

**Minutes  
State Board of Education  
Thursday, September 12, 2019**

The Arkansas State Board of Education (State Board) met Thursday, September 12, 2019, in the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (Division) Auditorium. Chair Ms. Diane Zook called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Ms. Zook led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Ms. Diane Zook, Chair; Ms. Charisse Dean, Vice-Chair; Dr. Sarah Moore; Mr. Brett Williamson; Ms. Kathy McFetridge; Ms. Susan Chambers; Dr. Fitz Hill; Ms. Ouida Newton; Mr. Chad Pekron; Ms. Stacey McAdoo, 2019 Arkansas Teacher of the Year; and Mr. Johnny Key, Secretary

Absent: None

**Changes to Agenda**

Ms. Zook said action item B-3a Williams Family Opportunity School Choice Appeal was settled prior to the start of the meeting and is being pulled from the agenda.

Ms. Zook said there was a request from Mr. Rick Napier to be added to the agenda regarding the previous revocation of his teaching license.

Ms. Chambers moved, seconded by Mr. Williamson, to add Mr. Napier to the agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

**Consent Agenda**

Ms. Newton asked, on consent agenda item 3, if Educator Effectiveness planned to continue to add percentages to the report as the year progresses. Public School Program Manager Ms. Melissa Jacks confirmed that the percentages would be added next month.

Ms. Newton asked why, on consent agenda items 6 and 7, the sanctions were different when the cases appear to be similar. PLSB Chief Investigator Mr. Eric James discussed the mitigating factors of the cases and said the matrix used in the decision-making process is a guide and not a definite. Mr. Pekron and Dr. Moore noted they shared Ms. Newton's concerns.

Ms. Newton moved, seconded by Mr. Pekron, to pull consent agenda item 6 to be heard during the action agenda of the October State Board meeting. Dr. Hill was absent for the vote. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Pekron moved, seconded by Dr. Moore, to pull consent agenda item 7 to be heard during the action agenda of the October State Board meeting. Dr. Hill was absent for the vote. The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Moore asked, on consent agenda item 11, what building the library media specialist position would be in. Superintendent Bobby Hart said the position was in their middle school. Dr. Moore asked if Mr. Hart believed the paraprofessional was receiving the appropriate training and he confirmed.

Ms. Newton asked, on consent agenda item 15, if Hermitage was using the library media specialist and teacher salary waiver. Superintendent Dr. Tracy Tucker said they are not using the waivers.

Ms. Newton asked, on consent agenda item 16, how many teachers the school district had on the teacher licensure waiver. Superintendent Robert Edwards said there were currently five; however, the art teacher would come off whenever the Arkansas Department of Education releases the appropriate paperwork. Ms. Newton asked how the district is supporting the teachers on the waiver. Mr. Edwards said the districts provides professional development and additional supports through their partnership with Solution Tree.

Items included for consideration in the Consent Agenda were as follows.

1. Minutes
2. Newly Employed, Promotions and Separations
3. Consideration of Report on Waivers to School Districts for Teachers Teaching Out of Area for Longer than Thirty (30) Days, Ark. Code Ann. § 6- 17-309
4. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case # 18-022 Steven Welborn
5. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case # 18-157 Gary Kirk
6. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case # 19-008 Justin Ruley
7. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case # 19-063 Jennifer Pippenger
8. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case #19-090 Robert Coplin
9. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case #19-116 Melanie Hotchkiss
10. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case #19-118 David Mackey
11. Hope School District Act 1240 Annual Progress Report
12. Hot Springs School District Act 1240 Annual Progress Report
13. Jacksonville North Pulaski School District Act 1240 Annual Progress Report
14. Hillcrest School District Act 1240 Annual Progress Report
15. Hermitage School District Act 1240 Annual Progress Report
16. Lafayette County School District Act 1240 Annual Progress Report

Ms. Chambers moved, seconded by Ms. Dean, to approve the consent agenda minus items 6 and 7. Dr. Hill was absent for the vote. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Action Agenda A**

#### **A-1 Consideration of Revocation of Teaching License – Licensure Action Case No. 19-11**

Staff Attorney Mr. Taylor Dugan said Ms. Jessica Williams and her attorney are not present. The educator is currently incarcerated. Mr. Dugan reviewed the exhibits, provided email correspondence with the lawyer, and read letter asking for suspension and not revocation.



