



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

AGENDA **STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

September 11, 2015

Arkansas Department of Education

ADE Auditorium, immediately following adjournment of State Board Meeting

11:00 AM

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Reports

Report-1 Chair's Report

Presenter: Vicki Saviers

Consent Agenda

C-1 Minutes - August 14, 2015

Presenter: Deborah Coffman

Action Agenda

A-1 Progress Report from Blytheville High School - A New Tech School and Blytheville Middle School, Blytheville School District

Blytheville High School - A New Tech School and Blytheville Middle School, Blytheville School District were classified as Academic Distressed on February 12, 2015.

Presenter: Dr. Richard Wilde and Elbert Harvey

Minutes
State Board of Education Special Committee on Academic Distress Meeting
Friday, August 14, 2015

The State Board of Education Special Committee on Academic Distress met Friday, August 14, 2015, in the Arkansas Department of Education Auditorium. Chair Vicki Saviers called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m.

Present: Vicki Saviers, Chair; Toyce Newton; Diane Zook; Brett Williamson; and Ouida Newton.

Absent: none

Reports

Report-1 Chair's Report

No report.

Consent Agenda

Ms. Zook moved, seconded by Mr. Williamson, to approve the consent agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

Item included in the Consent Agenda:

- Minutes - July 10, 2015

Action Agenda

A-1 Progress Report from Belair Middle School and Pine Bluff High School in the Pine Bluff School District

Pine Bluff School District Superintendent Dr. T. C. Wallace, Jr. said the school board and the superintendent are on the same page. He said the district was overstaffed and, therefore, reduced some positions. He said the district closed two schools, eliminated 68 teaching and support positions and eliminated five administrative positions. He said some expenditures were also abolished. He said these reductions resulted in financial savings to the district. He said he anticipated increased enrollment in the district. He asked the Board to include the district in solving issues reported to the State Board members.

Pine Bluff School Board President Mr. Harold Jackson said the school board

approved the reductions described by Dr. Wallace. He said the school board was committed to removing the school from the academic distress list. He said the school board members attended the requested training. He said the school board meets monthly as required and also meets for a work study session monthly.

School Improvement Director Dr. Richard Wilde said through observation, he has noted more planning and educators have more voice in decisions. He said it is early in the change process and there needed to be continued monitoring. He said the school board needed to be more transparent in their discussion of the actions. He said the superintendent is delegating to the chief officers and being more inclusive. He said the systems are not in place at this time. He said it is too early in the year to evaluate the effectiveness. He said the school was working on changing the culture of the adults but also needed to consider a plan to change the culture of learning by the students.

Dr. Wallace said he is licensed as a superintendent in Arkansas, Texas, New York, Mississippi, and Michigan. He said his license is provisional in Arkansas. He said he communicates directly with the chief officers and administrators. He said the district had a needs assessment completed by an outside provider and by internal groups. Dr. Wallace said he projected a reduction in cost for external providers.

Chief School Reform Officer Ms. Alesia Smith said the teachers have received training on BloomBoard. She said the curriculum is vertically aligned. She said the needs assessment was ongoing with feedback from administrators and teachers. She said the district would use The Learning Institute and Star Reading and Math as interim assessments. She said they would use Compass for interventions. She said the principals were working with their staffs to build expectations around the new vision for the Pine Bluff School District. She said the district had worked with two external providers – From the Heart and Keith Sanders Group. She said the district currently has a contract with From the Heart, but no contract has been signed for the Keith Sanders Group.

Public School Accountability Coordinator Mr. Elbert Harvey said that Dr. Wallace's provisional license expires March 17, 2016. He recommended the district collaborate with the chamber of commerce and schedule regular community meetings and report the feedback.

Motion

Ms. Zook made a motion, seconded by Mr. Williamson, to provide a full report of progress and concerns, to hold a town hall meeting to inform the public, and report progress to the State Board in November 2015. The motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Deborah Coffman.

Blytheville Academic Distress report SBOE sub-committee

The Blytheville School District has accepted the four academic distress recommendations from the ADE School Improvement Unit as district concerns and has begun the process of addressing each recommendation as a K-12 district issue. The district leadership has been guiding these efforts throughout the summer.

The following describes some of the work that has been done during this summer as the district and campus leaders' work to address each of the academic distress recommendations.

ONE:

The Blytheville district curriculum director and the principals from the high school and middle school were asked to present at the ADE School Improvement Summer Conference which was held in June in Hot Springs. Their presentation described how, as a district, they came to embrace the academic distress recommendations for the high school and middle school as whole district issues and how they are developing plans to address these recommendations. The plans being developed will address systemic changes that will be designed to improve student academic performance at all levels in the Blytheville schools.

