

Minutes
State Board of Education Meeting
Friday, September 15, 2017

The State Board of Education met Friday, September 15, 2017, in the Arkansas Department of Education Auditorium. Chair Dr. Jay Barth called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

Present: Dr. Jay Barth, Chair; Joe Black, Vice-Chair; Dr. Fitz Hill; Diane Zook; Ouida Newton; Susan Chambers; Charisse Dean; Mireya Reith; Courtney Cochran, 2017 Teacher of the Year; and Johnny Key, Commissioner.

Absent: Brett Williamson

Reports

Report-1 Report on College Board's Partnership with Khan Academy

College and Career Access Executive Director Mr. Aaron Lemon-Strauss said his division is responsible for getting students to and through college and making them career-ready. He said College Board updated the SAT in recent years. He said College Board partnered with Khan Academy to create a resource for students to prepare for the SAT and PSAT. He said the resource can help students get personalized learning. He said Khan Academy's personalized instruction is aligned to Arkansas state standards.

He said the College Board and Khan Academy partnership started two years prior and has 4 million unique users. He said 39% of students improve 100 points or more on the PSAT or SAT when they practice on Khan Academy. He said 1,642 Arkansas students are practicing on Khan Academy. He said students across demographic groups find comparable gains in test scores.

He said satpractice.org is the official practice site. He said teachers can use satpractice.org/k12 as a resource.

Mr. Lemon-Strauss said there are some ACT test takers who prepare with the Khan Academy resource. He said College Board has not done an efficacy study on ACT score gains through use of this resource.

Mr. Lemon-Strauss said Khan Academy instruction is highly personalized to each student because College Board shares student test taking data and test-based data.

Report-2 Little Rock Area Public Education Stakeholder Group Report Next Steps

General Counsel Ms. Lori Freno submitted a summary report to State Board members to share perspectives on how to address specific recommendations made by the Little Rock Area Public Education Stakeholder Group.

Ms. Zook said the summary report provided by Legal Services is thorough and she will approach the report from a special education lens.

Chair Dr. Barth said he would share the document prepared by Legal Services with the Little Rock Area Public Education Stakeholder Group.

Dr. Barth asked the group to consider student discipline in light of the Stakeholder Report.

Dr. Hill said the Task Force for Student Discipline had a good conversation in the last meeting. He said the task force expects to gain clarity in the coming weeks on creating timelines for approaching change in student discipline procedures. He said short term and long term goals for the task force would be presented to the State Board at the next meeting.

Commissioner Key said there are zero tolerance policies within the law that are often interpreted on local school district levels not as what they may do but what the district shall do. He said there are some districts whose programs keep students in a learning environment rather than disrupting their education in response to discipline issues. He said changes are happening slowly over a long period of time.

Ms. Newton said there may be opportunities for Little Rock schools to pilot student discipline strategies.

Dr. Barth asked the group to consider special education related recommendations offered in the Stakeholder Report.

Ms. Zook said some districts go by the letter of the law and others go by the spirit of the law concerning special education. She said every charter school must provide the full spectrum of services for special education students. Ms. Zook said traditional districts must identify every special education child in their district by December 1st. She said state, federal, and Medicaid funding is available for special education students' education.

Ms. Reith said the first meeting for the Task Force on Family Engagement in Learning and Deeper Learning Grant was focused on goals for the task force. She said Public Information Manager and task force member Ms. Meghan Ables is part of the State Consortium on Family Engagement Initiative, a national effort to examine family engagement in learning in which Arkansas was one of a few states selected to

participate. She said continued conversations between State Board members and community members that is two-sided will address concerns about engagement in the Little Rock area. She said getting information out about English language services may not be the best approach to addressing English language learning concerns raised in the Stakeholder report.

Ms. Dean said a hub of information for parents on their options concerning special education and English language learning is needed. She said revising the hospitable culture of teachers including home visits will play a large role in student discipline. She said making schools more hospitable for parents is also important.

Dr. Barth asked the Task Force on Family Engagement in Learning and Deeper Learning Grant to consider the pros and cons of making connections via hardcopy, in-person engagement versus softcopy, online engagement. Commissioner Key asked how to get readily available information to parents via advocacy groups. Ms. Reith said this is one of the goals of the Task Force on Family Engagement in Learning and Deeper Learning Grant.

Dr. Barth asked the group to consider potential synergy between traditional public and charter schools in the Little Rock area.

