

**Minutes
State Board of Education
Friday, July 12, 2019**

The Arkansas State Board of Education (State Board) met Friday, July 12, 2019, in the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (Division) Auditorium. Chair Ms. Diane Zook called the meeting to order at 8:58 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. Johnny Key, Secretary

Absent: Ms. Stacey McAdoo, 2019 Arkansas Teacher of the Year

Changes to Agenda

There were no changes to the agenda.

Action Agenda A

A-1) Public School Choice Act Appeals

Staff Attorney Ms. Jennifer Dedman said the three items are under the Public School Choice Act of 2015. Ms. Dedman provided background information on School Choice.

a. Creekmore Family Public School Choice Appeal

Ms. Whitney Creekmore said she wants her child to go back to Southside. She said that Midland School District is in the opposite direction from her work and she doesn't want her child riding the bus at her age. The child's grandparents help with transportation; however, Midland is not a convenient location.

Superintendent Roger Rich said the denial was due to the fact that Midland had reached the limitation cap for allowable transfers. Superintendent Wammack said they met their three percent on the net.

Ms. Newton noted her confusion regarding dates on the application. She asked when the three percent cap was met. Mr. Wammack said the application was received on March 6, and the cut-off was February 28.

Ms. Zook asked if they were going to have two kindergarten classes, and Mr. Wammack said yes.

Mr. Key asked if there were any conversations of board-to-board transfers (legal transfers). Ms. Dedman said she did not believe there was in the Creekmore case. Ms. Chambers asked if it was an option. Ms. Dedman said it was up to local policy and upon agreement of the school boards.

Ms. Newton asked what Mr. Wammack's enrollment was, and he said 497 for K-12.

Mr. Williamson moved, seconded by Dr. Hill, to grant the transfer. There was a roll call vote. Ms. Newton voted no. The final vote was 6 to 1. The motion passed.

b. Kennedy Family Public School Choice Appeal

Ms. Dedman said the resident district was Guy-Perkins, and the non-resident district was Greenbrier. She said the denial was based on the three percent cap.

Ms. Sierra Kennedy said they moved mid-school year into the Guy-Perkins School District and were denied to move back to Greenbrier. She said they requested a legal transfer and have not heard back. She said they would like the student to go to Greenbrier due to transportation issues.

Assistant Superintendent Ms. Peggy O'Riley with the Greenbrier School District said they would be happy to have the student, but he was denied based on the three percent max from Guy-Perkins.

Superintendent Dr. Joe Fisher said he has not seen a formal request for a legal transfer. He noted that their numbers are under 350 and 3% only includes about 10 children.

Dr. Moore asked how many students have transferred in and out. Mr. Fisher did not have exact numbers but estimated five coming in.

Ms. Newton asked what Mr. Fisher's enrollment is, and he said 327 for the third quarter.

Ms. Dean moved, seconded by Ms. Chambers, to grant the transfer. There was a roll call vote. The motion passed unanimously.

Based on previous conversations, Mr. Key noted that the Division does not advocate for blanket denial from local boards and trusts the Boards to make the right choices for students. Ms. Zook agreed that batch denials are not good policy.

c. Laymon Family Public School Choice Appeal

The Laymon family was not present.

Superintendent Dennis Truxler of Quitman said applications for two children were turned in late.

Dr. Moore asked if there was talk of a board-to-board transfer, and Mr. Truxler said he did not know if they were considering it.

Ms. Chambers moved, seconded by Ms. Dean, to deny the motion based on an untimely filing. There was a brief discussion on possible actions and the facts of the case. There was a roll call vote. The motion passed unanimously.

Reports

Chair's Report

Ms. Zook noted that she will enjoy working with the Board as Chair this year. She said they must all strive for student-focused decisions.

Commissioner's Report

Mr. Key said Anna Claire Hay and Casey Humphrey received the Prudential Spirit of Community Award, which honors volunteerism. Anna Claire Hay started a group to encourage teens to get involved in their communities, and Casey Humphrey tutors visually impaired students and came up with innovative ways to help them, such as working with play-doh. He said he sent notes of congratulations to the students.

Mr. Key discussed Florida's Reading Story, noting that it took nearly two decades for the state of Florida to see substantial changes. He said progress isn't always a straight upward slope. In regard to the Arkansas ACT Aspire and reading concerns, he said growth takes time.

Dr. Moore asked how many districts have undergone R.I.S.E. training. Ms. Stacy Smith, with Learning Services, said there are 13,000 teachers who have completed the training or are in the process of completing it. She said they have been building standards to become a trainer, and the first year requires a Division member to be present. She said there are currently more than 300 R.I.S.E. Academy trainers and multiple pathways for training. Ms. Newton asked if the list of trainers would be available to the districts. Ms. Smith said yes and that most trainers are in co-ops.

Mr. Chad Pekron was introduced as the newest State Board Member.

Mr. Key said the ADE Summit went well. He said educators were amazed at the number of national speakers who were able to attend. Ms. Zook appreciated that the Summit was held outside of the school year and that some of the sessions were live streamed.

