

**Minutes**  
**Little Rock Area Public Education Stakeholder Group Meeting**  
**Monday, December 5, 2016**

The Little Rock Area Public Education Stakeholder Group met Monday, December 5, 2016, in the Arkansas Department of Education Auditorium. Chair Tommy Branch called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

Members Present: Tommy Branch, Chair; Jim McKenzie, Vice-Chair; Tamika Edwards; Ann Brown Marshall; Antwan Phillips; Leticia Reta; and Dianna Varady.

Members Absent: none.

Audience: ADE staff, general public, and press.

The meeting was live streamed and the recording was posted on the ADE website at [http://www.arkansased.gov/state-board/minutes/board\\_meeting\\_categories/2016](http://www.arkansased.gov/state-board/minutes/board_meeting_categories/2016).

**Consideration to Approve Minutes – September 26, 2016**

Mr. McKenzie moved, seconded by Ms. Marshall, to approve the September 26, 2016, minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

**Consideration of Guidance from the State Board**

State Board Chair Mireya Reith requested Dr. Jay Barth liaison with the Little Rock Area Public Education Stakeholder Group. State Board Vice-Chair Dr. Barth said the State Board heard from the Stakeholder Group in October 2016 requesting guidance on next steps. He said the State Board recommended a focus on Question #6 *How collaboration between traditional public schools and open-enrollment charter educational offerings can maximize the achievement of students and fiscal efficiency of the system of public education south of the river*. He said he would be attending all future meetings and reporting back to the State Board. He said he would be available to provide his perspective as requested.

Dr. Barth asked the Stakeholder Group to consider the efficiency of healthy and viable traditional and charter systems within the area south of the river. He said now that an outside consultant is no longer a consideration, the timeline should be shortened. He said the next report to the State Board should include a timeline of expected work and completion. Dr. Barth said some schools have additional costs related to serving the needs of high-need and/or special-need students.

The Stakeholder Group requested an ESSA working timeline.

## **Consideration of Requested Information from the Office of Education Policy (OEP)**

Executive Director of the Office for Education Policy at the University of Arkansas Dr. Sarah McKenzie presented findings on student movement as noted in the integration study. She reported on key questions.

### **How many students are enrolled in schools in Little Rock and the surrounding metro area and what do they look like? Is it changing over time?**

Dr. McKenzie said the enrollment trends for 1987-2016 indicated a decline in schools south of the river.

### **How many students are moving between the traditional public and the public charters and what do they look like? Are certain groups more likely to move?**

Dr. McKenzie said 85% of LRSD students remained in LRSD. Upon requests from the Stakeholder Group, Dr. McKenzie said she would submit an additional report that indicates the grade level when students move out of the LRSD. She said 2% of students move to charters schools. She said 7% are leaving the state education system.

### **When students move between the traditional public and public charter school in the Little Rock area – do they move to schools with students who are more like them demographically and academically?**

Dr. McKenzie said the students that left LRSD were attending schools that performed similar to the schools the students left. She said a survey of parents in charter schools indicated their perception of curriculum was better.

### **What impact does student movement have on the school left behind and the system as a whole? Are student moves leading to increased racial or socio-economic segregation within the public school system?**

Dr. McKenzie said the racial impact of students moving from traditional to charter was integrative.

In summary, Dr. McKenzie said a small percentage of students leave traditional public schools for charters – much larger percentage leave the system altogether. She said students leaving traditional public schools for charters are demographically and academically similar to traditional public school population. She said when black students leave traditional public schools, the charters they enter typically enroll a

smaller percentage of black students. Students who move to charter schools consistently have a smaller share of Free/Reduced Lunch students compared to their traditional public school, and have similar academic performance as the traditional public school that they left. She said the moves from traditional public school to charters have had racially and economically integrative impacts on traditional public schools.

Dr. McKenzie said she would send an additional policy brief on the expenses of serving special needs students. She said researching why parents move their child to another school is very time consuming and expensive.

Stakeholder Group members recommended research funding for the state.

Dr. McKenzie said Part 5 of her research was released today. Stakeholder Group members requested Report 5 be added to the agenda.

State Board member Ms. Diane Zook said schools receive SPED dollars based on a funding formula. She said spending was determined at the local level based on the needs of students.

### **Consideration for Next Steps**

Director of the Office of Innovation for Education Dr. Denise Airola said ESSA requires states to report data on all subgroups within schools and to report comparisons between charter school performance for all subgroups and the schools from which charter schools draw students. As to typical movement in the state, she said the statewide rate of mobility is 5.5%.

Dr. Airola asked if a collaboration could be developed to determine why students are moving between schools and out of schools. She said it might not be a random sample study but it could provide information that would inform the group, and also inform the schools. The potential for an exit questionnaire or exit interview might provide the information about why parents are leaving a particular school. She said if the questionnaire is about leaving in general, and not just transfers to charters, it might inform the larger picture shared by Dr. McKenzie.

Stakeholder Group Vice-Chair Mr. McKenzie recommended including the research cost for each question as a package to the State Board. He requested models from across the nation where collaboration has worked well. He asked if the structural or legislative difference could be identified. He asked about the comparative costs between traditional and charter school and the costs per pupil. With the closure of some schools, could the facilities be used for other resources that support the community and families? He asked what is the return on investment in these schools.

Stakeholder Group member Mr. Phillips requested to know the ADE scope of the governing power over charter and traditional schools.

Stakeholder Group member Ms. Marshall raised the need to consider how to build a bridge between traditional and charter schools and what could incentivize their relationship. She recommended an education cooperative for central Arkansas.

Stakeholder Group member Ms. Reta said charter schools may be providing parents incentives to participate.

Stakeholder Group member Ms. Varady asked if exit interviews were conducted at the school and could the state offer standards for reporting.

Dr. Airola said she has been studying networked improvement communities. She said the communities are working together to solve problems that improve learning for students. She recommended packaging all of the questions for the State Board. She recommended researching the CRPE website for information regarding collaboration between traditional and charter schools. She said the request for information regarding the ADE scope of influence would need to be provided by ADE Legal. She recommended keeping the focus on students.

Dr. Barth said while there is no systematic collaboration across schools in the county there are collaborations happening in other areas. He said the question regarding co-ops was also raised during the boundaries study.

Dr. Airola recommended the Stakeholder Group study the CRPE report, Denver report, and other information previously posted on agendas and prepare draft recommendations.

Stakeholder Group member Ms. Varady offered to study SPED from New Orleans and OEP. Mr. McKenzie volunteered to study fiscal efficiency. Ms. Marshall said she would study the CRPE documents.

### **Consideration of Agenda for Next Meeting**

Dr. Barth asked the Stakeholder Group to develop recommendations that guide the State Board. He said the recommendations could help to shape the vision for the area south of the river.

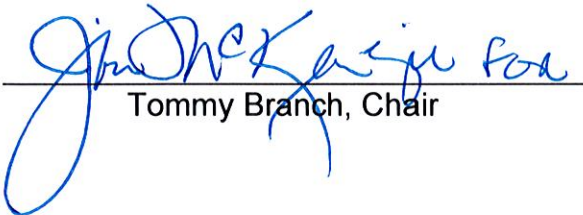
Commissioner Johnny Key restated his request to be bold and creative. He said recommendations may be accomplished over time.

The Stakeholder Group will meet in work session on January 30, 2017, to develop group recommendations.

### **Adjournment**

Mr. McKenzie moved, seconded by Ms. Edwards, to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

*Minutes recorded by Deborah Coffman.*



Tommy Branch, Chair