Ms. Newton said one way to address collaboration between traditional and charter schools is to invite leaders of public and charter schools to attend a State Board work session in spring 2018. Ms. Reith said Schools of Innovation and charter schools could come together for collaboration as well. Dr. Hill said problems within the current system should be identified with the expressed goal of addressing those problems through the collaboration of charter and public school leaders. Ms. Newton said the setting should invite charter and public school leaders to get to know one another on a personal level. Ms. Reith offered the Deeper Learning Grant remaining funds as an opportunity to bring in an outside facilitator to guide a meeting between charter and traditional school leaders.

Dr. Barth asked what the future of cooperatives is as it relates to providing key services such as transportation. Commissioner Key said conversations about a unified transportation system is possible for districts outside of the official cooperative structure.

Commissioner Key said the Task Force for Family Engagement in Learning and Deeper Learning Grant can bring together representatives from parent organizations of public and charter schools while district and school leaders are collaborating and sharing information. Dr. Barth said the advocacy community should also be involved with this collaboration and information sharing.

Report-3 Chair's Report

Dr. Barth said he has been talking to the department about future work sessions. He said work sessions on Act 930 and virtual education are to come. He said there will also be a report on service learning. He said work sessions will likely be during the day on Thursdays or Fridays.

Report-4 Commissioner's Report

Commissioner Johnny Key said the Arkansas Public School Computer Network (APSCN) received a Governor's Digital Transformation Award on September 14, 2017. Assistant Commissioner for Research and Technology Dr. Eric Saunders said My School Info also received a Government Standard of Excellence award as part of the 2017 WebAwards.

Commissioner Key said Ms. Gina Windle would become the next Chief of Staff for the Arkansas Department of Education.

Commissioner Key said the Department sent the Arkansas ESSA plan to the U.S. Department of Education on September 15, 2017.

Commissioner Key shared a presentation on Act 930 and systems analysis. He said the vision is to transform Arkansas to lead the nation in student-centered education. Commissioner Key said the Department will develop transitional support for districts that have public schools classified in academic distress, priority, or focus status.

Assistant Commissioner for Public School Accountability Ms. Deborah Coffman said it is important to understand systems. She said the systems include academics, human capital management, student support services, fiscal, facilities, and communication/meaningful stakeholder engagement.

Ms. Coffman said districts provide curriculum and instructional support. She said school levels also have their own system. She said the systems are the same but the components of those systems are slightly different.

State Superintendent Dr. Mike Hernandez said the Department is doing a diagnostic analysis on where different districts are having issues within their systems. He said the goal is to share this information with the State Board in November. He said transitional support plans will be included in that shared information. He said districts will provide details on the type of support they will provide to schools, and districts will also share the level of support they will need from the Department.

Commissioner Key said districts are more empowered to create their own solutions. He said the Department believes this process will provide a solid foundation for a cycle of inquiry and to help those districts improve.

Dr. Hernandez said the Department is purposefully avoiding the trap of having districts feel like they must check off items from a checklist to address diagnostic analysis. He said the Department will engage districts to consider the process as less of reaching compliance and more of addressing their own areas for growth.

Commissioner Key shared the newest School of Innovation video featuring Weiner Elementary School.

Report-5 Board Standing Committees, Special Committees, Liaisons, and Appointments Report

Ms. Dean said she visited a number of schools on the first day of school. She said her goal is to visit schools biweekly.

Ms. Zook acknowledged the work of Our House which supports homeless children. She said Our House serves over 500 children and provide good support to students.

Task Force on Student Discipline liaison Dr. Hill said the Sixth and Goal program will be rolled out at Pinnacle View for a September 16th event at 10 a.m. He said even though they have free physicals, transportation to the event is an issue for many students. He said the leadership team is learning from this experience. He said Sixth and Goal is reaching out to churches to request the use of church vans to mitigate transportation issues. He said the program will track participant data with one expressed goal of determining the program's impact on student discipline. He said the group is tracking attendance and GPA as well as wins and losses.

Liaison to Public School Accountability Ms. Zook said the support systems approach taken by the Department is multifaceted.

Liaison to ESSA Steering Committee Ms. Newton said there is an executive summary on the website for those interested in understanding the Arkansas ESSA Plan.

Liaison to NASBE Ms. Reith said all who wanted to attend the national meeting should be sure to book accommodations in a timely manner.

Adjournment

Ms. Dean moved, seconded by Mr. Black, to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 12:17 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Kelicia Hollis



Johnny Key, Commissioner



Dr. Jay Barth, Chair