State Board Standing Committees, Special Committees, Liaisons, and Appointments Report

Ms. Dean said the Family and Community Engagement team presented at the ADE Summit and did a great job.

Ms. Newton had no reports for ESSA or NASBE.

For Public School Accountability, Ms. Coffman discussed how to subscribe to receive Commissioner's Memos. She also specifically discussed Memo # 20-003 – Public School

Accountability Timeline for Planning and 20-005 - Proposed 2019-2020 Standards for Accreditation and Federal Programs Monitoring Tool and Process.

Ms. Zook said the Special Education unit will be providing training to Little Rock School District principals, assistant principals, and leadership on IDEA requirements for disciplinary actions involving students receiving special education. She said they will provide a keynote address in Forrest City and will present new alternative pathways to graduation at 13 co-ops. They will also provide training at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock for education interpreters. Ms. Zook said the monitoring and program effectiveness team and the dispute resolution team together will be presenting on the process of writing present level of academic achievement and functional performance in 10 co-ops.

2018-2019 State Required Assessment Results

Director of Student Assessment Ms. Hope Worsham provided an update on 2018-2019 data from state-required assessments – ACT, ACT Aspire, DLM, and K-2. She said for K-2 assessment scores there are three different assessments: NWEA, Renaissance, and Istation. Ms. Worsham said that for reading, those assessments show similar results for the number of students scoring at the 40th percentile. She noted that it is not encouraged for schools to compare across assessments since they each have their own nuances. Based on the K-2 assessment results, 60-70 percent of those students are reading where they should be at the end of year, according to other grade level norms. There is a slightly lower percentage of students hitting the 40th percentile in math for NWEA.

Ms. Worsham said that for ACT Aspire, “Ready” indicates a student is on track to meeting the readiness benchmark on the 11th grade ACT. She said “Close” indicates a student is in need of some support but is not necessarily performing below grade level. She noted that results suggest high school graduates need a strong academic foundation regardless of the postsecondary path they choose. Ms. Worsham said there were several statistically significant increases in scores for the 2018-2019 ACT Aspire. She said the “in need of support” numbers are shrinking, particularly in math. Ms. Worsham said there was higher performance in English; however, it is lower when looking at the ACT readiness benchmark. Across all subjects, Ms. Worsham said there is a drop in scores in the 9th and 10th grades.

Dr. Moore asked for an explanation of the difference between the English and Reading tests. Ms. Worsham said English focuses on the mechanics of English, whereas, Reading focuses on the main ideas, themes, and comprehension.

Ms. Newton asked about the difference between the exam in 8th and 10th grades. Ms. Worsham said there is not much difference in the exam design. She said there are less open response for math and reading on the high school test.

Ms. Worsham noted that there were only two years of data available for accurate comparison for ELA due to the change in cut scores. She said there appears to be a steady increase across grades in ELA, which is encouraging. The scores are an average of writing, English, and reading.

Dr. Moore asked if they are able to see scores from open response versus multiple choice. Ms. Worsham said they are not available with ACT Aspire; however, for writing, schools receive rubric scores.

Ms. Newton noted her concern at the scores' drop-off from 8th to 9th and 10th grade. Assistant Commissioner Ms. Stacy Smith said they had some of the same questions and that a meeting with ACT may be appropriate to discuss the differences of the tests and a comparison with national scores.

Ms. Worsham briefly discussed Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM), saying this was the first year of administration. She said the first year went well, and feedback indicated a need for more professional development. She said the Assessment unit is providing professional development throughout the summer for how to use DLM for practical classroom application. Ms. Worsham said that based on registration, there are 650 teachers attending training.

Ms. Worsham said the 11th grade ACT benchmarks are as follows.

- English - 18
- Math - 22
- Reading - 22
- Science - 23
- STEM - 26

She said the percentage of students who met the ACT benchmark was highest in English. She noted that the average ACT score for Arkansas has not changed much over the past few years. The biggest drop was seen in math. She said the majority of 11th graders are participating in the test.

Ms. Worsham said that regarding all assessments, scores are remaining steady and confirm what we already know. She said we need to continue to promote solid instructional practice.

Ms. Zook asked how the K-2 tests align with ACT Aspire. Ms. Worsham said two of the three K-2 assessments have done a concordance study and are able to predict performance on the ACT Aspire. Istation is doing a concordance study this summer. Ms. Zook asked how long an English Learner is in the district before his/her test scores count toward the school/district scores. Ms. Worsham said the student's first year in the United States does not count. For the second year, only growth counts, and in the third year, everything counts. Ms. Zook asked that State Board members receive a copy of the PowerPoint presentation Ms. Worsham was using to present.

New Business


There was no new business.

Public Comment

Ms. Dean moved, seconded by Ms. McFetridge, to accept public comment. The motion passed unanimously. Public comment was heard.

Adjournment

Ms. Dean moved, seconded by Ms. Chambers, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 11:28 a.m.


Ms. Diane Zook, SBE Chair


Mr. Johnny Key, Secretary of Education