TWO:

Following the submission of the four academic distress recommendations to the Blytheville district, the ADE-School Improvement Specialist advised the school leadership that one of the first steps in addressing the recommendations was to write a "description of full implementation" for each recommendation. This process requires a deep understanding of the district's current reality regarding the recommendation and a thorough explanation of the interventions that will be utilized to rectify the concerns outlined in the recommendation. The final piece of this description states what the successful outcomes will be when the issues of the recommendation have been solved. This process requires an extensive and candid review of the current reality of the district and schools and, when done correctly, is quite time consuming.

The district has developed the description of full implementation for the following recommendation.

Recommendation 3: School leadership will implement a team structure that supports student learning and improved achievement as its primary purpose.

Clarification: The leadership team is the recipient of data from instructional teams and provides guidance and support for improved student outcomes. Instructional teams are the primary source for planning, implementing, and assessing teaching and learning. In addition to instructional teams, the leadership team also develops a structure of support teams that include parent teams, student teams (when appropriate) and community teams.

The following is the description of full implementation of the above recommendation as submitted by the district.

Description of full implementation:

The four academic distress recommendations will be evaluated by the continuous cycle of using data, analysis and strategy as teams assign indicators based on data, assess where they are, plan how to get there and evaluate if they made it.

In order to support the cycle of improvement, team structures are in place. Structures that support student learning and improved achievement include: weekly district level administrative meetings, principal learning and growth team that meets monthly, district-wide leadership team that meets quarterly, core building leadership team (consisting of instructional support personnel, teacher leaders and principal) that meets weekly on each campus and building level sub-committee chairs that report to building leadership teams weekly.

- Core building leadership teams review data from instructional, cultural, stakeholder, and management teams for the purpose of improving student achievement. Agendas and notes from each core building leadership team are shared with the district leadership team through the new ACSIP software.
- Monthly principals' learning and growth time is organized to guide principals to lead core building leadership teams in instructional practices (reviewing performance data from common assessments, extended classroom observations and teacher data conferences) for the purpose of student achievement.
- Data, reviewed by the core building leadership team, from common assessments, classroom observations and teacher conferences drive professional development and often provide individualized pathways for learning and support per teacher.

Indicators and Wise Ways From Indistar referenced in the development of this description:

**** = Priority School Indicators**

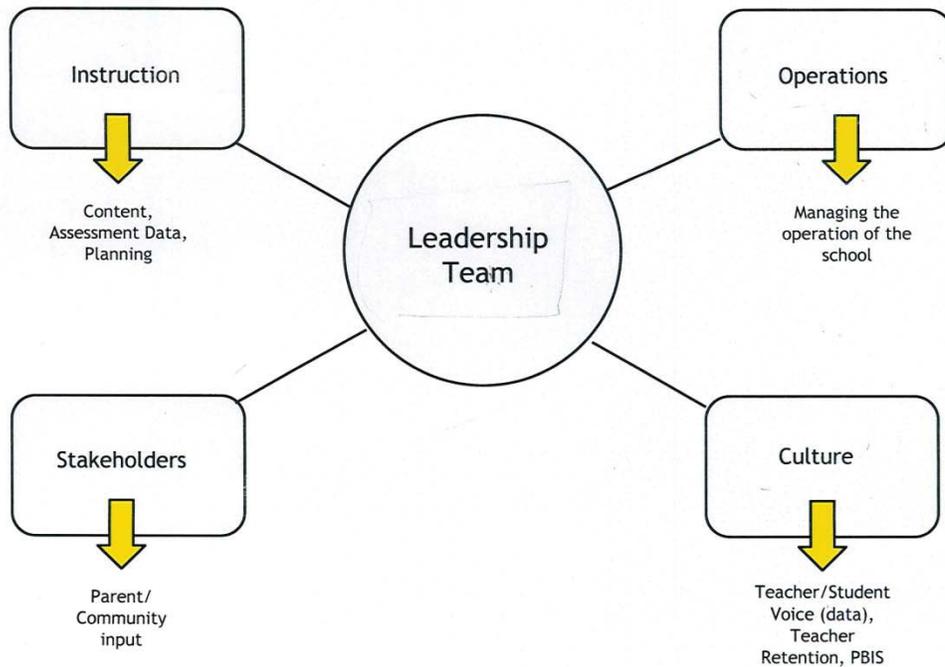
- **ID01 A team structure is officially incorporated into the school governance policy. [\(36\)](#)
- **ID04 All teams prepare agendas for their meetings. [\(39\)](#)
- **ID07 A Leadership Team consisting of the principal, teachers who lead the Instructional Teams, and other key professional staff meets regularly (twice a month or more for an hour each meeting). [\(42\)](#)
- **IF02 The Leadership Team reviews the principal's summary reports of classroom observations and takes them into account in planning professional development. [\(66\)](#)
- **IIA01 Instructional Teams develop standards-aligned units of instruction for each subject and grade level. [\(88\)](#)
- **IID06 Yearly learning goals are set for the school by the Leadership Team, utilizing student learning data. [\(104\)](#)

