

Minutes
State Board of Education
Tuesday, May 18, 2004

The State Board of Education met on Tuesday, May 18, 2004, in the Auditorium of the State Education Building. JoNell Caldwell, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

The following Board members were present: JoNell Caldwell; Chairman; Shelby Hillman; Vice-Chairman; Sherry Burrow; Luke Gordy; Dr. Calvin King; Diane Tatum; and Dr. Jeanna Westmoreland.

The following Board members were absent: Randy Lawson and MaryJane Rebick

Ms. Tatum moved that a new item be added to the Agenda to consider a staff position. Ms. Hillman seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Dr. James recommended that Dr. Don Stewart be employed as Deputy Director effective June 1, 2004. Dr. James stated that Dr. Stewart has much experience as an administrator in Arkansas public schools: he served as a teacher and superintendent, he is a former employee of the Department of Education, and he worked in both the Pulaski County Special School District and the Little Rock School District where he was responsible for financial management.

Mr. Gordy moved to accept Dr. James' recommendation and employ Dr. Don Stewart as Deputy Director. Dr. Westmoreland seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Dr. Stewart was recognized and stated to the Board that he is looking forward to working in the position of Deputy Director and is happy to be returning to the Department of Education. He stated that there are many challenges, but he is confident that with the leadership and staff those challenges can be met.

Consideration of Administrative Annexations or Consolidations

The minutes reflect only actions taken by the Board. A full transcript of the deliberations as transcribed by a court reporter is available.

Matter of Administrative Consolidation of the Crawfordsville School District Pursuant to Act 60 of the Second Extraordinary Session of 2003

Scott Smith reported that Bill Lewellen, representing the Crawfordsville School Board, requested a continuation until a later date due to a previous court engagement. Ms. Caldwell stated that the district was notified of the date and

time for the hearing with sufficient time for other arrangements to be made. She further noted the importance of keeping on schedule to meet the requirements of Act 60 to have this work completed prior to June 1. Dr. King stated that it is important to hear from the Crawfordsville residents and that they be represented in this hearing. He noted that the Board denied their previous petition and that this is a hearing to cause the Crawfordsville District to combine with another entity. Dr. King stated that if the hearing is conducted and a decision is made today, many Crawfordsville residents and members of the Crawfordsville Board will not be represented. Dr. King moved continuation of the hearing until May 24. Ms. Tatum seconded the motion.

Mr. Smith reminded the Board that Act 60 requires that each school “on the list” must be annexed or consolidated prior to June 1. He also informed the Board that the Crawfordsville District continues under a desegregation order that must be resolved prior to a final decision.

Ms. Hillman inquired if Mr. Lewellen could add additional information to the issue that was not part of the previous discussion. Dr. King stated that he felt there would be new issues in that the previous discussion focused strictly on Crawfordsville and Earle and that the matter at this time would be consideration of a new partner for the consolidation. He avowed that new questions and new issues will be raised. He also noted that there could possibly be new or additional information from the Attorney General’s Office.

The motion was adopted unanimously.

Matter of Administrative Consolidation of the Grady School District Pursuant to Act 60 of the Second Extraordinary Session of 2003

Ms. Tatum moved that the Grady School District be administratively consolidated with the Star City School District. Ms. Burrow seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Matter of Administrative Consolidation of the Gould School District Pursuant to Act 60 of the Second Extraordinary Session of 2003

Dr. King moved that the Gould School District be administratively consolidated with the Dumas School District. Ms. Burrow seconded the motion. The vote passed on a vote of 4 – 3 (Gordy, Hillman and Tatum voted no)

Matter of Administrative Consolidation of the Mt. Holly School District Pursuant to Act 60 of the Second Extraordinary Session of 2003

Ms. Tatum moved that the Mt. Holly School District be administratively consolidated with the Smackover School District. Ms. Hillman seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Matter of Administrative Consolidation of the Union School District Pursuant to Act 60 of the Second Extraordinary Session of 2003

Ms. Hillman moved that the Union School District be administratively consolidated with the El Dorado School District. Ms. Tatum seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Other Business

Dr. James confirmed that there will be a quorum available for a meeting to be held on Monday, May 24, 2004. He noted that in addition to Crawfordsville, each of the four districts that have a conditional approval will be asked to appear and provide an update of the pending court rulings and Department staff will begin presenting rules for consideration for final approval.

He also stated that the regular meeting on June 14, 2004, promises to be lengthy.

Ms. Tatum moved adjournment. Ms. Burrow seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

These Minutes were recorded and reported by Dr. Charles D. Watson.

Dr. Ken James, Director

JoNell Caldwell, Chair