

**Minutes
State Board of Education Meeting
Thursday, February 9, 2017**

The State Board of Education met Thursday, February 9, 2017, in the Arkansas Department of Education Auditorium. Chair Mireya Reith called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

Present: Mireya Reith, Chair; Dr. Jay Barth, Vice-Chair; Dr. Fitz Hill; Joe Black; Diane Zook; Ouida Newton; Susan Chambers; Brett Williamson; Charisse Dean; Meghan Ables, 2016 Teacher of the Year; and Johnny Key, Commissioner.

Absent: None

Recognition

Ms. Kara Davis, Milken Educator Awardee

Ms. Kara Davis was awarded the Milken Educator Award by the Milken Family Foundation. Communications Director Ms. Kimberly Friedman recognized Ms. Davis. She said Ms. Davis is a teacher at Joe Mathias Elementary School in the Rogers School District.

Ms. Davis recognized her principal, Ms. Betsy Kincaid. She said she was honored to receive the award. She recognized her colleagues and their dedication to students.

Consent Agenda

Ms. Zook moved, seconded by Dr. Barth, to pull consent agenda items, C-5 Consideration of Legislative Reports and C-6 Consideration of Little Rock School District Community Advisory Board Quarterly Report. The motion carried unanimously.

Dr. Barth moved, seconded by Ms. Chambers, to approve the consent agenda, less consent items C-5 and C-6. The motion carried unanimously.

Items included in the Consent Agenda:

- Minutes – January 12, 2017
- Minutes – January 13, 2017
- Newly Employed, Promotions and Separations
- Review of Loan and Bond Applications
- 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
- My Child/My Student Report
- Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case #16-164 – James Gaunt

- Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case #16-172 – Bryan Matthew Walters
- Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case #17-009 – Stephen Edward Harshaw
- Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case #17-031 – Bennie Stanton Butler
- Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case #17-043 – Michaela Monique Jeffrey
- 2017 Open-Enrollment Charter School Application
- 2017 District Conversion Charter School Application

Ms. Newton requested an annual report of long-term substitutes by subject area when no teacher of record is noted.

Action Agenda

C-5 Consideration of Legislative Reports

Public Comment Ms. Annie Bryant said she was concerned about how math scores are calculated and reported. She was also concerned about how students are instructed on grade level if they are working below grade level.

Assistant Commissioner for Public School Accountability Ms. Annette Barnes said the Department does not include Algebra II in state accountability. She said the submitted reports are required by the Legislature.

Ms. Newton moved, seconded by Dr. Hill, to approve the legislative reports. The motion carried unanimously.

C-6 Consideration of Little Rock School District Community Advisory Board Quarterly Report

Public Comment Ms. Acadia Roher said the report did not accurately reflect the community interests. She urged the Board to return the Little Rock School District to local control.

Ms. Chambers moved, seconded by Mr. Black, to approve the Little Rock School District Community Advisory Board quarterly report. The motion carried unanimously.

Report

AR Linking Study

Office of Innovation in Education Director Dr. Denise Airola provided a report on the concordance of ACTAAP proficient score to ACT Aspire score scale. She said three years of data are utilized to provide stability and limit variability. She said there was a precedent for using concordance. She said the Technical Advisory Committee for Assessment and Accountability reviewed the concordance process.

Action Agenda

A-1 Consideration of District Recommended for Removal from Academic Distress

Assistant Commissioner of Public School Accountability Ms. Annette Barnes said A-1 and A-2 relate to the presentation from Ms. Airola.

State Systems Administrator for School Performance Mr. Louis Ferren said the Department certifies that the Blytheville School District is no longer at or below the 49.5 percent proficiency level which caused it to be classified as being in Academic Distress. Section 3.02 et seq. of the Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment and Accountability Program (ACTAAP) and the Academic Distress Program states that the Academic Distress classification is assigned to any public school or public school district in which 49.5 percent or less of its students achieve proficient or advanced in math and literacy for the most recent three (3) year period.

Ms. Barnes said the Department is committed to assistance to the district and schools. She said the 45-days reports would continue and the Board can call the district at any time.

Blytheville School District Superintendent Mr. Richard Atwill said academic distress is a district system issue. He said the Department asked questions that led to the substantive changes in the district system. He thanked the Department for the support. He said the district was committed to continuing the improvement.

