

Minutes
State Board of Education
Monday, December 10, 2007

The State Board of Education met in the Garden View Room at the Clinton Presidential Library on Monday, December 10, 2007. Diane Tatum, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

The following Board members were present: Diane Tatum, Chair; Randy Lawson, Vice-Chair; Sherry Burrow; Jim Cooper; Brenda Gullett; Dr. Tim Knight; Dr. Ben Mays; MaryJane Rebick; and Dr. Naccaman Williams. Non-voting member, Justin Minkel, also attended.

No members were absent.

Chair's Report

Ms. Tatum reported that she spoke at an informational meeting for aspiring superintendents held at the Arkansas River Educational Cooperative in Pine Bluff and she also attended the Governor's Press Conference announcing the 2008 Arkansas Teacher of the Year.

Ms. Rebick reported attending a Project EAST session held at the Clinton Library where students presented documentary films promoting the Smart Core Curriculum. She also attended the Bessie Moore Council on Economic Education luncheon.

Mr. Lawson reported attending and speaking at the Blue Ribbon School Recognition event at Bentonville High School along with ADE deputy director, Dr. Diana Julyan; U. S. Congressman Boozman, Arkansas State Representative Hardwicke and U. S. Department of Education officials. Bentonville High School was selected as one of 37 award winners from across the nation.

Commissioner's Report

Dr. James reported the following:

- Mr. Paul Gray, high school social studies teacher at Russellville High School, was named Arkansas Teacher of the Year.
- A visit to Beebe High School to observe a class in Mandarin Chinese delivered by distance learning.
- A presentation to a conference for education journalist held in Houston, TX. He stated that he took the opportunity to relate the many good things happening in our state.

Consent Agenda

Dr. Williams moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Ms. Burrow seconded the motion. The Consent Agenda was adopted unanimously.

- Minutes from November 5 and November 6, 2007
- Adoption of Meeting Dates Arkansas State Board of Education January 2008-December 2008
- Commitment to Principles of Desegregation Settlement Agreement: Report on the Execution of the Implementation Plan
- Newly Employed, Promotions and Separations
- Review of Loan and Bond Applications
- Reports on Waivers to School Districts for Teachers Teaching Out of Area for Longer than Thirty (30) Consecutive Days, Act 1623 of 2001
- Request for Approval of Stipulated Agreement – Angela Charmagne Leger
- Consideration for Approval of QZAB Allocation Applications

Action Agenda

Request for Approval of 2007-2008 Arkansas Better Chance Grants – Round 5

Jamie Morrison was recognized to present this item. Ms. Morrison stated that additional proposals were received, evaluated by staff and deemed approvable.

Mr. Lawson moved approval as presented. Ms. Gullett seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Consideration for Adoption Revisions to the Foreign Language Curriculum Framework

Dr. Gayle Potter was recognized to present this item. Dr. Potter noted that this framework was expanded and included a number of languages, which were previously not in the foreign language framework. She stated that other languages, such as Arabic, could be added in the future, but currently there are no instructional resources for such languages.

Ms. Gullett asked about Non-Traditional Licensure for native speakers who might be teaching some of these courses in the high schools. Beverly Williams responded that the Non-Traditional Licensure policies have been revised to accommodate issues such as this.

Ms. Tatum asked when the revisions would become effective. Dr. Potter stated that upon adoption, the new frameworks will be posted on the ADE Website immediately with the intent that the new framework will be used in schools beginning in the fall 2008.

Ms. Gullett moved to adopt the foreign language framework as presented. Mr. Cooper seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Consideration for Adoption Library Media Framework

Dr. Gayle Potter was recognized to present this item. Dr. Potter stated that the Library Media Framework is a new framework and that adoption of this as an area of study is consistent with trends in other states. She did state that her office had received feedback from one school inquiring about student learning expectations at Grades 5 and 6 asking students to be reflective about their work and research

that they may have initiated. Dr. Potter indicated that to pull these student expectations from Grades 5 and 6 would leave a gap in the framework in that there are similar expectations at other grade levels.

Ms. Burrow moved approval as presented. Dr. Williams seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Consideration for Final Approval: Arkansas Department of Education Rule Governing the Monitoring of Arkansas Comprehensive School Improvement Plans (ACSIP)

Dr. Alice Barnes Rose was recognized to present this item. Dr. Barnes Rose stated that these rules have been in the revision process for some time and the most recent revisions are based on Board suggestions. Dr. Barnes Rose requested that two additional changes be made: in Section 5.02.4 add "instructional facilitator" as an eligible participant and in Section 7.04 delete "district and."