Mr. Pekron asked if Ms. Williams was required to register as a sex offender. Mr. Dugan confirmed and Mr. Pekron noted that due to that, Ms. Williams would not be allowed near a school. Ms. Zook asked what level of sex offender the educator was. Mr. Dugan said he was unsure.

Mr. Pekron moved, seconded by Ms. Dean, to revoke Ms. Jessica Williams' teaching license. The motion passed unanimously.

## **A-2 Consideration of Waiver of Disqualifying Offense– Licensure Action Case No. 19-14**

Staff Attorney Mr. Taylor Dugan said Mr. Bryan Gerald Little has requested a waiver and is entitled to a hearing. Mr. Little is represented by his attorney, Mr. Ethan Nobles. Mr. Dugan reviewed the hearing procedures.

Nobles Law Firm Attorney Mr. Ethan Nobles noted that Mr. Little is eligible to have his records sealed after his probation is served. Mr. Nobles said his client did have a problem and is working to reform himself.

Mr. Pekron asked for clarification on whether Mr. Little was asking for a complete waiver or a suspension or another lighter penalty. Mr. Nobles said his client was requesting a waiver.

Mr. Dugan reviewed the exhibits of the case and the State Board's options. He noted that Mr. Little pled guilty to Possession of Drug Paraphernalia and was sentenced to two years' probation. Also, Mr. Little performed 30 hours of community service and his driver's license was suspended with hardship.

Ms. Newton asked if the Division had a recommendation in this case. Mr. Dugan said the Division does not have a recommendation, but he has no objection to granting Mr. Little a waiver.

Mr. Nobles conducted a direct examination of his client. Mr. Little said his addiction to painkillers began in 2014, following multiple surgeries. He said being arrested was somewhat of a blessing, because it gave him the opportunity to get the help he needed. Mr. Little said he entered Quapaw House, a recovery center, immediately following his arrest and graduated one month later. After his graduation from the recovery center, he made the decision to continue with outpatient treatment. Mr. Little said he takes regular drug tests. Also, Mr. Little said he has the full support of the staff and community of Lawson Elementary School. The school has a position available for him if he receives the requested waiver. He said he would like to be the recovery story for his school district.

Mr. Williamson asked if Mr. Little is involved in a 12-step program. Mr. Little said he attends meeting for a program called Keep It Simple in Bryant. Mr. Williamson said he has no problem giving someone a second chance if they are actively working to help themselves.

Ms. McFetridge asked what grade level and subject Mr. Little teaches. Mr. Little said he teaches fifth grade math, science, and social studies; however, he is certified to teach all subjects.

Ms. Chambers asked Mr. Dugan what the requested waiver would look like. Mr. Dugan said the State Board could either put conditions on the waiver or grant the waiver flat-out. Ms. Chambers asked how long the criminal probation is and Mr. Dugan answered the probation is for 24 months. However, it is possible Mr. Little may be able to complete his probation in one year.

Ms. Chambers noted her concern over the recency of the events being discussed. Mr. Noble said he did not think his client would have an objection to providing a progress report to the State Board. Ms. Chambers asked about Mr. Little's drug testing and he said the drug testing is completed monthly by his probation officer.

Dr. Hill said that it would be important for Mr. Little's recovery to be around those, in reference to Mr. Little's fellow school staff member, who would see him every day and hold him accountable for his actions.

Ms. Newton asked if it would be possible, at the end of the one year probation, to get a report from a professional stating Mr. Little has been clean and is still on-track to maintain his drug-free lifestyle. Mr. Dugan confirmed that as a possibility.

Mr. Pekron asked if Mr. Little was ever under the influence while teaching. Mr. Little said he was not, he may have taken the pain medicines after his surgeries, but not an abundance. Mr. Pekron asked if he used illicit substances and Mr. Little said he did not.

Mr. Williamson said he would want to add the condition of Mr. Little locating a sponsor to any motion in favor of granting the waiver.

