

Minutes
State Board of Education Meeting
Friday, June 15, 2018

The Arkansas State Board of Education (State Board) met Friday, June 15, 2018, in the Arkansas Department of Education Auditorium. Chair Dr. Jay Barth called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

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

Absent: Brett Williamson and Charisse Dean.

Reports

State Superintendent Dr. Mike Hernandez presented general observations from all three (3) cooperative reports on the agenda. He said the Department focused on the 2016-2017 school year during the cooperative evaluations. He said the common theme centered on the user satisfaction survey. He said he believed not as many people responded as the Department thought should have responded. He said the Department went back to look through responses. He said due to the response rates, the Department could not definitely gauge user satisfaction.

Report 1- Office of Coordinated Support and Services presents the Arkansas River Education Cooperative Evaluation Report

Arkansas River Education Cooperative Director Ms. Cathy Swan said the board of directors of the cooperative collectively wrote a letter of support addressed to State Board members. She said the 2017-2018 year was a great learning year. She said the focus was on moving forward. She said all of the recommendations by the committee were addressed.

Report 2- Office of Coordinated Support and Services presents the Guy Fenter Education Service Cooperative Evaluation Report

Guy Fenter Education Service Cooperative Director Mr. Roy Hester said he was a third year cooperative director. He said the cooperative did a better job at getting responses in the past year compared to previous years. He said he believed the cooperative could grow from the evaluation experience.

Report 3- Office of Coordinated Support and Services presents the Crowley's Ridge Education Cooperative Evaluation Report

State Superintendent Dr. Mike Hernandez said there were some things that needed to improve in the cooperative. He said the cooperative had gotten better and the Department expected to see improvement in the future.

Commissioner Key said the previous evaluation system for cooperatives was compliance-based. He said the new evaluation system was designed so that cooperatives could get better. He said the Department was adjusting the rubric to develop a better evaluation instrument. He said cooperatives do great work in the state by aiding in the Department's overall objectives in serving schools.

Dr. Hernandez said there was a timing issue that may have impacted the response rate.

Dr. Hernandez said the Department would review the evaluation process for any needed changes.

Report 4- 2017 Arkansas Teacher of the Year Report

Ms. Cochran said she spent her year traveling across Arkansas and talking about equity in education and the need for culturally responsive practices.

Ms. Cochran said people who care about kids and do whatever it takes to make futures brighter is what makes Arkansas great. She said there is greatness in the diversity of students. She said kids are like a kaleidoscope of colors.

Report 5- Chair's Report

Dr. Barth said he met with the new Teach for America cohort about equity issues in Arkansas. He said the meeting was positive.

Report 6- Commissioner's Report

Commissioner Key shared the new restructuring of the Unit for Standards and Systems Support structure with the State Board. He said the School Improvement unit and the Standards for Accreditation unit were combined in the new Unit for Standards and Systems Support.

He said the Charter Schools Unit would now be under the Division for Public School Accountability. He said the Equity Office would now be under the Division of Educator Effectiveness and Licensure.

State Superintendent Dr. Mike Hernandez said all districts were being actively engaged at all times regardless of the level of support needed. He said a team would be developed specifically to support each Level 5 district. He said the support would be tailored based on the needs of the individual district.

Commissioner Key said My School Info was an important tool to identify schools with similar demographics to reach out for mentorship and sharing best practices.

Report 7- State Board Standing Committees, Special Committees, Liaisons, and Appointments Report

Task Force on Family Engagement in Learning and Deeper Learning Grant Co-Chair Ms. Reith said the last meeting focused on the future of the task force. She said the fall work for the task force was to develop standards. She said the next meeting was the following Thursday, June 21, 2018. She said Dr. Hill was asked to join the task force. She said the work of developing standards would reach into local communities across the state to seek input.

Ms. Reith said the ForwARd Arkansas meeting in Springdale did not reflect the large Latino and Marshallese population in the region. She said there was acknowledgement that ForwARd would have to go into these communities intentionally to seek engagement.

Ms. Reith said the Family and Community Engagement (FCE) team would participate in a family engagement innovation event at the Clinton School.

Public Information Manager Ms. Meghan Ables said the goal of the FCE team was to find out the type of resources needed for the toolkit that would help districts with family and community engagement. She said the connections that the State Board members on the task force added were critical to the success of the FCE team's work.

Task Force on Student Discipline member Dr. Hill said the team did not meet in June. He said all of the recommendations would be submitted for the July 2018 State Board meeting.

Liaison to ForwARd Arkansas Dr. Barth said ForwARd sent their thanks for State Board members' participation in the community conversation events. He said ForwARd created an initial document based on that feedback. He said there was an implementation working meeting in July. He said there would be a data symposium on September 27, 2018, in Little Rock. He asked that State Board members consider being the ForwARd liaison for the following calendar year.

Liaison to the ESSA Steering Committee Ms. Newton said the steering committee met at the end of May. She said the committee learned about the progress of the Department. She said support was being provided to districts to better understand

student data. She said spring testing corrections would open on August 1, 2018. Ms. Newton said the ESSA School Index and A-F rating system would be released in October at the earliest. She said districts should have their plans posted on their websites by August 1, 2018.

NASBE Government Affairs Committee member Ms. Newton said the implementation of the ESSA plans would be overseen via grant monitoring and consolidated state performance reports. Ms. Newton asked State Board members to submit input regarding thoughts on the direction of career technical education ahead of future federal legislation.

Commissioner Key said due to ACT Aspire cut score changes to the English Language Arts scores, a concordance was created so that the A-F school rating scores would align.

Liaison to the Division of Public School Accountability Ms. Zook said the specialists were connecting with districts. She said the Business Rules would be posted on the Department website for review.

Assistant Commissioner for Public School Accountability Ms. Deborah Coffman said the A-F concordance would be brought before the State Board after the second public comment period. She said the Standards for Accreditation were approved by the Arkansas Legislative Council.

Liaison to Special Education Ms. Zook said the Director of Special Education position was still vacant.

Dr. Barth said NASBE's president announced her retirement effective at the end of 2018. He said NASBE had a strategic plan that required a smooth leadership transition.

Dr. Barth said it would be helpful to have former Arkansas teachers of the year share their post- State Board experience with the State Board.

Dr. Barth asked if State Board members had recommendations for additional task forces starting in July 2018.

Ms. Chambers asked whether there was a group that examined where dollars were best spent in the best interest of students in light of charter school openings across the state.

Dr. Hill said the State Board should consider public safety and opioid addiction as potential task forces.

Ms. Reith said mental health was an issue that she did not have the opportunity to take up in the current year. She said the Arkansas School Safety Commission might benefit from a State Board member liaison.

Commissioner Key said the Arkansas School Safety Commission would release an initial report on June 29, 2018.

Ms. Newton said many teachers had approached her with the desire to align pre-K standards and curriculum with kindergarten standards and curriculum.

Commissioner Key said Senator Joyce Elliott shared a suggestion to create a joint effort between the Arkansas Economic Development Commission and the State Board.

General Counsel Ms. Lori Freno shared a summary of litigation concerning school choice. She said the Hope School District, Layette County School District, Camden-Fairview School District and Junction City School District were challenging the constitutionality of the Public School Choice Act of 2015, as amended.

Adjournment

Ms. Reith moved, seconded by Mr. Black, to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 11:02 a.m.

Minutes recorded by Kelicia Hollis



Johnny Key, Commissioner



Dr. Jay Barth, Chair

