

**Minutes  
State Board of Education Meeting  
Monday, February 14, 2011**

The State Board of Education met Monday, February 14, 2011, in the auditorium of the Department of Education building. Dr. Naccaman Williams, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9 a.m.

Present: Dr. Naccaman Williams, Chairman; Dr. Ben Mays, Vice-Chair; Sherry Burrow; Jim Cooper; Brenda Gullett; Sam Ledbetter; Alice Mahony; Dr. Ben Mays; Toyce Newton; Dr. Tom Kimbrell, Commissioner; and Vandy Nash, Arkansas Teacher of the Year

Absent: None

**Reports**

**Chair's Report:**

There was no report from the Chairman.

**Commissioner's Report:**

Dr. Kimbrell gave a brief report of ASCD's study trip to Helsinki, Finland to examine complex issues of teaching, learning and culture. He said the group quickly learned that strong cultural values built on responsibility, trust and respect pervade. Educators are held in high esteem and only the best and brightest are accepted into the teaching profession. He pointed out that foreign language was a focus beginning in first grade.

Dr. Kimbrell announced that a team from CCSSO would perform a review of the Department's capacity and make recommendations for being proactive in providing services to schools.

The Commissioner reported that he and Mr. Tony Wood, Deputy Commissioner, attended a dedication of the basketball arena in Alma. He said the arena was named in honor of long-term Superintendent Charles Dyer.

**Recognition of Arkansas Teachers from the Peoples Republic of China Who are Teaching Mandarin Chinese Language and Culture to Arkansas Students**

Commissioner Kimbrell and Beverly Williams, Assistant Commissioner of Human Resources, presented the Arkansas Traveler to 11 teachers from China working in Arkansas school districts and cooperatives. The teachers are: Lina Gan-Wynne School District; Yufei Li and Fang Xie-Northwest Arkansas Cooperative; Danmei

Si-Cross County School District; Qi Shao-Waldron School District; Tu Xu-Batesville School District; Yu Mao and Jie Min-Hot Springs School District; Xi Chen-Conway School District; Liyun Zhang-Harrisburg School District; and Wen Huang-North Little Rock School District.

Eight of the eleven teachers will leave the state at the end of the school year. Fifteen new teachers are expected to move to the state for the 2011-12 school year.

### **Coordinated School Health Joint Use Agreement Grant Program Update**

Ms. Laura McDowell, Program Coordinator for Coordinated School Health, provided an update of schools receiving funds through the Joint Use Agreement. She said the grants, made available through the Tobacco Excise Tax, were designed to promote physical activity through community partnerships by encouraging schools and community organizations to share indoor and outdoor spaces. Ms. McDowell provided a list of grant recipients including 28 schools and their community partners.

### **Progress Report on School Improvement Grants**

Dr. Laura Bednar, Assistant Commissioner of Learning Services, reported that at least five of the seven school recipients did not appear to be in satisfactory compliance with their improvement plans and are jeopardizing millions of dollars. Dr. Bednar said the schools have an unprecedented amount of money to change the culture and make drastic improvements.

Some of the deficiencies include failure to provide access and train teachers on using electronic student data systems, failure to retain math teachers and raise student achievement, failure to coordinate classroom instruction and after school tutoring programs and failure to carry out a system for communicating with parents.

Schools that received the school improvement grants are: Hall High, Fair High and Cloverdale Middle School in the Little Rock School District; Osceola High and Middle School in the Osceola School District; Rose City Middle School in the North Little Rock School District and Trust Elementary in the Fort Smith School District.

Dr. Bednar said if the schools failed to meet the terms of their plans, the grant funds could be discontinued or redirected.

## **Charter School Authorizing Evaluation Summary and Update on Charter School Grant**

Ms. Rachel Ksenyak and Ms. Margaret Lin with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers presented an evaluation of the Board's process for authorizing charter schools and provided the following recommendations:

- Strengthen the application requirements and evaluation criteria.
- Provide staff summary findings and recommendations to inform State Board decisions.
- Develop comprehensive contract that clearly states rights, responsibilities, expectations and material terms and condition of school operation.
- Develop and implement a monitoring system for educational, operational and financial performance and compliance.
- Establish a single comprehensive performance framework.
- Require State Board approval only for material modifications to the contract.

NACSA will continue to work with the Department to improve the process for transparent, merit-based decisions for charter approval, intervention, renewal and other key charter decisions.

