

**Arkansas Department of Education
Professional Licensure Standards Board
Friday, September 4, 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 September 4, 2015. Members of the Board present were Ms. Kathy Howell, Chair; voting members: Dr. Shelly Albritton, Dr. Brad Baine, Ms. Lisa Baker, Ms. Brenda Brown, Dr. Mary Gunter, Dr. Judy Harrison, Ms. Lillian Hemphill, Dr. Zaidy MohdZain, Dr. Greg Murry, Ms. Cindy Romeo, and Mr. Todd Sellers; non-voting members Darrick Williams. Members absent: Dr. Suzanne Bailey, Ms. Ivy Pfeffer and Ms. Tonya Williams. ADE staff members in attendance were Cheryl Reinhart, Wayne Ruthven, Eric James, Jean Robertson, Michael Rowland, Frank Servedio, and Joan Luneau.

The board consisted of twelve (12) voting members and one (1) non-voting members, representing a quorum.

- 1. Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order by Ms. Howell, Chair.
- 2.** New members and attending staff were introduced.
- 3. New Business:**

Election of Chair – Kathy Howell.

Brenda Brown made the nomination and it was seconded by Lisa Baker; motion passed 12/0.

Vice Chair – Dr. Brad Baine.

Dr. Zaidy MohdZain made the nomination and it was seconded by Judy Harrison; motion passed 12/0.

Ethics Subcommittee and Evidentiary Hearings Panel

Ethics Subcommittee nominations: Lillian Hemphill, Kathy Howell, Lisa Baker, Suzanne Bailey, and Shelly Albritton. All nominations seconded; motion passed 12/0.

Evidentiary Hearing Panel nominations: Dr. Brad Baine, Brenda Brown, Cindy Romeo, Sheila Jacobs, and Mark McDougal. All nominations seconded; motion passed 12/0.

Sheila Jacobs and Mark McDougal will be contacted regarding their willingness to serve on the panel.

Strategic Planning for Elevating Professionalism

Cheryl Reinhart suggested a strategic planning meeting to discuss ways to elevate educator professionalism in Arkansas. She suggested October 30, 2015, as the date for a strategic planning day, with a facilitator, Kerri White of the South Central Comprehensive Center (SC3). Motion made by Shelly Albritton to conduct the strategic planning session and seconded by Cindy Romeo; motion carried 12/0.

Cheryl updated the board about the July Educator Ethics Workshop. Several of the board attended and agreed that it was beneficial to everyone.

Educators' blog – Ed Ethics. Cheryl is recruiting for participants. If anyone knows a teacher or administrator that would like to participate, please let her know.

One standard from the Code of Ethics is being put out on ADE social media weekly.

4. Policies Governing Educator Preparation Program Approval update

Joan Luneau gave an update regarding a committee that met in July and August to discuss changes to the rules and provided a handout. Joan asked that the board review the information contained in the handout and let her know if there are questions or comments. It has not gone out of public comment yet.

Motion to take the Policies Governing Educator Preparation Program Approval to the State Board of Education was made by Judy Harrison; seconded by Brad Baine; motion carried 12/0.

5. Special Education Assessment Test Scores

Michael Rowland presented with an informational handout. In a new test or a test that has been regenerated or updated, ETS conducts a national or multi-state standards setting study. For this test, Arkansas held a state-only review in 2014. All agreed on the 160 cut score. It was presented and accepted by the State Board of Education. A question and answer period followed.

The chair announced a change in the order of the agenda due to Dr. Baine having to leave the meeting.

6. Educator Preparation Program Approvals

Joan Luneau presented on program approvals. Thirty-five programs are in the process at this time. Heather Newsam is in charge of all program approvals. There are 462 approved

programs in Arkansas; 55 different licensure areas in 21 different IHEs. The list of approved programs is online and all old licensure areas were removed in August.

7. Budget

Cheryl Reinhart began a discussion concerning the revenue and expenses of the PLSB office. There is a need to look at the budget carefully to plan for future expectations concerning the amount of funds in reserve. There is concern about reaching into the reserve for operating expenses, which is not sustainable. A quick summary of revenues and expenses was provided. Cheryl requested that the board form a budget subcommittee that can look at the budget in light of the ethics initiatives we would like to do and the cost involved. It was decided that the budget subcommittee would meet after the strategic planning session. The subcommittee can meet in November and report back to the board in December. Judy Harrison moved that the board create a budget subcommittee to review the issues; seconded by Lillian Hemphill, motion passed 12/0.

