

Minutes
State Board of Education Meeting
Thursday, February 8, 2018

The State Board of Education (State Board) met Thursday, February 8, 2018, in the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality Auditorium. Chair Dr. Jay Barth called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

Present: Dr. Jay Barth, Chair; Joe Black, Vice-Chair; Dr. Fitz Hill; Diane Zook; Ouida Newton; Susan Chambers; Brett Williamson; Charisse Dean; Mireya Reith; Courtney Cochran, 2017 Arkansas Teacher of the Year; and Johnny Key, Commissioner.

Absent: None

Dr. Barth said the Arkansas Department of Education (Department) respectfully requested that Action Agenda Item B-2 Consideration for Final Approval: ADE Rules Governing Eligibility and Financial Incentives for National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Candidacy and Certification be removed from the agenda due to the need to incorporate substantive public comment.

Dr. Barth said the Department requested that EMERGENCY PROMULGATION of ADE Rules Governing Educator Licensure (and repeal of ADE Rules Governing Educator Preparation Program) be added to the agenda. Dr. Barth said the addition would require a two-thirds vote from the State Board. He said the added item would be considered alongside Action Agenda item B-1.

Ms. Newton moved, seconded by Ms. Reith, to add EMERGENCY PROMULGATION of ADE Rules Governing Educator Licensure (and repeal of ADE Rules Governing Educator Preparation Program) as Action Agenda item B-1 (a). The motion carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda

Mr. Black moved, seconded by Mr. Williamson, to approve the consent agenda minus Consent Item 2 Consideration of Legislative Reports. The motion carried unanimously.

Items included in the Consent Agenda:

- Minutes – January 11, 2018 and January 12, 2018
- Consideration of Legislative Reports
- Review of Loan and Bond Applications
- Newly Employed, Promotions and Separations
- Consideration of Report on Waivers to School Districts for Teachers Teaching Out of Area for Longer than Thirty (30) Days, Ark. Code Ann. § 6-7-309
- Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case # 17-090 Derek Phillips

- Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case # 17-215 Melisa Dillard
- Consideration of the 2016-2017 Annual Statistical Report
- 2018 Open-Enrollment Charter School Application
- 2018 District Conversion Charter School Application

Action Agenda A

Consent Item 2 Consideration of Legislative Reports

State Superintendent Dr. Mike Hernandez said the Little Rock School District is currently only reporting on Baseline Elementary School.

Little Rock School District Superintendent Mr. Mike Poore said there are a number of initiatives happening within the district for elementary school students. He said the science fair recently passed. He said the One District One Book campaign would teach financial literacy in elementary schools. He said this initiative would kick off in April 2018. He said the legislative report on the district showed improvement in sub-populations at the elementary level, particularly with English Language Learners. Mr. Poore said the R.I.S.E. initiative was being implemented in full force by the district. He said the district has targeted elementary schools with low reading levels with the Grade-Level Reading Initiative.

Mr. Poore said there has been a lot of coverage on the substitute teacher shortage in the district. He said the coverage has helped the district. Mr. Poore said a big issue with teacher absences is the gap in instruction for students.

Mr. Poore said the next major community engagement conversation would consider Southwest High School and how it would affect community members. He said this conversation would awaken conversations on local control of the Little Rock School District. He said this conversation would occur at the end of the 2017-2018 school year.

Mr. Poore said there were a few unique family engagement initiatives in the district. Henderson Middle School has begun a family engagement initiative where members of the school's feeder schools come together and discuss issues pertinent to the school. Mr. Poore said the Parents as Partners program engages parents interested in learning how to improve their parenting skills. He said that the participant group was gender, language, and professionally diverse. Mr. Poore said the district hosts monthly community walks. He said some schools have also done these walks independently.

Mr. Poore said the district would have to undergo teacher and administrator reductions in order to compensate for a 5 million budget-cut. Mr. Poore said the district is losing National School Lunch Program (NSLP) funds because the district serves approximately 400 less students than the previous year. He said he believed the current numbers represented incomplete free and reduced lunch applications and not

the population of the community. He said he believed the district would exceed the 70% threshold in the coming school year to regain NSLP funds.

Mr. Poore said there was a much more collaborative environment in the district. He said the business community had reached out to the district. He said Southwest Power Pool was interested in engaging and supporting the district with STEM education initiatives. He said project-based learning was ongoing with the Clinton School and ForwARd Arkansas. Mr. Poore said career-technical education had grown.

Mr. Poore said the district was working with Bright Futures Little Rock to provide for student needs by utilizing community resources.

Mr. Poore said the Little Rock School District provided training for the Community Advisory Board (CAB) in collaboration with the Arkansas School Board Association and the Department. He said the training was robust and that there had been subsequent training. He said there were currently two openings on the CAB.