Ms. Zook moved, seconded by Mr. Black, to approve the removal of the Blytheville School District from Academic Distress. The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Key said he appreciated the work of the Blytheville School District in developing partnerships, supporting student voice, commitment from the adults, and systemic dedication to improvement. He said the leadership at the district, schools, and community are evident.

A-2 Consideration of Schools Recommended for Removal from Academic Distress

Ms. Barnes submitted the following schools for consideration of removal from academic distress:

- McClellan Magnet High School – Little Rock School District
- J.A. Fair High School – Little Rock School District
- Jacksonville Middle School – Jacksonville North Pulaski School District
- Blytheville High School – A New Tech School – Blytheville School District
- Pine Bluff High School – Pine Bluff School District
- Belair Middle School – Pine Bluff School District
- Mineral Springs High School – Mineral Springs School District
- Dermott High School – Dermott School District
- Watson Chapel High School – Watson Chapel School District
- Little Rock Prep Academy Elementary – Little Rock Preparatory Charter School

Dr. Barth moved, seconded by Mr. Williamson, to approve the removal of the listed schools from Academic Distress. The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Key said the leadership teams from the schools led the work to improvement. He expressed congratulations to all involved in the process.

Blytheville School District Superintendent Mr. Richard Atwill said the State Board should be very proud of the work of the Department.

Little Rock School District Superintendent Mr. Michael Poore said teachers made the difference. He echoed that the support from the Department and the Office of Intensive Support were valuable. He said the building principals were instrumental in the improvement. He said the schools were setting different expectations and therefore seeing the needed improvement.

Dermott School District Superintendent Ms. Kristi Ridgell said hard work pays off.

Mineral School District Superintendent Mr. Curtis Turner said the Department was very helpful and the progress will be continued.

A-3 District Extension Request for Waivers Granted to Open-Enrollment Charters: Southeast Cooperative Districts

Public School Program Advisor Ms. Kelly McLaughlin said Act 1240 of 2015 allows a school district to petition the State Board of Education for all or some of the waivers granted to open-enrollment public charter schools that serve students who reside in the school district.

Staff Attorney Ms. Jennifer Davis reviewed the Board procedures.

Southeast Education Service Cooperative Director Ms. Karen Eoff said the previously approved waiver had been a great recruitment tool. She requested a waiver extension for five (5) years. She said last year the region expected to hire 119 teachers because they had 64 openings and 55 teacher retirements. She said 268 teachers were hired, and 203 were fully licensed or already enrolled in non-traditional licensure programs. She said 58 teachers were hired that did not have licenses, but 41 of the teachers are currently enrolled in non-traditional licensure programs. She said all of the teachers that were hired received ethics training. She said the new educators are supported by on-site learning and the cooperative specialists. The districts included are:

- Cleveland County School District
- Crossett School District
- Dermott School District
- DeWitt School District
- Drew Central School District
- Dumas School District
- Hamburg School District
- Hermitage School District
- Lakeside School District
- Monticello School District
- Star City School District
- Warren School District

Crossett School District Superintendent Mr. Gary Williams said the district faced many job openings with 1/5 turnover of staff. He said the teachers hired under the waiver are local community members. He said all nine (9) new hires would return next year if the waiver request was approved.

Dermott School District Superintendent Ms. Kristi Ridgell said the district employed eight (8) teachers under the waiver. She said an approved waiver would allow the district to have one of its highest teacher retention rates.

Dumas School District Superintendent Mr. Kelvin Gragg said the district was supporting new hires to pass the appropriate exams for licensure.

Hamburg School District Superintendent Mr. Max Dyson said the waivers helped southeast Arkansas. He said some of the new hires are degreed personnel but do not have the license in the area of assignment.

Dewitt School District Superintendent Dr. Lynn Dardenne said she hired four (4) teachers under the waiver.

Ms. Eoff said the cooperative would provide a two-year and four-year written report to the Board (consent agenda).

Ms. Dean moved, seconded by Dr. Hill, to approve the waivers granted to open-enrollment charters for twelve (12) districts in the Southeast Cooperative Districts for five (5) years with two-year and four-year reports. The motion carried unanimously.

