

**Minutes
State Board of Education
Monday, January 12, 2009**

The State Board of Education met on Monday, January 12, 2009, in the Auditorium of the State Education Building. Chairman, Randy Lawson, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

The following Board members were present: Randy Lawson, Chairman; Dr. Naccaman Williams, Vice-Chairman; Sherry Burrow; Jim Cooper; Brenda Gullett; Sam Ledbetter; Alice Mahony; Dr. Ben Mays; and Diane Tatum.

No members were absent.

Reports

Chair's Report

Ms. Gullett: reported attending a recent meeting of the Arkansas Leadership Academy. She stated that she was pleased to be a Board representative to the Academy.

Dr. Williams: reported attending the Arkansas Teacher of the Year Ceremony at the Governor's Conference Room.

Commissioner's Report

Dr. James provided information on the following:

- Acknowledged the opening of the Arkansas General Assembly at Noon (1/12/09) and the Governor's annual address, which is set for a combined session on Tuesday (1/13/09)
- Reported the recent release of the Quality Counts Report. Arkansas received an overall rating of B-, which ranked the state at 10th in the national rating.
- Noted Arkansas' participation in policy study activities – Career Ready Seminar – with leadership from the Council of Chief State School Officers
- Acknowledged naming of the 2009 Arkansas Teacher of the Year and stated the desire to consider different and additional opportunities to expand the Teacher of the Year program in future years

Arkansas Leadership Academy – Master Principal Recognition

Dr. Debbie Cook was recognized to introduce three school principals who completed the Academy's Master Principal Program. Dr. Ken James joined Dr. Cook in presenting plaques and recognition for the program completed. Principals recognized: Michelle French, Ward Central Elementary School, Cabot School District; Kay York, Margaret Daniel Elementary School,

Ashdown School District; and Jackie Smith, Arnold Drive Elementary School, Pulaski County Special School District.

(A complete text of the Decatur and Greenland School District reports and dialogue is available from the Court Reporter's transcript in the State Board Office – Arkansas Department of Education)

Quarterly Financial Report for Decatur School District

Bill Goff was recognized to present this report. Mr. Goff introduced Leroy Ortman, interim superintendent at Decatur School District. Mr. Ortman stated that finances are moving toward having a positive balance for both the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 school years. He acknowledged that the decline in student enrollment has stopped and a small increase will be reported for the third quarter report. Mr. Goff provided financial details supporting the report of a projected balance for the current fiscal year. Mr. Goff's report also included a timeline for activities and actions that would have to occur should it be determined that the District would be annexed to a single district or subdivided into multiple districts. This report was requested by the Board at the previous update presentation.

Questioning of Mr. Goff and Mr. Ortman affirmed that cost saving measures have been implemented and are working – approximately 42% of the operating budget has been expended and six months have lapsed in this fiscal year; an issue remains to be resolved regarding severance pay (if any) with the former superintendent; cost saving measures included reduction in force and redefining duties of some administrators; and any decision related to annexation of the district would have to be initiated no later than January 2010.

No action was taken on the report.

Quarterly Financial Report for Greenland School District

Bill Goff was recognized to present this report. Mr. Goff introduced Dr. Roland Smith who presented detailed budget and expenditure information indicating cost saving measures implemented resulting in a projected surplus for the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 school years. Dr. Smith reported strong community support that includes financial support from individuals, the business community and parents as exemplified in strong attendance at community meetings held on a regular basis. Mr. Goff supported the data provided by Dr. Smith and stated that information presented as part of the Decatur report regarding any annexation would follow that same pattern and timeline should such action be warranted.

Questioning of Mr. Goff and Dr. Smith noted that the district retains title to property formerly used by the Winslow School District and some work is directed to keeping those facilities from major deterioration and there is no current indication of further financial obligation from the previous superintendent.

No action was taken on the report.

2008 Arkansas School Performance Report Card and Implementation of the Gains Growth Model for School Accountability

Dr. Charity Smith was recognized to present this report. Dr. Smith summarized events leading up to the release of state and local district accountability data as required by statute. She reported that preliminary data are available on a Web site for review by local district officials prior to that data being released. Dr. Robert Kennedy, a member of the technical advisory committee also discussed components of the growth model calculation.