Ms. McAdoo suggested that Mr. Little's school and/or district consider partnering with the D.A.R.E. program to help raise awareness.

Ms. Zook asked if this case went through drug court and Mr. Nobles said it did not.

Mr. Pekron noted his concern that this may be too soon to allow the educator back in the classroom and Ms. Chambers echoed his concerns. Mr. Little said he believes what Dr. Hill said about how it would be good for Mr. Little to be in the presence of those who would help to hold him accountable.

Ms. Chambers moved, seconded by Mr. Williamson, to grant Mr. Little the requested waiver with conditions (obtain a sponsor, 24 month probation with continued urine drug testing during the second year of probation, and a letter of support from a supervisor every 6 months. There was a roll call vote. Mr. Pekron voted no. The final vote was 7-1. The motion passed.

### **A-3 State Board Review of PLSB Evidentiary Hearing Recommendation – Jerri Lyn Odom**

Mr. Dugan said he emailed the State Board the Motion for Continuance from the educator's attorney to move this item to the October agenda.

Mr. Pekron moved, seconded by Dr. Moore, to move this item to the October agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

### **A-4 State Board Review of PLSB Evidentiary Hearing Recommendation – Robert Tomas Edwards, III**

Staff Attorney Mr. Taylor Dugan said that this agenda item was one which removed from the Consent Agenda during the previous State Board meeting by Mr. Pekron.

Mr. Pekron recused himself from further consideration and left the room.



Mr. Dugan reviewed the recommendations for this case. The first recommendation was a two year suspension, \$75 fine, completion of required coursework, trainings, and written reflections. The second recommendation changed suspension to probation.

Ms. Dean moved, seconded by Dr. Moore, to accept the PLSB recommendation and to not review. There was a roll call vote. The final vote was 7 yes and 1 recusal. The motion passed.

Ms. Newton moved, seconded by Ms. Dean, to hear Mr. Rick Napier's action item next. The motion passed with 7 yes votes. Mr. Pekron was absent from the room for this vote.

**(Additional Agenda Item) Consideration of Waiver of Disqualifying Offense - Rick Napier**

Staff Attorney Mr. Taylor Dugan reviewed the background information of the case. Ms. Zook asked if he had a recommendation. Mr. Dugan said, he would suggest granting the waiver.

Ms. Chambers moved, seconded by Ms. Dean, to grant the waiver. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Dugan said the State Board would now consider the reinstatement of Mr. Napier's revoked license.

Mr. Napier reviewed his background information. Mr. Dugan said Mr. Napier's request to reinstate his license was made on August 26, 2019 and all requirements through legislation have been completed.

Ms. Newton asked about Mr. Napier's area of certification. Mr. Napier said he is certified in physical education, health, and history.

Ms. McFetridge moved, seconded by Dr. Hill, to reinstate Mr. Napier's license. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Key commended the Division team members who have worked to make license reinstatement possible.

**A-5 District Request for Waivers granted to Open-Enrollment Charters**

Presenter: Kelly McLaughlin

**a. District Request for Waivers Granted to Open-Enrollment Charters: Searcy County School District**

Public School Program Advisor Ms. Kelly McLaughlin said Searcy County School District are requesting waivers for flexible schedule. She said their 90 days will expire on November 6, 2019 and are requesting a three year waiver, ending September 13, 2022. Ms. McLaughlin passed out board resolutions to the State Board members.

Superintendent Mr. Alan Yarbrough said the district is requesting nine days of early dismissal to assist with the implementation of Professional Learning Communities (PLC) throughout the district.

Dr. Moore asked if transportation or after school care would be affected on those days. Mr. Yarbrough said they would work with the ABC preschool staff to provide extra daycare assistance.

Ms. McFetridge noted she understands the benefits of PLCs, but also her concern over the instructional time which would be lost if the waiver was granted. Mr. Yarbrough said the district schools already have extra time within the day they feel they can compensate with. Ms. McFetridge asked if the district had received feedback from the parents. Mr. Yarbrough said the district has done extensive work with the school board and discussed the waiver request with parents as well.

Mr. Yarbrough said he believes that allowing teachers the time to collaborate in PLCs will give the district the opportunity to solve problems for students, both as a whole and individually.