Additional Indicators

- IID11 Instructional Teams review the results of unit pre-/post-tests to make decisions about the curriculum and instructional plans and to "red flag" students in need of intervention (both students in need of tutoring or extra help and students needing enhanced learning opportunities because of their early mastery of objectives). [\(109\)](#)
- ID08 The Leadership Team serves as a conduit of communication to the faculty and staff. [\(43\)](#)
- ID10 The Leadership Team regularly looks at school performance data and aggregated classroom observation data and uses that data to make decisions about school improvement and professional development needs. [\(45\)](#)
- ID11 Teachers are organized into grade-level, grade-level cluster, or subject-area Instructional Teams. [\(46\)](#)
- ID13 Instructional Teams meet for blocks of time (4 to 6 hour blocks, once a month; whole days before and after the school year) sufficient to develop and refine units of instruction and review student learning data. [\(48\)](#)
- ID01 A team structure is officially incorporated into the school governance policy. [\(36\)](#)

THREE:

The district reviewed the existing structure of the Leadership Teams at the campus and district levels and designed the model below that will be used to allow the Leadership Teams to spend more quality time in the support of student learning and instruction. Many of the necessary tasks will be addressed by the additional support teams as described in the model.



FOUR:

The “Learning and Growth” activities are designed to provide support and professional growth for principals and other school leaders and are an integral part of the team structure for the district. The calendar for these activities for the 2015-2016 school year has been developed and provided to all school leaders that will be involved in this program.

Learning & Growth 2015-2016 Schedule

July:

28: 9:00-10:30 District Leadership Team Academic Distress 45-Day Plans
10:30-12:00 District Leadership Round Table

August:

25: 8:30-11:30 Learning & Growth (Admin)

September:

15: 8:30-10:30 Building Tour BPS

29: 8:30-11:30 Learning & Growth (Admin)

October:

13: 8:30-11:30 Learning & Growth (Admin)

11:30-1:30 District Leadership Round Table & Academic Distress/45 Day Plans

28: 8:30-10:30 Building Tour BES

November:

3: 8:30-10:30 Building Tour BMS

17: 8:30-11:30 Learning & Growth (Admin)

December:

1: 8:30-11:30 Learning & Growth (Admin)

11:30-1:30 District Leadership Round Table & Academic Distress/45 Day Plans
(lunch provided)

15: 8:30-10:30 Building Tour BHS

January:

26: 8:30-11:30 Learning & Growth (Admin)

February:

23: 8:30-11:30 Learning & Growth (Admin)

March:

8: 8:30-11:30 Learning & Growth (Admin)

11:30-1:30 District Leadership Round Table & Academic Distress/45 Day Plans
(lunch provided)

April:

19: 8:30-11:30 Learning & Growth (Admin)

May:

24: 8:30-11:30 Learning & Growth (Admin)

11:30-1:30 District Leadership Round Table & Academic Distress/45 Day Plans
(lunch provided)

Week of May 31-June 4 Individual Celebration & Reflection Meetings

June: Meetings as needed

FIVE:

On Wednesday, August 5, 2015, Sally Cooke, Teryn Spears, and Kristin Cuilla, of New Tech Network conducted a joint session around Academic Distress with Blytheville Middle School and Blytheville High School teachers and administrators. The purpose and goals for the session were to:

1. Develop a shared picture of existing structures that support ADE's recommendations for student academic success.
2. Ground the understanding of existing structures in order to enact them.
3. Identify ways to increase intensity and frequency of balanced communication between and among schools and the district.

Middle and High school teachers worked together to identify existing structures in each building that support teaching and learning around the four recommendations (effective use of data, recruit, induct and retain high quality employees, team structures and curriculum alignment). From there, the teachers identified which of the existing structures needed to be tweaked and also identified gaps.

Each campus had a follow-up session during the week of professional development to work on solutions for the issues identified by the teachers. The middle school met on Wednesday, August 12th, and the high school met on Thursday, August 13th. The work and inputs from these meetings are being used on each campus to inform the 45 day plans.

Additionally, the joint-session increased the flow of communication between teachers in grades 6-12 and serves as a conduit for future work.

