

**Arkansas Department of Education
Professional Licensure Standards Board (PLSB)
Friday, April 3, 2015
8:00 a.m.**

A meeting of the Professional Licensure Standards Board was held in the PLSB board room at #1 Capitol Mall, Little Rock, AR, on April 3, 2015. Members of the Board present were Ms. Kathy Howell, Chair; voting members: Ms. Lisa Baker, Ms. Cindy Romeo, Ms. Brenda Brown, Dr. Judy Harrison, Dr. Brad Baine, Mr. Michael Poore, Ms. Debbie Miller, Dr. Zaidy MohdZain, Dr. Shelly Albritton, Ms. Lillian Hemphill; non-voting members Ms. Ivy Pfeffer, Ms. Karli Saracini, and Ms. Tonya Williams. Members absent: Dr. Suzanne Bailey and Ms. Jo Vines. Guests in attendance were Ms. Brenda Robinson-AEA. ADE staff members in attendance were Cheryl Reinhart, Wayne Ruthven, Eric James, Michael Rowland, and Joan Luneau.

The board consisted of twelve (12) voting members and three (3) non-voting members, representing a quorum.

- 1. Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order by Ms. Howell, Chair.

ACTION ITEMS:

- 2. Approval of Minutes, September 5, 2014** – A motion was made to accept the minutes as written, and it was seconded; motion passed 12/0.
- 3. Discussion of proposal from ARPEA on TESS Credential Costs** – Dr. Shelly Albritton presented a proposal from Arkansas Professors of Educational Administration (ARPEA) for the PLSB to fund the cost of the assessment for an administrator to become credentialed as an evaluator under the Teacher Excellence and Support System due to the large expense for students in leadership programs at institutions of higher education. It was determined that the assessment is not a licensure requirement but is a requirement from the Office of Educator Effectiveness. Therefore, the PLSB does not have authority to pay all or a part of that cost. Dr. Baine made a motion to deny the proposal, and it was seconded; motion passed 12/0.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- 4. Budget for FY2016** – Ms. Reinhart presented the proposed budget for FY2016. There was a brief discussion on the budget for FY2016. The budget includes one additional investigator and two new senior investigator positions. Ms. Reinhart stated that the office will focus on developing better training tools for Code of Ethics training. A discussion ensued concerning the income received versus the expenditures. PLSB income is generated from fees and fines and not general revenue. The ADE will be looking at the proposed budget and new fees and fines will be proposed in the Code of Ethics rules.
- 5. PLSB Task Force on Educator Preparation Program Audits** – Ms. Reinhart reported on the progress of this task force. The task force has met twice and has scheduled the next few meetings. They have focused on aligning the requirements of our audits with CAEP's new requirements. Surveys are the first task, and the task force has identified 7 surveys that may be developed to link back to the educator preparation program. The information from the surveys will be available to institutions of higher education. The

first survey will go out with the mentoring program. Other surveys will be linked to applications for licensure. A budget for the task force was discussed. Dr. Mohdzain expressed appreciation on the part of the deans for the opportunity to participate in these discussions and the alignment of existing requirements with these new requirements. Ms. Pfeffer reminded the board that as we do not have final rules from the federal government concerning these audits, for now we are looking at this fairly broadly and will drill down later when we know more about federal requirements. Ms. Reinhart commended the task force members for the level of commitment to this work.