Ms. Zook asked if the district follows a block or regular schedule. Mr. Yarbrough said they are on a regular schedule at the high school. Ms. Zook asked if the district had adopted a curriculum that is aligned with the Science of Reading concepts and R.I.S.E. Arkansas. Mr. Yarbrough confirmed they had done so.

Ms. Newton moved, seconded by Ms. McFetridge, to grant the waiver. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **A-6 Consideration of Fourth Round for Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) 2019-2020**

Arkansas Better Chance's Ms. Susan Underwood said she is requesting approval of the Fourth Round for ABC Grants 2019-2020 school year. She said the Blytheville School District has requested to join the Crowley's Ridge Education Service Cooperative ABC program. Ms. Underwood noted the 40 slots approved by the Blytheville School District ABC Program would remain on the school campus, but would be administered by the Crowley's Ridge Education Service Cooperative. She also said Crowley's Ridge has requested to convert 40 home-visiting slots to center-based to continue the high-quality preschool services for children in the Earle School District community. Ms. Underwood said they are requesting approval for the Crowley's Ridge Education Service Cooperative ABC Program, with a total of 305 center-based slots, for the total grant amount of \$1,460,004.

Ms. Zook noted that Dr. Moore is the State Board liaison to the Arkansas Better Chance program.

Ms. McFetridge moved, seconded by Mr. Pekron, to approve the request. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Underwood said that she would like to bring another item before the State Board based on events of the current week.

Ms. Dean moved, seconded by Ms. Chambers, to hear the additional item. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Underwood said there has been a termination of an ABC grant with the agency Kid-to-Kid Child Development Center, based on a failure to follow ABC regulations. Approval is requested to reallocate the returned slots to the Pine Bluff School District ABC Program. She said this would be 20 additional slots to the previously awarded 80 slots. The total award would be for 100 slots, with a total grant amount of \$476,736.

Ms. Chambers moved, seconded by Mr. Pekron, to approve the reallocation. The motion passed unanimously.



## **Action Agenda B**

### **B-1 Request for Transfer of Succeed Scholarship: de Leon**

Deputy General Counsel Ms. Courtney Salas-Ford said the de Leon family is requesting a transfer from St. Edwards to North Little Rock Catholic Academy as a result of St. Edwards closing.

Ms. Newton moved, seconded by Dr. Hill, to approve the transfer. Ms. Dean was absent for this vote. The motion passed with seven yes votes.

### **B-2 Request for Transfer of Succeed Scholarship: McGregor**

Deputy General Counsel Ms. Courtney Salas-Ford said the McGregor family is requesting a transfer from Bentonville Christian Academy to Clover Community School.

Ms. Chambers moved, seconded by Mr. Pekron, to approve the transfer. Ms. Dean was absent from this vote. The motion passed with seven yes votes.

### **B-3 Opportunity School Choice Appeals**

Presenter: Jennifer Dedman

#### **a. *(Pulled from the Agenda) Williams Family Opportunity School Choice Appeal***

*This item has been pulled from the agenda.*

#### **b. Harris-Hudson Family Opportunity School Choice Appeal**

The Harris-Hudson family appeals the denial of their request to transfer under Opportunity School Choice from the Little Rock School District to the Benton School District. Neither the parents nor the school district were present for the meeting.

Ms. Pekron moved, seconded by Mr. Williamson, to deny the request. The motion passed unanimously.

### **B-4 Request for Final Approval: DESE Rules Governing the Educator Compensation Reform Program**

Deputy General Counsel Ms. Courtney Salas-Ford said final approval is requested for the DESE Rules Governing the Educator Compensation Reform Program. These Rules were released for public comment on June 13, 2019, and a public comment hearing held on June 27, 2019. Public comments were received, however, no substantive changes were made. She said these are the rules which govern administration of the \$60,000,000 for teacher salaries.

Mr. Williamson moved, seconded by Ms. Dean, to approve. The motion passed unanimously.

### **B-5 Request for Final Approval: DESE Rules Governing the School District Educational Excellence Trust Fund**

Deputy General Counsel Ms. Courtney Salas-Ford said these Rules were released for public comment on June 13, 2019, and a public comment hearing held on June 27, 2019. No public comments were received.