Consent Agenda

Chairman Lawson stated that Consent Agenda Item C-5 – Act 648 of 1993 Community Service Learning – No Way Pulpwood, Inc. – was being withdrawn from consideration.

Dr. Williams moved adoption of the Consent Agenda as amended. Mr. Cooper seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

- Minutes – December 8, 2008
- New Employed, Promotions and Separations
- Report on Waivers to Schools Districts for Teachers Teaching Out of Area for Longer than Thirty (30) Days, Act 1623 of 2001
- Commitment to Principles of Desegregation Settlement Agreement: Report on the Execution of the Implementation Plan
- Approval for Payment of Stipends and Expenses to Board Members

Action Agenda

Request for Approval of 2008-2009 Arkansas Better Chance Grants

Jamie Morrison was recognized to present this item. Ms. Morrison requested that the Board consider seven (7) additional grant requests, which were not previously presented.

Requests submitted with the Agenda 13 proposals	\$335,520
Requests submitted at meeting (1/12/07)	\$ 24,780

Mr. Cooper moved approval of grant requests with additions as submitted. Ms. Gullett seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Continuation of Review of Open-Enrollment Public Charter School: Dreamland Academy of Performing and Communication Arts, Little Rock, AR

Dr. Mary Ann Brown was recognized to present this item. Dr. Brown introduced Dr. Beverly Clark and Dr. Carolyn Carter to provide updated information on the proposed budget revision and restructuring of staffing at Dreamland Academy. Chris Bell, Dreamland CPA, presented current financial status of the Academy. Dr. Brown stated that working with the Dreamland staff has resulted in positive responses to questions and financial status. Bill Goff stated that his review of the proposed budget was reasonable and with tight internal control could be implemented.

Ms. Tatum asked about the letters and commitment to reduction in staff, especially when Dr. Carter's position has zero allocation for the balance of this fiscal year. Dr. Clark affirmed that there has been reduction in staff and that some positions, including Carolyn Carter's, would be zero funded through the remainder of this fiscal year, but Dr. Carter will continue to serve as an administrator at Dreamland.

Dr. Williams asked about the major reduction in capital expenditures for the remainder of the year. Mr. Bell responded that most of the purchases for the year were made early in the fiscal year and purchases were made in sufficient quantities that the reductions in that category are accurate and realistic.

Dr. Mays asked about the proposed staff changes from those made at the December meeting. Dr. Clark noted that work with the budget and needs of the school caused a rethinking of those decisions made rather quickly at that previous meeting. She affirmed that the students are often challenging and experienced staff must be in place to meet the expectations of the parents and the needs of the students.

Mr. Cooper asked about the reduction in rent agreement. Dr. Clark stated that the church has agreed to reduce the rent by \$1500 per month for the balance of this fiscal year and that revision will be reflected in a revised lease agreement as soon as paperwork can be prepared.

Ms. Tatum moved to accept the proposed budget and staff proposal and to require quarterly updates on the fiscal status of the Academy beginning with the April Board meeting. Ms. Burrow seconded the motion. The motion was adopted 5 yes and 3 no. (Gullett, Ledbetter and Mays voted no.) Reasons for no votes: Gullett: was not satisfied with the financial status as reported and proposed; Ledbetter: suggested that the Academy should be placed on probationary status if allowed to continue; Mays: does not believe financial proposals are sound and can be fulfilled.

Request for Approval of Revised Fine Arts Curriculum Framework

Dr. Gayle Potter was recognized to present this item. Dr. Potter noted the various strategies and committee participation involved in the revision of the fine arts frameworks. She also noted that more individual secondary courses were included in this revision.

Mr. Cooper asked if the Department received any feedback from school or individuals pursuant to adoption of the revised documents. Dr. Potter answered none were received.

Ms. Gullett moved adoption of the frameworks as proposed. Dr. Williams seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

The Chair declared, without objection, the meeting adjourned. The meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

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


T. Kenneth James, Commissioner Dept. of Education


Randy Lawson, Chair AR Board of Education