

**Minutes**  
**Little Rock Area Public Education Stakeholder Group Meeting**  
**Monday, June 6, 2016**

The Little Rock Area Public Education Stakeholder Group met Monday, June 6, 2016, in the Arkansas Department of Education Auditorium. Commissioner Johnny Key called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

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

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).

**Purpose of the Little Rock Area Public Education Stakeholder Group**

Commissioner Johnny Key said on April 14, 2016, the State Board of Education directed the Arkansas Department of Education to facilitate research on the following:

- How every student can have access to a school that is achieving;
- How schools can best meet the educational needs of a student population markedly diverse in terms of income levels, achievement levels, English-language learners, and students with disabilities;
- How to be most cost effective and fiscally efficient in the delivery of education;
- How to respond to patterns that students with certain characteristics (in terms of achievement levels, demographics, etc.) are more likely, at present, to seek out open-enrollment charter options;
- How facilities should be modernized and spread across the area based on the current demographics of the area with an eye to future demographic patterns; and
- 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.

Commissioner Key said the stakeholder group would be tasked with identifying data questions, defining key terms, and setting measurement parameters that must be addressed by the research facilitator to (1) establish a recommended plan for the future of public education "south of the river" to be presented to the State Board of Education and (2) consider whether any action should be taken on the recommendations by the Special State Board Committee for the Pulaski County Boundaries Study.

## **Nominations and Election of Chair and Vice-Chair**

Mr. Jim McKenzie moved, seconded by Ms. Diana Varady, to nominate Mr. Tommy Branch as Chair. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Tamika Edwards moved, seconded by Ms. Ann Brown Marshall, to nominate Mr. Jim McKenzie as Vice-Chair. The motion carried unanimously.

## **Introduction of Members**

Members introduced themselves by providing a brief oral biography of their work and experience.

## **Consideration of Meeting Dates, Including Start and End Times**

The members discussed and through consensus decided to meet on Mondays from 5:00 – 7:00pm. Due to immediate scheduling conflicts, the members selected June 29, July 11, and July 25 as meeting dates. The meetings will be held in the ADE Auditorium. Additional dates will be identified at a later date.

## **Consideration of Timeline of Events**

Dr. Denise Airola, Director of the Office of Innovation in Education, said the issues to be addressed by the group would require the members to define key terms. She said the first term to be identified would be “achieving or what is a quality school”.

The members discussed the development of a briefing paper that included data on current achievement of schools and the history of charter schools. Members also discussed identifying community members that will provide information to the members.

Commissioner Key offered clarification to consider this work as a study for future State Board consideration. He referenced the boundaries study conducted by the State Board. He encouraged the members to consider where future schools may be located and what types of schools will best serve the students in Pulaski County south of the river.

Dr. Airola said some perceptions have been shared regarding the quality of schools in the area. She said the research would provide data to make decisions. She said the issues might be reordered to facilitate the work:

1. How every student can have access to a school that is achieving;
2. How schools can best meet the educational needs of a student population markedly diverse in terms of income levels, achievement levels, English-language learners, and students with disabilities;
3. How to be most cost effective and fiscally efficient in the delivery of education;



4. 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;
5. How to respond to patterns that students with certain characteristics (in terms of achievement levels, demographics, etc.) are more likely, at present, to seek out open-enrollment charter options;
6. How facilities should be modernized and spread across the area based on the current demographics of the area with an eye to future demographic patterns.

Commissioner Key said organizations are researching these same issues in other areas of the nation. He said Dr. Airola could identify organizations that may be available to assist with the research. Members requested that Dr. Airola provide the current data available regarding the identified schools.

Dr. Airola said the members would identify the characteristics of a quality school, identify if data exists or if data should be collected, analyze data to determine patterns, and identify additional questions. She said the members would need to examine the data with the lens of equity, alignment with vision, efficiency, and practicality.

The members requested background information on the transition from No Child Left Behind (NCLB) to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The members also requested a copy of the State Board boundary study.

### **Consideration of Public Comment**

No one requested to provide public comment.

### **Consideration of Agenda for Next Meeting (June 29)**

In preparation for the June 29<sup>th</sup> meeting, the members requested written materials regarding the following:

- Historical (factual and legal) timeline of the introduction of charter school in Little Rock;
- Reports/recommendations produced by the Special Committee for the Pulaski County Boundaries Study;
- Any data and research collected by the Arkansas Department of Education regarding the impact of charter schools on traditional schools in Little Rock;
- A lexicon – pertaining to concepts, programs, and practices – defining terms commonly used in the current education arena, that are likely unfamiliar to those who are not education practitioners; and
- Other documents the Arkansas Department of Education deem important to the purpose of the Little Rock Area Public Education Stakeholder Group.

In addition, the members requested to hear from Charter School Directors and District

Superintendents during the next meeting. Speakers are requested to prepare 5-10 minute presentations with materials posted on the public agenda. Members will have opportunity to engage in Q & A with the speakers.

Commissioner Key suggested the members think about the future for the students. He asked them to consider what will students in the Capitol City need in the next five, ten, or fifteen years.

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Jim McKenzie moved, seconded by Ms. Tamika Edwards, to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:39 p.m.

*Minutes recorded by Deborah Coffman*



Tommy Branch, Chair