Mr. Pekron moved, seconded by Ms. Dean, to approve. The motion passed unanimously.

## **B-6 Consideration of Charter Authorizing Panel Decisions - Summary Information**

### **a. Consideration of Charter Authorizing Panel Action on Open-Enrollment Public Charter School Application: Hope Academy of Northwest Arkansas, Bentonville, AR**

Public School Program Coordinator Mr. Reginald Ballard said on August 13, 2019, representatives of Hope Academy of Northwest Arkansas appeared before the Charter Authorizing Panel requesting a charter in the Bentonville School District. By a unanimous vote, the Panel approved the request. No request for the State Board of Education to review the decision made by the Panel was submitted. The State Board may exercise a right of review and conduct a hearing on the Charter Authorizing Panel's determination at the State Board's next meeting.

Ms. Newton moved, seconded by Ms. McFetridge, to review the Charter Authorizing Panel decision. The motion passed unanimously. Ms. Newton said she wants to know why they wanted to waive the entire section and how they are going to make sure that all students are served.

## **B-7 Consideration of Legislative Report and Approval of District Support Plan: Dollarway School District**

State Superintendent Dr. Mike Hernandez provided background information about the legislative reports and district support plans. He gave a brief overview of the math and literacy data, saying that the information is also available in the report.

Ms. Zook noted that it was disturbing that both math and literacy went down in the third and fourth grades. She asked if they had done an aligned curriculum. Dr. Hernandez said the school district is in the process of doing that and they are in their second year of working with Solution Tree on the PLC process. Dr. Hernandez provided a brief overview of this process.

Dr. Hernandez said they are trying to start a Community Advisory Board for the school district; however, they only have had three people apply. Dr. Hill asked why Dr. Hernandez thought there has not been much interest in applying. Dr. Hernandez is not entirely positive on the specific reason. Dr. Hill suggested researching more ways of promoting the positions on the Community Advisory Board. He also suggested reaching out to the pastors of the three largest churches in the area. He said sometimes this kind of engagement can stimulate conversations.

Ms. Newton asked where Dollarway was on their five-year timeline. Dr. Hernandez said this coming December will end the fourth year.

Ms. Chambers said it would be helpful to see the exit criteria so the State Board will know consistently where the district is relative to where they need to be. Dr. Hernandez said there is a link to the live document for exit criteria.

Dr. Moore asked about the plans for next summer and the 21st Century grant. Deputy Superintendent Dr. Melvin Bryant said they applied for the 21st Century grant; however, it was not approved. However, they do partner with other entities in the state and community with the grant. He said they were unable to generate much interest in a summer school program. Dr. Bryant said attendance for credit recovery was very good and in general, student and staff attendance has improved tremendously.



Ms. Zook asked if they had started or had a dyslexia or special education audit yet. Dr. Bryant said they had not and were still working on their dyslexia plan.

Ms. Dean asked Dr. Bryant to discuss family and community engagement in Dollarway. Dr. Bryant said they have someone teaching parents how to monitor their student's cell phone usage. They had monthly meetings in the community which have grown quite a bit. Ms. Dean suggested discussing the open Advisory Board slots during the monthly meetings. Dr. Hernandez said the Division Family and Community Engagement unit will be walking the district through how to use the toolkit on the Division website.

Dr. Hernandez provided a brief review of the fiscal side of the district and said it looks like they are still on track to be okay financially.

Ms. Chambers moved, seconded by Ms. Dean, to accept the report. The motion passed unanimously.

### **B-8 Consideration of Legislative Report and Approval of District Support Plan: Earle School District**

State Superintendent Dr. Mike Hernandez gave a brief overview of the math and literacy data. Mr. Pekron asked why the English scores are also substantially higher than the other scores in terms of readiness. Dr. Hernandez said he would have someone look into the answer to this question. Dr. Hernandez said that partially due to financial constraints, Earle was not a district that could be a part of the Solution Tree PLC process in the past. He said at the district level, they are focusing on reading and mathematics instruction. Prior to Dr. Richard Wilde leaving, the district had begun doing instructional rounds to observe the different teaching methods through their buildings.