A-4 District Request for Waivers Granted to Open-Enrollment Charters: Greenwood School District

Public School Program Advisor Ms. Kelly McLaughlin said Act 1240 of 2015 allows a school district to petition the State Board of Education for all or some of the waivers granted to Open-Enrollment Public Charter Schools that serve students who reside in the school district.

Greenwood School District Superintendent Mr. John Ciesla said the district is committed to excellence in education. He requested a waiver from 14.03 unit of credit and clock hours for a unit of credit. He said professional development would be provided by Edgenuity.

Greenwood School District Instructional Facilitator Mr. Jason Bridges said the district identified issues. He said some students in the classroom struggled with the grade level concepts and others excelled. He said the district needed to personalize the learning for all students. He said one-third of students were dropping out of college before completing a degree. He said the Bulldog Learning Academy will include mastery of core content, collaborative activities, and a passion project.

Greenwood School District Instructional Facilitator Ms. Christy Hesslen said the proposed high school model changes the role of the student and teacher. She said the progress would be measured through quantitative and qualitative data. She said the timeline for development started in November 2016. She said the implementation would begin with ninth graders in the 2017-2018 school year with the advancement of one additional grade level each year through high school.

Greenwood Freshman Center Principal Mr. Cody Chapman said local stakeholders were engaged in the model development. He said the model would permit students to accelerate and take more concurrent classes. He thanked the Department for the support.

Ms. Zook moved, seconded by Ms. Chambers, to approve the request for waivers granted to open-enrollment charters for the Greenwood School District for five (5) years. The motion carried unanimously.

A-5 State Board Review of PLSB Evidentiary Hearing Findings and Recommendations – PLSB Case No. 16-076; Annick Flore Degny

PLSB Managing Attorney Ms. Bilenda Harris-Ritter said educator Ms. Annick Flore Degny was in violation of Standard 2: An educator maintains competence regarding his or her professional practice inclusive of skills, knowledge, dispositions, and responsibilities, relating to his or her organizational position and violation of Standard 6: An educator keeps in confidence secure standardized test materials and results and maintains integrity regarding test administration procedures. On August 12, 2016, the Professional Licensure Standards Board Ethics Subcommittee recommended that the State Board suspend Ms. Degny's license for three (3) years and assess a \$100.00 fine. Ms. Degny made a timely request for State Board review. Ms. Degny filed her written objection and brief. The PLSB filed its response.

Ms. Annick Degny represented herself. Ms. Degny said she did not violate an ethics standard. She said proper testing procedures were not followed by the school. She said no proctor was assigned to her classroom.

Ms. Harris-Ritter said Ms. Degny copied information from the test booklet. She said Ms. Degny received annual training for test administration.

Ms. Dean moved, seconded by Mr. Williamson, to suspend Ms. Degny's license for three (3) years and assess a \$100.00 fine. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Newton moved, seconded by Ms. Chambers, to hear public comment on this item. Mr. Williamson voted no. The motion carried.

Public Comment Mr. Ezechiel Degny said Ms. Degny reported the testing violation. He said the setting contributed to the testing violation.

A-6 Consideration of Waiver Request for Teaching License – Richard Raymond Rodgers

Managing Attorney Ms. Bilenda Harris-Ritter said Mr. Richard Raymond Rodgers is a licensed educator who applied for renewal of his license. On January 3, 2017, the Department notified Mr. Rodgers that he is disqualified from holding a teaching license under Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-410. Mr. Rodgers requested a waiver of the disqualification from the State Board. Mr. Rodgers was represented by attorney Greg Alagood.

Attorney Mr. Greg Alagood said Mr. Rodgers' name was placed on the Child Maltreatment Registry for a true finding. He said Mr. Rodgers was found to have left a bruise on a student after administering corporal punishment. He said Mr. Rodgers was never notified that his name was on the Registry and that the incident occurred many years ago. He said Mr. Rodgers would also seek to have his name removed from the Registry.

Cheryl Reinhart said a number of cases indicated that persons have been named on the Child Maltreatment Registry without notification to the person.

Ms. Harris-Ritter said the PLSB supported approval of the waiver.

Ms. Chambers moved, seconded by Mr. Williamson, to approve Mr. Rodger's request for waiver. The motion carried unanimously.

