

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
MONDAY, JUNE 30, 1997

MINUTES

The State Board of Education met Monday, June 30, 1997, in the Auditorium of the Arch Ford Education Building for a Special Called Meeting. The meeting was called to order at 9:05 a.m.

Members present: James McLarty, Chairman
 Edwin Alderson, (via phone)
 JoNell Caldwell
 Martha Dixon
 Bill Fisher
 Luke Gordy
 Betty Pickett
 Elaine Scott
 Richard Smith
 Sherry Walker
 Anita Yates

 Gene Wilhoit, Ex Officio Secretary

Member absent: Carl Baggett

Chairman McLarty noted the two agenda items before the Board. The Gentry hearing date has been changed to August 6, 1997 in the Auditorium of the Arch Ford Education Building. Mr. McLarty asked for a continuance because seven new Board members were not familiar with this issue, and there were 581 sheets of information to cover prior to the hearing.

The 2.0 Grade Point Average (GPA) item was brought before the Board and it was stated that a number of letters were received in the State Board Office on both sides of the issue. Following is a list of persons from whom correspondence was received:

Fort Smith School District
Mr. Floyd Parnell
Ms. Linda Johnson
Dr. Ralph Ruby
Ms. Mattie B. Collins
Ms. Hazel Shoals
Ms. Glenda Hendrix

Ms. Alma J. Tuberville
Ms. Vicky May
Mr. Harvie Nicholes
Mr. Bill Fisher
Mr. Doug Scheel
Mr. Charles Adair
Mr. Juan F. Alonso
Ms. Libby Cox

Mr. Gordy read a letter from a parent, who is a teacher, in the Fort Smith School District to the Board.

Mr. Smith strongly supported retaining the 2.0 GPA. He stated the standards of education must not be lowered.

Mr. Bill Fisher made the following motion:

“A student promoted from the seventh to the eighth grade automatically meets scholarship requirements for the first semester. The second semester eighth grade and the first semester ninth grade students meet the scholarship requirements for junior high (etc.) Students promotions at seventh, and eight grades meet scholarship requirements for participation in athletics.”

To remain eligible for competitive interscholastic activity, a student must have passed four academic courses the previous semester and either:

Have earned a minimum grade point average of 2.0 from all academic courses the previous semester, or have achieved a designated score on a criterion referenced test, or achieved a designated percentile on a norm referenced test aligned with the state’s standards. The state standards for success will be established by the State Board.

If not meeting the 2.0 grade point average or not meeting the alternative testing requirements:

- 1) be currently enrolled in a school-supervised supplemental instruction program of at least 100 minutes duration each week,**
- 2) have no more than three days of unexcused absences for the current semester (or equivalent),**

3) have no school disciplinary actions, juvenile delinquency findings, or misdemeanors and felonies for the current semester or equivalent

Sanctions. A student declared ineligible for competition due to a lack of compliance with any criteria under Section 5.01 will be immediately suspended from competition for a minimum of three weeks from the date of the violation, though a more restrictive individual school district policy may be enforced. For purposes of meeting the supplemental instruction requirement in 5.01b(1), a “week” shall be considered to begin and end with the close of the official school day on Friday. A policy statement defining “school disciplinary action” for purposes of imposing a sanction under Section 5.01b(3) shall be developed and distributed to the schools prior to the opening of school in August 1997.

The program will require parental involvement and notification congruent to rules and regulations to be established by the State Board of Education.

The State Board is to define the meaning of a supplemental instructional program in rules and regulations.

Mr. Gordy seconded the motion. After a lengthy discussion, the question was called. The motion was approved by majority vote.

For the Motion

**Mr. Fisher
Mr. Alderson
Mr. Gordy
Ms. Walker
Ms. Scott
Ms. Yates**

Against the Motion

**Mr. Smith
Ms. Dixon
Ms. Pickett
Ms. Caldwell
Mr. McLarty**

Senator Brown thanked the Board and offered his assistance in leading the effort with the Legislature to obtain money needed to implement the 100 minutes of remediation. The Chair thanked all who were present and participated in the discussion.

The Board recessed at 10:07 a.m. and reconvened at 10:27 a.m.

The Chair asked if any item should be brought to the Board's attention before the next meeting. Ms. Walker asked if the Governor's School contract could be considered, since all had reviewed the materials from Lyon College.

Mr. Gordy made the motion to accept the recommendation from the site selection committee for Hendrix College to host Governor's School for 1998-2000.

Ms. Yates spoke in support of Lyon College. Mr. McLarty and Mr. Fisher said this should not be construed as a mandate that other colleges would not be considered in the future. Mr. Smith seconded and the motion carried by majority vote with Ms. Yates voting against.

The Department requested that an item regarding debt service funding supplement be added to the agenda. Mr. John Kunkel presented the item by explaining that schools must publish the budget in the newspaper and present it to their Board by July 18. The Department requested that districts be allowed to roll old bonds into one debt to take advantage of lower interest rates but that only old bond issues would be considered eligible for part of the State debt service support.

Mr. Smith made the motion to approve this recommendation. Mr. Gordy seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Fisher made the motion to go into an executive session. Ms. Pickett seconded and the motion carried unanimously. The Board went into an executive session at 10:48 a.m. to discuss personnel issues. At 11:25 a.m. the Board reconvened into the general session. Mr. McLarty stated that they centered the discussion around vacant positions in the agency, but no action was taken.

Mr. Fisher made the motion to begin the process of filling the position of the Director vacated by Mr. Wilhoit. Ms. Yates seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Fisher stated that Mr. Wilhoit will be staying with the Department until the middle of August. Governor Huckabee has not interviewed any candidates and is waiting for the Board to send him its recommendation. Mr. McLarty appointed a search committee to be chaired by Mr. Alderson and other members serving with him would be Mr. Fisher (ex officio member), Ms. Pickett, and Ms. Yates.

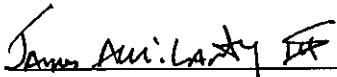
The Chair recognized Ms. Scott during her last meeting for her long service career as a member of the Board and for her dedication to the education of the children of Arkansas.

Mr. Fisher expressed appreciation from the Board to Mr. McLarty as chair during the past Legislative session and the change from two Boards to one.

Ms. Scott expressed appreciation to Mr. Wilhoit for his tenure as Director of the Department of Education.

Mr. McLarty then passed the gavel to the newly elected State Board Chair, Mr. Bill Fisher.

Ms. Scott made the motion to adjourn. Ms. Walker seconded and the motion carried unanimously. The Board adjourned at 11:53 a.m.


James McLarty, Chairman


Gene Wilhoit, Ex Officio Secretary