Mr. Poore said the climate at Hall High School had changed to one of inclusion and care with the new principal. Forest Heights STEM Academy and Hall High School were working on providing high school credit for eighth graders.

Dollarway School District Superintendent Ms. Barbara Warren said there was a new principal in the elementary school and that the climate had changed. She said the new principal was working hard. She said the pre-kindergarten program had a new curriculum. She said teachers were involved in professional learning conversations. Ms. Warren said James Matthew Elementary School was a R.I.S.E. (Reading Initiative for Student Excellence) school and that reading scores had improved.

Ms. Warren said writing the report was a conversation starter for the district. She said if the report was not a flexible tool, it was a problem. She said it had been beneficial to the district.

Ms. Warren said the district was using social media platforms to reach families and the community. She said family engagement was important to the district.

Ms. Warren said the district was in the planning stages for developing Cardinal Academy, the umbrella term for professional learning in the district that would include teacher-to-teacher training.

Ms. Warren said the community-learning program was moving forward.

Ms. Warren said the Dollarway Foundation was an alumni and community organization that provides resources to the district.

Ms. Warren said the ESSA School Index gave the district a number of areas to consider. She said Dr. Hernandez provided support in interpreting the index. She said

there was some data-integrity work that the district must do to address errors. Ms. Warren said the district was taking a close look at the computer science data in order to understand the gap. She said there was a lot of work that the district must do academically.

Ms. Warren said the district needed to provide competitive salaries. She said the district had teacher retention strategies in place. She said one challenge was that there had been teachers on the Arkansas Professional Pathway to Educator Licensure (APPEL) program who had difficulties paying for program candidacy. Ms. Warren said the district collaborated with the Department to offset the cost for some candidates.

Assistant Commissioner for Educator Effectiveness and Licensure Dr. Jeremy Owoh said there were high-need grants to pay for APPEL teacher candidates who could not afford exam preparation. He said the Teach Arkansas program was offering Praxis preparation programs across the state.

Ms. Warren said the district had received positive feedback overall from the community. She said the district had received negative feedback concerning the low number of attendees for community events.

Ms. Warren said people want their children to be nurtured, and Dollarway School District provides this for their students. She said her goal was to make Dollarway the school district of choice.

Ms. Zook said, overall, the state must address the timing of professional development for teachers so that it does not interfere with instruction.

Dr. Hernandez said the Department had shifted to a quarterly report. He said the report is different from the previous 45-day reports. He said Earle School District would be included in the next quarterly report.

Ms. Reith moved, seconded by Ms. Chambers, to approve Consent Item 2 Consideration of Legislative Reports. The motion carried unanimously.

Dr. Barth proposed for an agenda order change due to staff scheduling availability. Dr. Barth proposed that the State Board start with Action Agenda Item B-1 and continue with items B-1 (a), A-1 (b), A-1 (c), and A-1 (a). The motion carried unanimously.

Note: written minutes will follow original order for clarity.

A-1 (a) District Request for Waivers Granted to Open-Enrollment Charters: Emmerson-Taylor-Bradley

Public School Program Advisor Ms. Kelly McLaughlin said representatives from the Emerson-Taylor-Bradley School District were appearing before the State Board with a petition of waivers.

Emmerson-Taylor-Bradley School District Superintendent Mr. Gary Hines said the district was requesting an early school start waiver to allow an equal first and second semester and to allow more instructional days before end-of-year testing.

Ms. Newton moved, seconded by Ms. Dean, to approve waiver request filed by Emmerson-Taylor-Bradley School District. The motion carried unanimously.

A-1 (b) District Request for Waivers Granted to Open-Enrollment Charters: Hot Springs School District

Public School Program Advisor Ms. Kelly McLaughlin said representatives from the Hot Springs School District were appearing before the State Board with a petition of waivers. The principal licensure and library media waiver requests were to expire on August 1, 2020, and the teacher licensure waiver request is to expire on August 1, 2022.

Hot Springs School District Superintendent Dr. Stephanie Nehus said there was a millage increase in September 2016 and the millage had led to the waiver request. Dr. Nehus said there were currently multiple school transitions for students in the district. She said studies show that students achieve better with less school transitions. Dr. Nehus said the district's building projects end in 2020. She said the district would like to minimize building transitions for students by decreasing the number of buildings students would have to transition through between their K-12 education. She said the district was building a new elementary school. She said the district was looking to build another junior academy.