6. **Equitable Access Initiative** – Ms. Pfeffer updated the board on the Equitable Access Initiative. The initial plan must be filed with the USDOE by June 1. ADE has engaged many stakeholders, and also utilized feedback from coaches from SC3 and USDOE. ADE has focused on what are the root causes for students in high poverty schools and/or high minority schools not having equitable access to excellent educators. We are looking at how ADE resources are being spent and whether those expenditures are the best use of that money. There is a presentation available with the April State Board agendas.
[\[http://edboard.arkansas.gov/ItemAttachments.aspx?itemid=4050&meetingid=234\]](http://edboard.arkansas.gov/ItemAttachments.aspx?itemid=4050&meetingid=234)
7. **Model Code of Ethics** – Ms. Reinhart provided a copy of the Model Code of Ethics developed by NASDTEC for the board's review. This will be discussed further with the Ethics Subcommittee. Dr. Mohdzain asked where Arkansas stands in comparison with other states on the number of ethical violations by teachers. Ms. Reinhart said that from anecdotal information, Arkansas is about the same as most other states, but there has not been a formal comparison made.
8. **Legislative Update** – Ms. Reinhart updated the board as to the following bills sponsored by ADE that have passed the general assembly and are on the governor's desk. The effective dates may be mid-August.

a) HB 1651 [now Act 1090] highlights:

- i. Persons with a suspended or revoked license cannot be employed at a school district, whether hired directly or through a contract with a vendor.
- ii. Audits are now on a 7-year cycle to align with CAEP requirements; and a noncompliant program now has two full semesters to develop a plan and then has the next year to implement the plan.
- iii. Preservice teachers who are student teaching on campus will be held to the Code of Ethics. If a violation is found, they may be sanctioned and that sanction will be applied at the time of licensing (or they may denied a license).
- iv. If a student has been dismissed from an educator preparation program, the APPEL program may deny them admission.
- v. Evidentiary hearings panel is now allowed by law. Ethics Subcommittee will make a recommendation at the June meeting.

b) HB 1650 [now Act 1089] highlights:

- i. Expunged or pardoned records more than 10 years old and not involving physical injury or abuse of others will not be considered disqualifying.

c) SB 744 [now Act 1121]: Ms. Pfeffer explained that the General Assembly approved American Board for Certification of Teaching Excellence (ABCTE) as an accelerated program for teacher licensure. A few states have also approved

ABCTE as a nontraditional program. We looked at what those states are doing with ABCTE and we are drafting a memorandum of understanding to guide what Arkansas will agree to (i.e., a provisional license, mentoring, etc.). The numbers of participants in other states are small.

9. Licensure Section Update –

- a) **Licensure application fees:** Historically, a person can pay the application fee but if the license is not granted the fee was refunded – despite the amount of work the ADE staff does to make that determination. We will propose in the next Code of Ethics rules a new fee schedule that spreads out costs, but are nonrefundable fees.
- b) **Assessment Cut Scores:** Ms. Saracini presented the following cut score information for the board's review:
 - i. **American Sign Language (ASL)** – a new licensure area. The assessment is the Praxis™ Assessment of Signed Communication – American Sign Language (0632); cut score: 2.5 on a 5.0 scale.
 - ii. **English Proficiency Test** – This is an assessment for out-of-country applicants for licensure. The assessment is the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL®), cut score 76 on a 120 scale.
- c) **Computer Science** – Ms. Saracini advised the board that Act 107 requires public high schools and charter schools to offer computer science by 2016. If taught by a licensed math teacher, it will have math credit. Essentials of computer programming must be taught by a licensed person. Texas has a Praxis™ test for this, and has agreed to let us adopt their test. June 2015 will be when it is first offered, so it will have to be approved by the State Board in May. There will be a standard setting study in May also. This will be a 4-12 license. Ms. Saracini encouraged institutions of higher education to have one or two computer science courses that would assist someone on an ALP to take the course to help them pass the test. Ms. Pfeffer added that the ADE will be hiring a computer science coordinator. Also, there are new Standards for Accreditation that address the computer science requirement. Mr. Poore asked whether the ADE is collaborating with the new task force. Ms. Pfeffer discussed what steps the ADE has taken to be involved and agrees that we need to be aware and involved.
- d) **Electronic fingerprinting machines** – Ms. Saracini advised that the PLSB is purchasing an additional five (5) portable livescan fingerprinting machines. Those machines should be available in May for institutions of higher education to “check out” and use on their campuses. Designated persons from those institutions will be trained on the process for fingerprinting and use of the machines – typically licensure officers. That training will probably be scheduled from mid-May to the first of June. The reason for this is to assist the IHEs and lessen some of the burden on education service cooperatives.