Dr. Mays moved final approval of this rule with the changes suggested by Dr. Barnes Rose. Dr. Knight seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

(A complete transcript of the following items was recorded by a court reporter and can be accessed from the State Board Office in the Arkansas Department of Education.)

Status Report Bald Knob School District

Dr. Bobbie Davis was recognized to present this report. Dr. Davis summarized data presented in the Agenda materials indicating that the Bald Knob School District is currently operating within available revenue, indicated that the patrons in the District passed a sales tax, which will be dedicated to operation of the school. Additionally, she recognized Mr. James Staggs, interim superintendent, who reported that all of the short-term debt obligations had been met in full. Dr. Davis also noted that based on current projections, the District should have an operating balance of \$56,000 before any sales tax revenue and other state funds are received. She also projected an operating balance of \$450,000 at the end of the 2008-2009 school year.

Ms. Rebick expresses hope that some of the cuts in teacher benefits could be reinstated once financial balances are stable. Mr. Staggs supported that idea.

Dr. Mays advanced questions regarding the construction costs of gym facilities as part of the overall high school campus. He asked if the athletic facility had not been built, would the school have been in fiscal distress. Dr. Davis noted that that was four years ago and there was no way to make such determinations at this time. Mr. Cooper asked for a point of order noting that this line of questioning did

not contribute to the Agenda and to the issue of the status report of the District at this time. Ms. Gullett also stated that this line of questioning was not justified at this time. Dr. Mays contended that too often districts are spending money on athletics and athletic facilities that are not essential or not required for the academic program.¹

Mr. Lawson moved to accept the report. Dr. Knight seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Dr. James stated the status of the Bald Knob School District:

- The Bald Knob School District will continue to operate under State oversight with the local leadership of interim superintendent James Staggs.
- The District will continue to be classified in fiscal distress.
- The Board will be provided updates as necessary, but at least by the end of the fiscal year.

Continuation of the Hearing of Open Enrollment Charter School Application: Covenant Keepers College Preparatory Charter School

Dr. Mary Ann Brown was recognized to introduce this item. Dr. Brown summarized points from the previous Board discussion and identified issues yet to be resolved. Dr. Valerie Tatum was present to respond to Board members' questions.

The issue of property ownership and the availability of the property for purchase remained unresolved. Real estate agent, Rolland Christianis, presented documentation of work to clear legal issues related to the sale of the property. He stated that some of the parties lived out of state and had not responded to documents sent for signature.

Ms. Gullett observing that too many of the actions are not transparent, moved to deny the charter application. The motion failed for lack of a second.

Ms. Rebick moved to table further consideration due to lack of progress with obtaining necessary signatures to establish ownership of property. Dr. Knight seconded the motion. The motion passed on a roll-call vote with a vote 6 yes and 2 no (Cooper and Gullett voted no.)

The following documentation was identified as essential prior to further consideration at the January 2008, Board meeting.

¹ Dr. Ben Mays requested amendment to the minutes to replace this paragraph with the attachment found at the end of these Minutes.

- Tentative real estate agreement documenting agreement to sell the property,
- Letter of Credit from lending institution that assures financing should sale be completed,
- Written proof of appropriate zoning from City of Little Rock,
- Agreement for lease of buildings,
- Summary of plumbing and electrical costs to erect facilities on school site.

Continuation of the Hearing of Open Enrollment Charter School Applications:

e-STEM Elementary Pubic Charter School
e-STEM Middle Public Charter School
e-STEM High Public Charter School

Scott Smith summarized the previous discussion regarding these applications and restated that the parties had agreed to consider the three applications as one entity.

Dr. Roy Brooks, consultant to the e-STEM applications, and projected administrator of the schools was introduced to provide the updated information and to respond to Board member questions.

Discussion focused on the responsibility of the owner of the building for structural maintenance during the period of the lease.

Dr. Mays moved to table until the January meeting to get additional clarification on the lease agreement. Ms. Rebick seconded the motion. The motion failed on a voice vote 1 yes 7 no (Mays voted no.)

Ms. Gullett moved to approve the e-STEM Elementary, e-STEM Middle and e-STEM High open enrollment charter schools for five years. Mr. Lawson seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

The Board recommended that the charter developers seek to establish participation of agencies dealing with economic development and representatives from the Arkansas Science and Technology Authority.

Dr. Williams moved adjournment. Dr. Knight seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 3:05 p.m.

These Minutes were recorded and reported by Dr. Charles D. Watson.

There is one attachment to these Minutes – Transcript from the Court Reporter of discussion pursuant to the Bald Knob School District Update. [Transcript Bald Knob pgs 2 to 24.pdf](#)



Dr. Kenneth James Commissioner, Dept of Education



Diane Tatum, Chair, State Board of Education