Dr. Nehus said the district requests to have one principal oversee two buildings. She said the district needed licensure waivers to allow middle-level certified teachers (grades 4-8) to teach all subjects for any elementary grade level during the transition period leading up to 2020. Dr. Nehus said the district would have one library media specialist serve two buildings

Dr. Nehus said special education support would continue at a high level.

Ms. Zook moved, seconded by Ms. Reith, to approve waiver requests filed by Hot Springs School District. The motion carried unanimously.

A-1 (c) District Request for Waivers Granted to Open-Enrollment Charters: Guy-Perkins School District

Public School Program Advisor Ms. Kelly McLaughlin said representatives from the Guy-Perkins School District were appearing before the State Board with a petition of waivers.

Guy-Perkins School District Superintendent Mr. Shade Gilbert said he joined the district as superintendent when the district was under fiscal distress. Mr. Gilbert said the district exceeded the student-to-teacher ratio for the 1st grade after Christmas 2017. He said the district required a waiver for their art and music teachers. Mr. Gilbert said the waiver requests were for two years.

Ms. Newton moved, seconded by Ms. Reith, to approve waiver requests filed by Guy-Perkins School District. The motion carried unanimously.

A-2 Arkansas Civics Exam

Assistant Commissioner for Learning Services Ms. Stacy Smith said Act 478 of 2017 requires students to pass an Arkansas Civics Exam with a score of at least 60% as a graduation requirement. She said the State Board shall determine the method and manner by which to administer a test that is identical to the civics portion of the naturalization test used by United States Citizenship and Immigration Services.

Ms. Smith said the proposed exam was online and offered through the Moodle digital platform. Ms. Smith said the exam includes fill-in-the-blank and multiple-choice sections. She said the exam sections are clearly delineated. She said the exam lets students know whether their answer is correct or not. Ms. Smith said students are given a detour lesson if their answer is wrong. She said students are allowed to return to the missed question after the detour lesson. She said the answer is marked wrong if the student gets a question wrong for the second time.

Ms. Smith said some districts would like to begin using the assessment in the current 2017-2018 school year. She said the Department would like to give districts this option. She said current juniors would be required to take the test as a graduation requirement. Ms. Smith said the test is untimed and has 100 questions.

Ms. Zook moved, seconded by Mr. Williamson, to accept the Arkansas Civics Exam format. The motion carried unanimously.

Action Agenda B

B-1 Consideration for Final Approval: ADE Rules Governing Educator Licensure (and repeal of ADE Rules Governing Educator Preparation Program)

General Counsel Ms. Lori Freno said the Department staff respectfully requested that this Board give final approval to the proposed rules and rules repeal, pending Arkansas Legislative Council review.

Assistant Commissioner for Learning Services Ms. Stacy Smith said the prescribed pathways was being worked on by the Department. She said the prescribed pathways would be done in two phases. She said the first phase would be to document how teachers received their training and knowledge, and the second phase would be demonstration of that training and knowledge. Ms. Smith said this awareness aspect was being worked on by AETN (Arkansas Educational Television Network).

Ms. Dean moved, seconded by Ms. Zook, seconded to approve ADE Rules Governing Educator Licensure (and repeal of ADE Rules Governing Educator Preparation Program).

B-1 (a) EMERGENCY PROMULGATION of ADE Rules Governing Educator Licensure (and repeal of ADE Rules Governing Educator Preparation Program)

General Counsel Ms. Lori Freno said due to the rule promulgation process that would impede the Department from releasing these rules to districts in a timely matter, the Department respectfully requested that the State Board vote on this emergency promulgation during the February 2018 session.

Mr. Black moved, seconded by Ms. Reith, to approve EMERGENCY PROMULGATION of ADE Rules Governing Educator Licensure (and repeal of ADE Rules Governing Educator Preparation Program). The motion carried unanimously.

B-2 Consideration for Final Approval: ADE Rules Governing Eligibility and Financial Incentives for National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Candidacy and Certification

The State Board moved to remove this item from the agenda.

B-3 Consideration for Public Comment: ADE Rules Governing Instructional Materials

The Department requested that this item be removed from the agenda.

B-4 Consideration for Public Comment: ADE Rules to Implement the Braille and Large Print Textbook Appropriation


Staff Attorney Ms. Mary Claire Hyatt said this rule is mandated in the annual appropriation for braille and large print textbooks, most recently appropriated in Act 174 of 2017. She said amendments to the rule removed outdated information and replaced it with current terms and methods.

Ms. Zook moved, seconded by Mr. Black, to approve ADE Rules to Implement the Braille and Large Print Textbook Appropriation for public comment. The motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment

Ms. Reith moved, seconded by Ms. Chambers, to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 1:40 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Kelicia Hollis



Johnhy Key, Commissioner



Dr. Jay Barth, Chair