### **Consent Agenda**

Ms. Burrow moved, seconded by Ms. Saviers, approval of the Consent Agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

Items included in the Consent Agenda:

- Minutes of the January 14, 2011, Board Meeting
- Commitment to Principles of Desegregation Settlement Agreement: Report on the Execution of the Implementation Plan
- Newly Employed, Promotions and Separations
- Waivers to School Districts for Teachers Teaching Out of Area for Longer than 30 Days
- A second lien bond application in the amount of \$630,000 for the Concord School District and two voted bond applications—Barton Lexa School District-\$2,550,000; Malvern School District-\$4,066,000.
- Sanctions for Teachers as Recommended by the Professional Licensure Standards Board
  - Brenda Allen
  - Joe Bob Wise
  - Greg McGill
  - Sandra Blasengame
  - Toni Sayers-Barnett

- Cyndi Najar
- Robert Garrison

### **Action Agenda**

*(Complete records of the hearings are available in the State Board office.)*

#### **Consideration of the Advanced Cut Score and Performance Level for the Grade 11 Literacy Examination**

Dr. Gayle Potter, Director of Curriculum and Assessment, presented a recommendation to adjust the minimum score students must earn to receive an advanced rating on the 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Literacy Exam from 184 to 173. Dr. Potter said that in the 10-year history of the exam, students scoring at the advanced level had never increased above 2 percent.

Dr. Kimbrell said there was a disconnect between the top scores students earned on the ACT college entrance test and their less than advanced achievement on the state literacy test. He explained that students had to be almost perfect to score at an advanced level on the literacy exam.

Dr. Potter pointed out that a statewide committee of educators reviewed student work from the literacy exam administered in previous years to determine the new cut score. The committee's work was reviewed by ADE staff and the Technical Advisory Committee for Assessment.

Ms. Gullett moved, seconded by Ms. Newton, to adjust the minimum score for an advanced rating on the Grade 11 Literacy Exam to 173. The motion carried unanimously.

#### **Consideration of Request for Open-Enrollment Public Charter School Amendment Academics Plus Charter School, Maumelle, Arkansas**

Dr. Mary Ann Duncan, Charter School Coordinator, presented a proposal from Academics Plus to expand their current enrollment cap of 650 students to 1,300 students over the next seven years.

Mr. Rob McGill, Director of Academics Plus, told the Board the school was outperforming local traditional public schools academically. He expressed a desire to partner with the Pulaski County districts and suggested Academics Plus could provide an option for students in low performing schools.

Board members questioned whether it was fair to compare the academic achievement at the charter school and the traditional schools in the Maumelle area. The traditional schools might not make adequate yearly progress because of subpopulations of students.

Mr. McGill also said Academics Plus was now offering transportation services and had instituted the federal school lunch program which would allow students from low income families to qualify for free or reduced price meals.

Mr. Ledbetter moved, seconded by Dr. Mays, to deny the request from Academics Plus to expand their current enrollment cap. The motion carried unanimously.

*ADE General Counsel Jeremy Lasiter was absent during the discussion and action on this agenda item.*

### **Hearing on Waiver Request for Certified Teacher's License-Jennifer Tyson Lackey**

PLSB Attorney Katherine Donovan reported that Jennifer Tyson-Lackey had been employed in the Hamburg School District through the MAT program while attending UA Monticello. A criminal background check of Ms. Tyson-Lackey revealed a disqualifying offense. Ms. Tyson-Lackey signed a release of her sealed record showing she pleaded guilty to a disqualifying offense in 1999, completed her probation and her case was expunged.

Mr. Max Dyson, Superintendent of the Hamburg School District, spoke in support of Ms. Tyson-Lackey's request for waiver.

Ms. Newton moved, seconded by Ms. Burrow, to grant the waiver.

Ms. Mahony suggested amending the motion to include the two-year probationary period.

Ms. Newton moved, seconded by Ms. Saviers, to accept the amendment. The motion carried.

The amended motion to grant the waiver with the stipulation that while serving two years probation there would be no violation of Code of Ethics carried unanimously.

### **Consideration of Request for Approval of the Creation of Career and Technical/Vocational Permits in the Area Mandarin Chinese for Grades P-8**

Ms. Beverly Williams presented a request to expand the 7-12 Mandarin Chinese permit to include a permit for P-8 Mandarin Chinese.

Ms. Burrow moved, seconded by Ms. Gullett, approval of the P-8 Mandarin Chinese permit. The motion carried unanimously.

## **Designation of Nominations Committee for 2011-2012**

Dr. Williams announced that Ms. Gullett, Ms. Newton and Ms. Mahony would serve on the nominations committee. Ms. Mahony will serve as committee chair.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 1:35 p.m.

*These minutes were recorded by Phyllis Stewart.*