A-7 Petition for Alteration of Education Service Cooperative Boundaries

General Counsel Ms. Lori Freno said Mr. Nathan Gills, Stuttgart School District Superintendent, on behalf of the Stuttgart School District, requested the Board of Education consider Stuttgart's request to change cooperative membership from the Arkansas River Education Service Cooperative (Pine Bluff) to the Wilbur D. Mills Education Service Cooperative (Beebe). The request would facilitate the alteration of cooperative boundaries as outlined in A.C.A. §6-13-1003 and §6-13-1005. She said seven (7) cooperatives are under 20,000 students based on average daily membership (ADM).

Stuttgart School District Superintendent Mr. Nathan Gills said that in the best interest of the district he requested to become a member of the Wilbur D. Mills Education Service Cooperative. He said Stuttgart educators are often the only educators in AR River Co-op training and the co-op board has to wait for additional board members to arrive to achieve a quorum. He said the Mills Co-op offers more opportunities to the Stuttgart District. He said Mills Co-op has agreed to accept the Stuttgart District as a member.

Arkansas River Education Service Cooperative Director Mr. Danny Hazelwood said the AR River Co-op board voted to deny the release of the Stuttgart School District. He said the co-op provides services for birth to twelfth grade. He said the co-op could lose approximately \$100,000 in funding which may cause a reduction in staff. He said the Stuttgart District is closer to the AR River Co-op. He said the co-op currently serves eight (8) districts. He said the co-op has offered to provide more services to the Stuttgart District. He said losing this district would be detrimental to the co-op. He said student enrollment is declining in the area. He asked the Board to deny the request for boundary alteration.

Commissioner Key said the cooperatives are working with the Department to improve the co-op evaluation system.

Dr. Barth moved, seconded by Mr. Black, to deny the alteration of education service cooperative boundaries. Ms. Newton and Ms. Zook voted no. The final vote was 6-2. The motion carried.

A-8 Critical Academic Licensure Shortage Areas for the 2017-2018 School Year

Special Projects Administrator Mr. Frank Servedio said in accordance with Arkansas Code § 6-15-403, the State Board of Education has authority to annually declare critical teacher shortage areas. The following areas were determined to be shortage areas in Arkansas for the 2017-2018 school year based on previously published supply and demand calculations: Art, Computer Science, Family & Consumer Science, Journalism, Library/Media, Mathematics, Music, Physical Science (Physics, Chemistry), Social Studies, Spanish, and Special Education. He said the approved list of shortage areas is submitted to the U.S. Department of Education. He said the recommendations are based on a supply and demand formula.

Assistant Commissioner for Educator Effectiveness and Licensure Ms. Ivy Pfeffer said the Department is working on a method to match teacher candidates to open positions.

Dr. Barth moved, seconded by Ms. Chambers, to approve the critical academic licensure shortage areas for the 2017-2018 school year. The motion carried unanimously.

A-9 Consideration to Add an Item to the Action Agenda

The Department requested to add an item to the action agenda.

Ms. Dean moved, seconded by Ms. Zook, to add Appointment of Nominating Committee to the Action Agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

Appointment of Nominating Committee

General Counsel Ms. Freno said on or before the first day of March of each year, the Chair shall appoint a Nominating Committee consisting of three (3) Board Members, all of whom shall have served at least two years on the Board. The Committee shall secure the consent of its nominees to serve and report to the Board at the May meeting. Nominations from the floor shall be allowed. The election shall take place by voice vote at the June meeting. The outgoing Chair shall serve through the conclusion of the meeting, at which time the newly elected Chair shall take office.

Ms. Reith appointed Mr. Black, Ms. Zook, and Dr. Barth to serve on the Nominating Committee.

Ms. Chambers moved, seconded by Ms. Dean, to approve the nominating committee of three (3) Board Members to include Mr. Black, Ms. Zook, and Dr. Barth. The motion carried unanimously.

Reports

Report-1 Chair's Report

No report.

Report-2 State Board Standing Committees, Special Committees, Liaisons, and Appointments Report

ForwARd Arkansas Liaison Dr. Barth said there has been a reconfiguration of the executive committee. He said he had been appointed to that executive committee for ForwARd Arkansas. He said currently the main work is focused on the legislative session and determining if proposed legislation is supportive of the ForwARd vision.

