, they don’t recommend revising current standards, number 9 and 3 specify what they want as far as recommendation should be. Scratch #1, it wasn’t in his report, start with item 2, which will be added to his report. #2 will be added. Has a recommendation for different grade levels, K-8 and high school.

Jeff: Asks Ted with 3 and 9, do you need 2?

Ted: maybe move 2 into his introduction, Jeff is correct.

Olivia: Could 10 be part of 9?

Ted: Wants to adopt MN or revise CC to meet MN’s standards. Says that change is not feasible.

Andre: States the only reason MN is looked as is because CC’s are not clear, they are redundant in certain cases, and have issues with sequencing and age appropriate. All that would have to be fixed in CC. So are you saying you could spend a lot of time and money doing that, or simply adopting the MN standards?

Tammy: If Mn standards meet what he is looking for in its entirety, it makes no sense to recommend that they completely alter Common Core standards to accomplish the same goal, which is to match MN.
Andre: Doesn’t think they have studied MN enough to make that claim. Asked question in August did we evaluate MN standards and make that statement.

Ted: Did not go over the MN standards step by step, their work group read and discussed them, but was not feasible to do the same kind of analysis because it took several weeks to do that.

Bill Cobey: Not comfortable adopting a set of standards they don’t know much about.

Tammy: Says that is exactly what the State Board did in 2010 When they adopted Common Core.

Bill Cobey: Shares he was not part of that decision. Shares that he has no problem using MN as a model framework for revision for changes in NC.

Ted: Says it is not feasible to do this. To rewrite that whole thing won’t work, could do it the other way, start with MN as a model to revise current standards.

Bill Cobey: How did we get to #3, throwing out the integrated math, and to return to traditional math, because that is not the message he is getting from teachers, his message is mixed, he is willing to look at that, or, or giving the LEA’s the option to make the choice. At this point would not accept that as consensus of the group.

Andre: #3 doesn’t state the problem they are addressing, why we recommend this.

Bill: Is saying the sequencing is completely flawed with the integrated approach, and they are leaving out geometry, Dr. Milgram said Integrated Math is the best way to go, so what’s the problem

Tammy: That is not what he said, he said our state in sot prepared to teach it. It is preferable if you have a teaching staff ready to teach it and you are truly integrated, which we are not.

Andre: If that is true, we need to capture that in the report, this is why we feel lead to this recommendation, in our focus groups, teachers feel that they don’t have the resources, text books, all the things that are needed to be successful. For Math I, it is like Algebra I, and can use existing text books. Those are the resources that are available. Either approach that gets to the goal of each grade. Some feedback shared that some of the kids coming up will do better in integrated math because they have been in the current track of the CC standards. There is a measurement system too, teachers are being evaluated on the success, and the teachers are in survival mode.

Olivia: Would like to see some kind of opening statement that lays out what is strong about MN and why it is a better or preferred approach, like we need 2 columns, this is how MN does it, this is how NC does it and this is the preferred approach to mathematics. It will have to be that clearly spelled out., when looking at the MN standards, make it clearly spelled out, here are the problems, They will need to illuminate the advisory council group that has endorsed the MN standards and they are a powerful voice, to underscore their credibility.

Andre: Clarity is missing, parents’ can’t understand, too many.
Tammy: We are looking at a list of recommendations that are pulled from evidence gathered so far, she doesn’t see them as stand alone, that there is plenty of justification for every recommendation that is being made. Need to justify all of them in the report.

Encourage them to listen to the teacher focus group topics, clear in her view as to what they would like to see.

Jeff: Does survey information data address the return to traditional math. Data should be part of the report. The summary report.

Jo says, #3, math standards does support that return to traditional math (current to July 13)

Jeff: wants to see the most recent data, raw data supports it as well, will e mail it to Jeff

Jo: Did a summary of the feedback statements from the teachers.

Jeff: Wants data to be compiled to its most recent form and e mailed to all t=of the commissioners for their review.

Olivia: Said that her raw data supports that as well.

Andre: Big issues are the way it was deployed was not right, not as thoughtful as it could have been, teacher training, sequencing, arbitrary, after Math I very difficult. Do advanced Geometry before they had the fundamental geometry foundation that had been stripped out of Math I. Can’t teach to that standard without the foundation to build upon. The reason that happened is because of how we segmented the traditional math to integrate it. Theory is mostly that integrated sounds fine, but you left stuff out during the development.

Jeannie: Said NC used to do integrated math, but what this is not the same. Get back to what made us good pre common core with traditional math standards, said we were #7 in the country pre Common Core. Supports Teds work, and thinks we should see it through.

Ted comments: MN allows each HS or LEA make their own decision on integrated or pre sequenced, he would guess that if you are in a school with lots of resources and good teachers would be fine to do, but the standards as they are written are not good. They are lousy, they need to be gone.

Andre: Important distinction he is making, we are here to fix the standards, if we fix the issues, how do I sequence his differently, there will be some LEA's that will like the integrated stuff and choose to use that method.

Ted: There are three very experienced senior High school teachers on his team that are already integrating standards in the old fashioned sequencing because they are good teachers and can successfully do it.
Olivia: In gathering information over the last several months, she doesn't know why we (NC) have turned to integrated math in the first place. Is it based on some research?

Jeff: Never got an answer from the beginning, why did we go to this in the first place.

Olivia: If we knew there was something valuable about this approach and its value in getting students ready for college, and especially is this how the colleges are teaching Math?

Andre: There is some research that does show the integrated approach is preferable, and offers to get an expert in to talk to them about its benefits. Ted’s point is still valid, even if we buy into the theory, theory is how to teach, which is not what they are to be doing. Still comes down to the standards. In NC right now, the way it looks is there are gaps in the standards, independent as to how you teach it. Whatever you decide you have to fix the standard.

Recommendations need to focus on standards, not execution of them.

Jeff: When he is looking at the standards they seem to come to 2 categories, 3, 4, 5 and 7 seem to be around high school, 6 can go either way, the 2nd area is K-8 piece with the identification of the MN standards. 9, 10, 11 all seem to be around that. 8 seems to be an area that can fall in either camp.

Andre: Thinks they may need a category of recommendations that are focused on the standards. Here are the recommendations for what needs to happen with the next set of standards, there are some issues with execution and we need to say we fix the standards, but after that, we will need to visit how this is communicated to everyone. To the point on funding, this stuff needs to be paid for. Does this mean as taxpayers, we pay more, it may mean we eliminate flaws that we are paying for now.

Olivia and Ted still want to know why NC moved to integrated math, what research lead them to its merits before they make their final recommendations.

Andre: Asks Jo to get a math standard guru in to speak about the facts and experiences behind integrated math. We look at survey data too. Even after that, we still have standards that need fixed.

Olivia: Wants to know how Math is taught in College.

Jeannie: Wants to know if someone can get them the same information over e mail instead of bringing someone one in.

Andre: In theory, the integrated math approach is supposed to make the kids more like it more and be more likely to pursue stem careers.

Jo sent out links for test scores for the ACT, SAT. Dr. Howard can come to speak to test results if they want.
Olivia: like to know and see, 6 years’ worth of data, because will pick up where students were at the end of the last curriculum. Scores during the revision process, because theory is when teachers and kids are in middle of the revision everyone gets it, would pick up mid-point and stretch us through where we are today, that would give us more of a panoramic view of achievement, SAT ACT and NAEP.

Andre: Look nationally and globally, international standards.

Tammy: Next meeting is scheduled for a Friday, November 13.

Meeting is adjourned.