Ms. Zook asked how the rollout of the new curriculum went. Superintendent Tish Knowles said they bought the Proficiency Scales from Marzano Research for ELA and math. She said there were six days in the summer during which teacher came in and worked on the scales, following a two-day High Reliability School training through Crowley's Ridge Education Service Cooperative and ERZ.

Ms. Zook asked if they had had their paper audit for dyslexia yet. Ms. Knowles said that they are doing a desk audit. Ms. Zook asked if they had finished their screenings and Ms. Knowles said she believed those were finished on Friday.

Dr. Moore asked how much online instruction there was at the high school level this year. Ms. Knowles said they struggled with Virtual Arkansas last year and said they are reserving the use of Virtual Arkansas for the upper-level classes. Dr. Moore asked if they were offering after school programs this year and Ms. Knowles said they are not at this time. Student Success Coordinator Ms. Felicia Watson provided an overview of the "What I Need Wednesdays."

Ms. McFetridge moved, seconded by Ms. Dean, to accept the report. The motion passed unanimously.

### **B-9 Consideration of Legislative Report: Lee County School District**

State Superintendent Dr. Mike Hernandez gave a brief overview of testing data and said the scores were not quite where they want them to be; however, they took over the district in the middle of the testing season. This was also during the time when the two principals decided to

no longer work with the district. He said Superintendent Dr. Zrano Bowles has expressed an interest in asking for a Level 5 designation. Dr. Hernandez said the school level plans are a bit different than most districts. He noted that Dr. Bowles was able to add a kind a science lab to the elementary school to give those students additional opportunities.

Dr. Hernandez also said that are in their first year of working with Solution Tree. They started their training in the summer and they have started their coaching. Dr. Hernandez said Mr. John Hoy has been working closely with Dr. Bowles.

Dr. Hernandez said that all areas within the district require some kind of attention. He noted that they are now on their third Finance team for the district.

Ms. McFetridge asking if the counselor position which handles ensuring students have all the credits they need for graduation. Dr. Hernandez said Dr. Bowles hired the team who helped in Lee County last year (Dr. McIntosh and Krista Harrell).

Ms. Dean asked what Dr. Bowles was doing for family and community engagement. Dr. Bowles said he is currently trying to meet with as many small groups as he possibly can. He has also met with the mayor and they held a big back-to-school fair. He also said they have found great success promoting their news with social media. Dr. Bowles also tries to have two-three parents present at his leadership meeting to provide their perspective.

Ms. Chambers moved, seconded by Ms. Dean, to accept the report. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **B-10 Consideration of Legislative Report and Approval of District Support Plan: Pine Bluff School District**

State Superintendent Dr. Mike Hernandez said Pine Bluff School District started on their Solution Tree work toward the end of the year. He said he and his staff were pleasantly surprised in the interactions with teachers and staff, saying they were excited and energized over the summer. He said the focus of their school level plans is generally about literacy/math, establishing collaborative teams, and there is an emphasis on behavior.

Dr. Hernandez said they are working closely with special education and they have had the desk audit related to dyslexia.

Dr. Hernandez said that Superintendent Dr. Jeremy Owoh and his team have done a great job taking care of certain financial concerns thus far. He said they have done a good job of selling properties that the district is no longer using. They are working on their master facilities plan which is due February 1, 2020.

Dr. Hernandez said they have been trying to reduce the number of suspensions and expulsion for the year. Ms. Zook asked what the district is doing differently to make those reductions. Dr. Owoh said they revised and are teaching the student handbook at all levels. They also provide incentives for students who go above and beyond to ensure the school setting is safe and they are on time and ready for class.

Ms. Zook asked if they were getting a lot of referrals from grades 3-12 as far as those kids that need to be screened. Dr. Owoh said they are not, which he finds concerning. He said last year they only had seven across a district of over 3,000 students.



Ms. Dean noted her concern about the recent approval for a casino to be built in the area and asked if Dr. Owoh had been thinking about the possible unintended consequences. Dr. Owoh said they have looked into both the possible positive and negative consequences. He said they have also had to consider that Pine Bluff was recently approved to have two medical marijuana facilities as well.

