

**Minutes**  
**State Board of Education Special Committee on Academic Distress Meeting**  
**Friday, December 9, 2016**

The State Board of Education Special Committee on Academic Distress met Friday, December 9, 2016, in the Arkansas Department of Education Auditorium. Chair Diane Zook called the meeting to order at 12:04 p.m.

Present: Diane Zook, Chair; Brett Williamson; Joe Black; Ouida Newton; Charisse Dean; Dr. Fitz Hill; and Meghan Ables, 2016 ATOY.

Absent: Mireya Reith.

**Consent Agenda**

Ms. Dean moved, seconded by Mr. Black, to approve the consent agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

Item included in the Consent Agenda:

- Minutes – October 14, 2016

**Action Agenda**

**A-1 Recommendations from School Improvement Unit**

Public School Program Manager Dr. Richard Wilde said the recommendations were submitted to the State Board on July 15, 2016.

**A-2 Report from School in Academic Distress – Blytheville High School – A New Tech School and Blytheville Middle School**

School Improvement Specialist Ms. Tiah Frazier facilitated the guiding questions.

Blytheville High School - A New Tech School Principal Mr. Bobby Ashley said the school was utilizing interim assessments. He said the areas of growth are identified and interventions are put into place. He said the SMART goals guide the work. He said a collaboration period was built into the master schedule to permit core teachers time to work together, analyze data, and report to the leadership team. He said more parents are engaging in school activities and parent surveys. He said policies have been reviewed to ensure relationships are

being built with students. He said the Bring Blytheville Back campaign was designed to encourage patrons to move back to Blytheville. He said the student voice represents the student population and the school culture was improving as evidenced by the teacher expertise, rigorous course offerings, and student recognition and achievement awards. Mr. Ashley said the continued improvement included utilizing Indistar indicators, BloomBoard and Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS), Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS), and Response to Intervention (RtI).

Blytheville Middle School Principal Mr. Mike Wallace said the leadership team meets weekly to discuss academic progress. He said the school is implementing Middle School Literacy Initiative (MSLI) and New Tech. He said the parent-teacher conference was moved to mid-year. He said students and the community had input on renovations to the school. He said the Arkansas Leadership Academy was assisting with increasing student voice in the school. He said teacher turnover is declining through solutions such as teacher leadership. He was very pleased with the teacher and student surveys. He said the Wise Ways have helped to develop a better understanding of each indicator in Indistar. He said the culture team has developed a PBIS curriculum. He said the students are documenting their time on reading and the school was working to increase the reading time.

Blytheville School District Curriculum Director Ms. Sally Cooke said the district established school improvement as a systemic goal. She said they were working on alignment, K-12 with smooth transitions between buildings. She said principals and assistant principals were engaged in Leadership Quest and as a result, administrators are utilizing TESS, BloomBoard, and Insight Reports to provide effective and meaningful feedback to teachers. She said PBIS and RtI fit with the other components on the pathway to improvement. She said the district was focused on supporting teachers. She said the district was 1-1 technology for Grades 3-12 and the local provider has offered reduced rates for students at home. She said the Department provided a framework for improvement that has been helpful to the schools and district.

School Improvement Director Dr. Richard Wilde said the district was working to integrate initiatives instead of seeing the components as individual activities. He recommended the district return after preliminary data are available.

Ms. Newton moved, Mr. Williamson seconded, to accept the report from the Blytheville High School – A New Tech School and Blytheville Middle School and to schedule the next report for July 14, 2017. The motion carried unanimously.

### **A-3 Report from School in Academic Distress - Forrest City Jr. High School and Forrest City High School**

School Improvement Specialist Ms. Tiah Frazier facilitated the guiding questions.

Forrest City High School Principal Mr. Osceola Hicks said the school has worked on curriculum alignment and professional development. He said external providers are serving as instructional facilitators. He said the leadership team used data from the teacher evaluation rubric to develop school-wide goals.

Forrest City Jr. High School Principal Mr. Carlos Fuller said the school leadership team identified challenges and celebrations from the analysis of the data. He said the school was utilizing co-teaching and pull out intervention to meet the needs of students. He said the LiveBinder for ACT Aspire has been very informative.

Lincoln Academy of Excellence Principal Jana Richey said the school is focused on English Language Arts. She said Flex Friday has improved student behavior. She said there is a mentorship program for the male students. She said the school is utilizing the Indistar indicators.

Forrest City School District Superintendent Dr. Tiffany Hardrick said the principals are passionate about the district. She said professional learning was focused on content standards, assessment, instruction, and professional growth. She said the school board was supportive of school and district improvements and recruitment/retention of excellent teachers. She said the district was working on an internal pipeline for leadership development. She said the Department provided great feedback to the district.

School Improvement Director Dr. Richard Wilde said the principals have personalized the work. He said Dr. Hardrick is an instructional leader. He recommended an analysis of progress in July 2017.

Mr. Black moved, Mr. Williamson seconded, to approve the report from Forrest City Jr. High School and Forrest City High School and to provide an analysis of progress report on July 14, 2017. The motion carried unanimously.

#### **A-4 Reporting Schedule**

Chief of Staff Ms. Deborah Coffman will update the reporting schedule to include the two districts.

#### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 3:01 p.m.

*Minutes recorded by Deborah Coffman.*

  
Diane Zook, Chair