Deeper Learning Grant Manager and Appointment Ms. Reith said the work session tonight would continue the conversation regarding waivers. She recommended a site visit to Dermott on March 10, 2017. Commissioner Key said the visit to Dermott would honor the commitment to improvement from the district and community.

ESSA Steering Committee Liaison Ms. Newton said during the last meeting the committee discussed the minimum N, assessment options, and graduation rates. She said Board members are invited to join the advisory teams. She said that she and Ms. Tina Smith attended a recent meeting in Atlanta and made great contacts. Ms. Reith suggested a work session regarding ESSA in April 2017.

Standing Committee on Academic Distress Chair Ms. Zook said she would like to reschedule a meeting with Pine Bluff School District.

Little Rock Area Public Education Stakeholder Group Liaison Dr. Barth said the Group is working to draft recommendations to the State Board. He said the recommendations would be grouped by the responsible organizations such as non-profit, Department, State Board, or General Assembly.

National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) Liaison Ms. Reith said the conference is scheduled for March 19-21, 2017 in Washington DC. Ms. Reith, Ms. Chambers and Dr. Barth plan to attend.

Student Discipline Liaison Dr. Fitz Hill said the Student Discipline Committee is examining data to make recommendations for change. Commissioner Key said the committee discussed if the Department is collecting the needed data and using the data to make the best decisions for students. Commissioner Key said the committee decided to look at big buckets of issues, how to resolve them, and how to share best practices. He said Dr. Eric Saunders and Mr. Arijit Sarkar are reviewing the data collection and reporting procedures.

Special Education Liaison Ms. Zook said the committee has not met.

Report-3 Commissioner's Report

Commissioner Key read a prepared statement explaining his decisions regarding the Little Rock School District. The statement was made available to the press.

Report-4 2016 Arkansas Teacher of the Year Report

The 2016 Arkansas Teacher of the Year Ms. Meghan Ables shared how professional learning communities are helping educators develop a growth mindset. She said teachers are joining #observeme and asking for feedback regarding their teaching because they want to grow professionally. She said the Arkansas Leadership Academy is a great learning resource. She said some schools are providing opportunities for extended mentoring, leadership pipelines, and coaching other teachers.

Ms. Ables recently visited Kirby School District and spent the day as a student. She shared the story of a great music teacher.

Ms. Ables said she and the 2017 Arkansas Teacher of the Year Ms. Courtney Cochran will have a Twitter Town Hall to discuss ESSA on February 21, 2017.

Report-5 R.I.S.E. Arkansas

Assistant Commissioner for Learning Services Ms. Stacy Smith said the R.I.S.E. Arkansas Initiative is getting many positive remarks from parents, students, and the community.

Literacy Program Manager Ms. Kathy Mascuilli said on Thursday, January 26, 2017, Governor Asa Hutchinson and Commissioner Johnny Key held a press conference to announce the statewide reading initiative. The Reading Initiative for Student Excellence is known as R.I.S.E. Arkansas. She said the literacy specialists are engaged in foundational reading training. She encouraged everyone to share a book talk on #RISEArkansas. She provided books to the State Board to take back to their communities and post a picture to #RISEArkansas.

Dyslexia Specialist Ms. Vicki King said the focus of the R.I.S.E. Arkansas Initiative is creating a reading culture in Arkansas.

Report-6 Child Nutrition Report


Director of Child Nutrition Ms. Suzanne Davidson presented an update on school nutrition programs currently serving students in 254 Arkansas public schools. She said approximately \$180 million in federal funds are reimbursed to local districts for meals served to students. She shared data from 2015-2016 that indicated the program served

30,055,027 breakfasts and 52,235,633 lunches to Arkansas students. In addition, 1,308,310 after school snacks were served in 2015-2016. She said in the fresh fruits and vegetable schools the BMI has declined. She said next month is Breakfast Month.

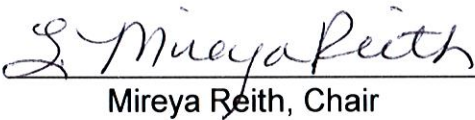
Adjournment

Mr. Williamson moved, seconded by Mr. Black, to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:28 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Deborah Coffman



Johnny Key, Commissioner



Mireya Reith, Chair