Dr. Owoh mentioned that during the restructuring of Central Office, they were able to hire a Director of Communications/Community Engagement. This new hire is going to launch their first Parent Academy in November and these sessions will handle different types of matters that may directly impact their students.

Ms. Dean moved, seconded by Ms. Chambers, to accept the report. The motion passed unanimously.

### **B-11 Consideration of Legislative Report and Approval of District Support Plan: Little Rock School District**

State Superintendent Dr. Mike Hernandez discussed school-level plans. He said the high-level focus is around literacy and math. He also briefly discussed the Feet to the Seat district-wide program, which is a program that focuses on student attendance. Dr. Hernandez said the elementary schools are focused around PLCs and the middle/high schools are focused on high reliability schools. He said they were going to work rest the district on an equity lab on September 13. Dr. Hernandez said they are seeing increases in the number of those receiving dyslexia intervention.

Dr. Hernandez said they have had professional development on restorative justice, CPI, AND PBIS. He also said that two schools are going to do the Leader in Me program. He said there have been some security cameras added at the secondary school and there are a few other projects also going on which were listed in the report.

Dr. Moore asked if the district is doing NWEA again this year. Superintendent Mr. Michael Poore said they are and it will be their third year doing NWEA in the district. He said they adopted K-2 with the state and last year was the first year for 3-10. Mr. Poore said they use NWEA as another way to look at reading scores. Dr. Moore asked if the building principals and teachers have been fully trained to use this well and Mr. Poore said yes.

Ms. Zook asked why under exit criteria that 4 schools of 22 declined offering leadership coaching. Mr. Poore said he believes that is because those schools chose the High Reliability Schools approach instead of the PLC approach.

Ms. Zook asked if Mr. Poore had the pre and post data on the summer school. Mr. Poore said that information would be a part of another report; however, he said they are going to have to adjust their summer school program.

Ms. Zook said she is getting a lot of reports that there is inconsistency in the Little Rock special education IEP conferences. She asked how they are working to make the IEP conferences truly student-focused. Mr. Poore said they had a meeting with some dyslexic supporters to discuss that issue and to listen to their concerns. He acknowledged they still have a bit of work to do, but said they are working to address concerns. Ms. Zook noted her frustration that school districts are still working on addressing special education issues when the definition of specific learning disabilities has not changed in 40 years.

Mr. Poore gave a brief update on things that are happening in the district. He said they have a special grant tied to the city about social/emotional learning. He said they also used trauma-informed education training with pre-K this year. Mr. Poore said he had \$27,000,000 worth of volunteer hours last year.

Ms. McFetridge asked if they have a communication plan in place on how to share the positive stories with the community. Mr. Poore said they primarily use Twitter to push out positive stories. He said Ms. Pam Smith does a good job with pushing out positive communications. Ms. McFetridge suggested Mr. Poore talk to Dr. Rollins in Springdale about his monthly community meetings.

Ms. Newton moved, seconded by Ms. McFetridge, to accept the report. The motion passed unanimously.

### **B-12 Consideration for Release for Public Comment: DESE Rules Governing Class Size and Teaching Load**

Staff Attorney Ms. Mary Claire Hyatt said changes to these Rules were made to incorporate provisions of Act 979 of 2019.

Ms. Dean moved, seconded by Mr. Pekron, to release for public comment. The motion passed unanimously.

### **B-13 Consideration for Release for Public Comment: DESE Rules Governing the Standards for Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools and School Districts**

Staff Attorney Ms. Mary Claire Hyatt said changes to these Rules were made to incorporate the provisions of Acts 83, 190, 641, 676, and 1083 of 2019.

Ms. McFetridge moved, seconded by Mr. Williamson, to release for public comment.

### **New Business**

There was no new business.

### **Public Comments**

Public comment was heard.

### **Adjournment**

Ms. Dean moved, seconded by Ms. Chambers, to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 4:37 p.m.

*Meeting minutes recorded by Tiffany Donovan*

  
Ms. Diane Zook, Chair

  
Mr. Johnny Key, Secretary