Addendum: The four academic recommendations for the Blytheville schools

Recommendation 1: School leadership will develop and implement a system for the effective use of data to inform all school improvement decisions and efforts.

Clarification: The system will include procedures for analyzing data (i.e., student achievement; personnel recruitment and retention; professional development programs; leader and teacher evaluation results; aligned, standards-based curriculum; instructional and assessment strategies, community and family engagement; and student groupings and services) to evaluate the level of effectiveness of efforts and interventions to improve student outcomes.

Recommendation 2: School leadership, in collaboration with district administration, will plan and implement a program designed to recruit, induct, and retain high-quality employees for all employment categories within the school/district.

Clarification: The plan will identify the following:

- an induction system that accelerates the assimilation of new staff
- specific monthly activities related to recruitment, induction, and retention
- quarterly evaluation of the activities
- An analysis of the reasons teachers leave the district or remain.

Recommendation 3: School leadership will implement a team structure that supports student learning and improved achievement as its primary purpose.

Clarification: The leadership team is the recipient of data from instructional teams and provides guidance and support for improved student outcomes. Instructional teams are the primary source for planning, implementing, and assessing teaching and learning. In addition to instructional teams, the leadership team also develops a structure of support teams that include parent teams, student teams (when appropriate) and community teams.

Recommendation 4: School leadership, in collaboration with district administration, will facilitate an analysis of current English/language arts and math curricula across all grade levels and articulate in writing the process for deep curriculum alignment.

Clarification: An aligned curriculum will address state and local standards, courses of study, pacing guides, instructional unit plans, daily lesson plans, and assessment and instructional strategies. The primary assessment of student learning will occur following the completion of each instructional unit (approximately two – three weeks) by the instructional team that is responsible for the planning and implementing instruction. This assessment will result in interventions for students who need additional support to

master standards and enrichment for students who have mastered unit standards. The focus on unit assessments does not preclude the need for ongoing, daily, formative assessments within a classroom or assessments that occur at longer intervals, such as quarterly or semester exams. Leadership will regularly evaluate the process and determine the need for modifications.

August 28, 2015-Outline of Progress on Academic Distress – Blytheville School District

District-wide ownership: Blytheville School District has embraced a culture of candor in taking ownership of academic distress and has begun a systemic approach to improving student achievement. Blytheville Middle School and Blytheville High School are in distress, but the district has shared the recommendations with all campuses and all have agreed to work the improvement process in each feeder school in addition to those in distress.

Embedded Support: This year the district has shifted the responsibilities of the curriculum director and New Tech/stakeholder involvement director to be embedded at the middle and high school to guide and support the improvement process in addition to using a full time SIS from an outside provider who is working with all leadership teams from K-12 and meets regularly with district leadership. Although the most intensive work is done at the two schools in distress, we are working through the issues district-wide by guiding and supporting the leadership teams on each campus to analyze data, find and close gaps, and create a growth mindset and a culture of expectation around learning for all staff, students, and their families.

Culture: Armed with an empowering culture in which students are agents of their own learning, an engaging curriculum that is contextualized, relevant and shared through Project-Based and Problem-Based learning and technology that enables student learning, BHS teachers, students and administrators have shifted the culture of teaching and learning. Increased expectations, increased rigor and increased opportunity for involvement are standards of business and data shows these shifts have resulted in student growth in learning and in agency. These concepts are being shared with BMS.

Community: Blytheville School District is aware of both the effect of the schools on the community and the effect of the community on the schools. To mitigate that effect, marketing materials have been created to accompany district administrators working in the community to tell the good news of the district. As the population of Blytheville (community) continues to shrink, the population of the school district follows. Between this shrink and parents opting to move their children to a less diverse educational setting, the student population inside Blytheville School District needs additional support and bolstering. As indicated below, that support has been amplified and is on point to see growth from kindergarten through twelfth grade.

Recommendations and highlights of some of the steps being taken follow:

1. It is recommended that the school/district develop and implement a system for the effective use of data to inform all school improvement decisions and efforts.

Clarification: The system will include procedures for analyzing data (i.e., student achievement; personnel recruitment and retention; professional development programs; leader and teacher evaluation results; aligned, standards-based curriculum; instructional and assessment strategies, community and family engagement; and student groupings and services) to evaluate the level of effectiveness of efforts and interventions to improve student outcomes.