Nominations for budget subcommittee: Brad Baine, chair, Dr. Greg Murry, Dr. Mary Gunter, Brenda Brown, and Darrick Williams (non-voting).

Cheryl will send out a questionnaire for the meeting date.

8. Action Items –

A. Approval of Minutes, June 5, 2015 – A motion was made to accept the minutes as amended, and it was seconded; motion passed 12/0.

Dr. Baine made the motion to accept the minutes as amended. Seconded by Lisa Baker. Motion carried.

9. Report Items –

A. Equitable Access

Joan Luneau provided an update on progress of the equitable access plan. Frank Servedio spoke about the critical shortage area as one of the strategies chosen for the plan. Staff of the Center for Great Teachers and Leaders will conduct meetings concerning the critical shortage area predictor model with Arkansas school districts (Conway, Stuttgart, Jonesboro) and based on that model the Department will conduct additional meetings.

B. Rules Update

T.E.S.S., L.E.A.D.S., and Background Checks

Cheryl advised that the T.E.S.S., L.E.A.D.S., and Background Check rules are out for public comment. All implement changes that were in the law. The law did change on background checks, requiring school districts to use an on-line process to initiate submission of the

background checks. A year later (2016) they will be required to submit fingerprints electronically. Teachers coming in from out of state will still have to do fingerprint cards.

Educator Licensure

The final rule will go before the State Board next week. The Department removed the testing out option for SPED off, but kept the MAT program for special education. The Department is going to look at the testing out option in conjunction with a whole lot more data and probably get the Special Education task force involved also. We have an emergency rule right now. These rules still need final approval from the legislature and the governor's office.

Dr. MohdZain asked how long the emergency rule lasts.

Cheryl stated the emergency rule last 120 days, so we have until November to get this set of licensure rules approved through the governor and the legislature.

Code of Ethics

The Rules Governing the Code of Ethics for Arkansas Educators are being reviewed by the Subcommittee and they will bring their recommendations for the proposed rule changes to the December 4, 2015 board meeting.

C. Director's Update

Because of the move we need to have walls painted and we're going to get AT&T receptors. We have an estimate on another television system for video conferencing.

We no longer have a receptionist. Paula is working on our PLSB database. We are talking with Mainstream, the company that works on our Educator Licensure System, AELS, and we hope that after the first of the year they will help us set up a better database system. Until then we will enter data into an ACCESS database. We will be able to use the database for statistics, identifying trends, and to help improve decision-making.

We have also completed training for our new members and will continue this for future new members.

We are overhauling our website – removing old information, including the case studies and old statistics. We are replacing that with the new training video.

H. Chief Investigator's Report

- We had 193 case numbers assigned and 226 allegation forms received.
- Allegations – not forms received – but allegations. In the 226 allegation forms received, we had 516 separate allegations. 82% of our allegations are Standard 1 or Standard 2 allegation. Of those 516 allegations, the subcommittee authorized 378 to be investigated.

- Denials were 138 or 27%.

Dr. MohdZain asked about the potential liability of the board if the subcommittee denies authorization to investigate. Cheryl said the Ethics Subcommittee has full authority to decide whether or not to authorize investigation. Dr. MohdZain asked if the board, severally and jointly, can be held responsible. Cheryl advised that the board is not liable.

- Investigations authorized in the last school year. Reasonable Belief through the August subcommittee meeting of the 161 that were authorized, 100 were found to be substantiated, the others obviously not substantiated. Therefore, in the last school year, overall percentage of investigations substantiated, or reasonable belief was 44% to date.

Dr. Murry asked if any of those deemed reasonable belief were repeat offenders. Wayne indicated that there is not a great number, but some.

- The last time you met in June, the number of PLSB ethics presentations year to date was 18; today for this report it is 54. We've had a major push between the last time you met and now to get out there and conduct ethics training.

Cheryl indicated that some school districts have started including their entire staff in the ethics training.

10. Other Business

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Next meeting date: Friday, December 4, 2015; time 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.