10. Rules Update – Ms. Reinhart updated the board on the status of the following rules:

- a) **Educator Licensure** – Emergency Rules Governing Educator Licensure were adopted by the State Board on February 12 and went into effect immediately. At the same time, the State Board approved the Proposed Rules Governing Educator Licensure to be published for public comment. Although the public comment period has expired, the ADE will accept comments from this board until April 17. Mr. Poore asked if there were any problem areas that we could identify. Ms. Reinhart and Ms. Pfeffer explained that the changes implemented

on task force recommendations from a few years ago only allowed someone to test out of a licensure area that was one area above or below the current licensure area. As a result, some areas, such as Art, PE, Music, Foreign language are now K-12, which prevents them from being able to test out. As a result of public comment, those areas can now be tested out of. The other issue was with special education now being K-12, and persons needing to be able to test out to teach K-6 or 7-12 special education. She added that this will also help some teachers to be highly qualified.

- b)** Ms. Williams added that her department will be publishing rules to incorporate B-K in them this summer.
- c)** **Mentoring** – Proposed Rules Governing Educator Mentoring Programs were also adopted for public comment on February 12. These are the provisions taken out of the Educator Licensure rules and made a standalone rule. They address charter school questions about the mentoring program. Additionally, the rules allow participation by a private school so that teachers could complete the mentoring requirement and not have to complete it if they move into a public school.

11. PLSB Staff Update –

- a)** **Director's update:** NASDTEC newsletter is provided and contains good information. PLSB staff will provide those in the future also.
 - i. Dr. Mohdzain asked whether NASDTEC is working on a more consistent process nationally for teacher reciprocity. Ms. Saracini responded that they are working on that.
 - ii. A discussion ensued about who to send to NASDTEC conferences from PLSB. The board agreed that it would be good to send a board member to the national and PPI conferences if there is money in the budget. Dr. Baine made a motion that as funds allow, to allow the PLSB support one (1) member designated by the chair to attend the NASDTEC national conference; the motion was seconded; motion passed 12/0. Ms. Hemphill made a motion that as funds allow, the PLSB support one (1) member of the Ethics Subcommittee designated by the chair of the subcommittee to attend the NASDTEC Professional Practices Institute; the motion was seconded; motion passed 12/0.
- b)** **Chief Investigator's Update:** Mr. Ruthven presented the quarterly statistics on ethics allegations and Ethics Subcommittee recommendations as requested at the last meeting of the board. He noted that the probable reason for the steady increase is that more people are aware of the Code of Ethics and are using it to report possible violations. Ms. Reinhart noted that we also see more social media problems now. Mr. Ruthven added that we focus a lot of our training on the use of social media.
- c)** He also advised the board concerning the school district training and staff training that has been conducted since the last board meeting.
- d)** Mr. Ruthven also provided the job description for the senior investigator position as requested at the last meeting.

- e) Two (2) vehicles were received in January for investigator use.

12. Other Business:

- a) **Resignation of Tameka Parker** – Jean Robertson is currently handling Tameka's duties. When the hiring freeze is lifted for the position, it will be advertised and filled.
- b) **Review of Member Terms Expiring in 2015** – Ms. Howell requested that the members whose terms are expiring be thinking about whether to request reappointment or make a recommendation for a replacement.
- c) **Code of Ethics rules** – The Ethics Subcommittee will be reviewing the Code of Ethics changes and bringing a recommendation to the full board in June.
- d) **Next meeting** – Mr. Poore would like the board to hear about the SREB TESS focus groups at its June meeting.

13. Adjournment

Next meeting date: Friday, September 4, 2015, 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. in the PLSB board room.