- Data is reviewed weekly in instructional team meetings, with principals after observations, and in core building leadership meetings
- Internal common assessments provide data that is monitored regularly to drive instruction from K-12
- Teachers at BHS are looking at student work protocols, Individual Assessments of Knowledge & Thinking and training for this is occurring at BMS
- Intervention has been built into the day at all grade levels K-12 with a renewed emphasis on each person being responsible to remediate and support students who are not meeting their goal. Additional classes taught by licensed interventionists are scheduled 3rd-12th grade. Data reports are shared with core leadership
- Professional development is intentional and differentiated to meet the needs of staff members based on data collected
- Students are guided to set goals to help them understand their needs and take ownership of learning and all teachers are trained in creating a growth mindset
- Student voice teams were formed at BHS and BMS and student ambassadors are selected at BES to provide input on culture, safety, and educational opportunities in each building
- Student Culture surveys will be given at BMS and BHS in the spring and fall

2. It is recommended that the school/district plan and implement a program designed to recruit, induct, and retain high-quality employees for all employment categories within the school/district.

Clarification: The plan will identify an induction system that accelerates the assimilation of new staff. The plan will identify specific monthly activities related to

recruitment, induction, and retention. The plan will be evaluated quarterly to determine effectiveness and make indicated adjustments.

- Goal of no more than 10% teacher turnover each year
- Recruit through job fairs, websites, Arkansas Teacher Corp, APPEL, Teach for America, and testimonies from current teachers
- Build relationships with Arkansas Northeastern College, Arkansas State University and other local institutions to help recruit local students into teaching with hopes they will want to stay in the area to work
- Seek assistance from community to provide incentives such as waived hookup fees, low interest loans, etc to teachers to encourage them to live in town and to stay longer
- Use marketing tools and community events to encourage teachers to take part in welcome activities in the community and to join local groups such as the community band, theater group, Relay For Life teams, 5k Color Run, Main Street Festivals etc to help them assimilate
- Provide social and emotional supports to help students from poverty develop a path and goal for learning while training teachers on Teaching With Poverty in Mind
- Partner with Teach For America and The National Teacher Project to receive training for district leadership on teacher retention
- Teacher leaders at BHS have preparation time to go into classrooms to provide support, to model and provide assistance
- Instructional Facilitators provide support in math and literacy in all buildings from K-12

3. It is recommended that the school/district implement a team structure that supports student learning and improved achievement as its primary purpose.

Clarification: The leadership team is the recipient of data from instructional teams and provides guidance and support for improved student outcomes. Instructional teams are the primary source for planning, implementing, and assessing teaching and learning. In addition to instructional teams, the leadership team also develops a structure of support teams that include parent teams, student teams (when appropriate) and community teams.

- Core building leadership teams review data from instructional, cultural, stakeholder, and management teams for the purpose of improving student achievement

- Agendas and notes from each core building leadership team are shared with the district leadership team through the new ACSIP software
- Monthly principals' learning and growth time is organized to guide principals to lead core building leadership teams in instructional practices (reviewing performance data from common assessments, extended classroom observations and teacher data conferences) for the purpose of student achievement
- Data, reviewed by the core building leadership team, from common assessments, classroom observations and teacher conferences drive professional development and often provide individualized pathways for learning and support per teacher
- Meetings K-12 that involve groups such as all counselors, all interventionists, all instructional facilitators, and all building leadership teams meet regularly around recommendations to provide vertical alignment
- A New Tech leadership coach at BHS is working to build capacity in building leadership and teacher leaders and this will be taken to BMS as well
- Plans for called meetings/lunches for public input and surveys from parents and community stakeholders will be used

4. It is recommended that the school/district analyze the current status of English/language arts and math curricula across all grade levels and articulate in writing the process for deep curriculum alignment.

Clarification: An aligned curriculum will address state and local standards, courses of study, pacing guides, instructional unit plans, daily lesson plans, and assessment and instructional strategies.

- Meetings to review curriculum from Kindergarten through 12 grade were begun before school was out and continued through the summer. Recurring and overlapping teams in a vertical alignment process to continue the flow of information between all buildings and groups
- Curriculum director met with grade level teams in primary and elementary during the summer to find gaps and begin the work of creating a document that aligns standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment
- Intensive focus on phonemic awareness, and strategies to support students with dyslexic tendencies are established at primary and elementary grades. Renewed focus on academic vocabulary and reciprocal reading

- BMS is receiving training and support in advanced word study and reciprocal reading strategies through the Middle School Literacy Initiative
- BHS is receiving training and support through the National Writing Project for teachers and students
- Pre and post tests and common assessments are being created
- On-going assessments identify students in need of intervention or enrichment and identify the skills needed as well as identifying an gaps in instruction
- Partnerships between schools have been established, teams of instructional support personnel, teachers, and administrators visit other campuses to examine practices, and teams will review alignment in all subjects