

**Minutes
State Board Meeting
March 9, 2023**

Present: Ouida Newton, Chair; Dr. Sarah Moore, Vice-Chair; Randy Henderson; Kathy McFetridge; Jeff Wood; Lisa Hunter; Jessica Saum, 2022 Arkansas Teacher of the Year; Jacob Olivia, ADE Secretary.

Attended via ZOOM: Adrienne Woods

Absent: Dr. Fitz Hill; Steve Sutton

The Arkansas State Board of Education (State Board) met Thursday, March 9, 2023. Ms. Ouida Newton called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM, followed by a moment of silence.

Governor Huckabee Sanders shared thoughts with the State Board, personally thanking them for the hard work they have done and their commitment to the people of the State of Arkansas. The Governor shared her excitement regarding the March 8, 2023 passage of Senate Bill 294 – Arkansas LEARNS (Literacy, Empowerment, Accountability, Readiness, Networking, Safety), which she described as the most far-reaching and comprehensive education reform seen in Arkansas history and what it will mean for Arkansas teachers, students, and parents. She went on to say that the difficulty will be the implementation of the bill and the reason she wanted to attend today’s State Board meeting, as it will be the work of the State Board of Education in charge of assisting with the rules and implementation.

Recognition

Arkansas Regional Braille Challenge

Mr. James Caton, Superintendent, Arkansas School for the Blind presented the first-place winner of the Arkansas Regional Braille Challenge, Ms. Miya Chakraborty. The 13th Annual Arkansas Regional Braille Challenge was held at Arkansas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Little Rock, AR on February 16, 2023. This qualifies Ms. Chakraborty for the national competition; the second time she has attended nationals.

Changes to the Agenda

Item VI.2. Marvell-Elaine School District will be an informational item, not an action item; Ms. Newton advised that the State Board will not be taking action on Item VI.2. at the March 9, State Board meeting but will probably take action on it next month; therefore, Item VI.2. was moved up prior to the Consent Agenda.

Ms. Newton suggested to the State Board that the April State Board meeting be held at Marvell-Elaine School District to prevent hardship by the Marvell-Elaine community in providing input at the meeting. The State Board members agreed to hold the April State Board meeting at the Marvell-Elaine School District (district); Ms. Newton requested Ms. Stacy Smith, ADE Deputy Commissioner to work with the district to work out the logistics.

VI.2. Marvell-Elaine School District

Item VI.2. was presented by Ms. Shastady Wagner, DESE Attorney Specialist. Also present was Ms. Stacy Smith, ADE Deputy Commissioner.

Ms. Wagner provided the State Board an update on the process.

This is an Act 60 Consolidation, which applies to any school districts in which their average daily membership falls under 350 students for two consecutive years. On November 28, 2022, Marvell-Elaine School District was classified as Level 5 Intensive Support by the State Board. On December 8, 2022, the State Board denied Marvell-Elaine School District's petition for a Minimum School District Size waiver. Consequently, the Marvell-Elaine School District had the ability to partner for a voluntary consolidation or annexation and by law, were to submit petition to consolidate by March 1. Unfortunately, they were unable to find another district with which to voluntarily consolidate; therefore, by law, the State Board must administratively consolidate the Marvell-Elaine School District by May 1st so the consolidation can take effect as of July 1st.

The purpose of the information today is to provide an update to the State Board on the process and is not a hearing. The hearing will take place next month, which will be held in Marvell, as the State Board just agreed on the location of the April State Board meeting. At the hearing, DESE will provide a recommendation for consolidation that is in the best interest of the district and the students. Also at the hearing, the State Board will have the opportunity to hear from Marvell-Elaine, surrounding school districts, and the public.

Ms. Smith provided the State Board with an update on what DESE is currently doing at the Marvell-Elaine School District.

A motion to accept public comments was made by Ms. Kathy McFetridge, seconded by Ms. Hunter. The motion unanimously passed.

Public comments were heard by:

Ms. Elaine Scaife
Dr. Ovell Hamilton
Mr. Johnny Gage
Ms. Felishia Powell
Ms. Rosie Tate
Pastor Larry Johnson
Ms. LaTara Burrell
Ms. Laverne Sims
Ms. F. Fields

Consent Agenda

Items included for consideration in the Consent Agenda were as follows:

1. Minutes 02-09-23
2. Consideration of Report on Waivers to School Districts for Teachers Teaching Out of Area for Longer than Thirty (30) Days, Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-309
3. Consent for the Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) Reallocation of FY23 Slots
4. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 23-049 Erin Michelle Lewter
5. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 23-048 Chadwick Braden Dixon

A motion to approve the Consent agenda was made by Mr. Randy Henderson, seconded by Dr. Sarah Moore. The motion unanimously passed.

Action Agenda

VI.1. Educational Service Cooperative Evaluations

Item VI.1., Educational Service Cooperative (ESC) Evaluations for Wilbur Mills ESC and Arch Ford ESC were presented by Ms. Stacy Smith, DESE Deputy Commissioner.

ESC evaluations occur at least once within a five-year period. The Wilbur Mills ESC and Arch Ford ESC evaluations and self-study reports are attached.

A motion to accept the evaluation reports for Wilbur Mills ESC and Arch Ford ESC was made by Ms. Kathy McFetridge, seconded by Dr. Sarah Moore. The motion unanimously passed.

VI.3. Consideration of Charter Authorizing Panel's Decision regarding Charter Amendment Requests

VI.3.a. Arkansas Lighthouse Charter School

Items VI.3.a. was presented by Ms. Shastady Wagner, DESE Attorney Specialist.

The Charter Authorizing Panel voted unanimously to grant Arkansas Lighthouse Charter Schools amendment request. Lighthouse did not request a review of the Charter Authorizing Panel's decision.

A motion to not review the decision of the Charter Authorizing Panel was made by Mr. Randy Henderson, seconded by Dr. Sarah Moore. The motion unanimously passed.

VI.3.b. Friendship Aspire Academies of Arkansas

Items VI.3.b. was presented by Ms. Shastady Wagner, DESE Attorney Specialist.

The Charter Authorizing Panel voted unanimously to grant Friendship Aspire Academies of Arkansas amendment request. Friendship did not request a review of the Charter Authorizing Panel's decision.

A motion to not review the decision of the Charter Authorizing Panel was made by Mr. Jeff Wood, seconded by Ms. Adrienne Woods. The motion unanimously passed.

VI.4. Consideration of Standards for Accreditation Violation of Standard 1-C.1.1

Item VI.4. was presented by Ms. Deborah Coffman, ADE Assistant Commissioner, Public School Accountability.

Standards for Accreditation: Standard 1-C.1.1. Each public school shall assess at least ninety-five percent (95%) of its students on the annual statewide student assessment.

The DESE requests the following public schools be placed in Accredited - Cited status until Fall 2023.

VI.4.a. Consideration of Recommendation of Accredited-Cited Status

Item VI.4.a. was presented by Ms. Deborah Coffman, ADE Assistant Commissioner, Public School Accountability.

DESE recommends Accredited-Cited Status for the following schools for violation of 1-C.1.1 Each public school shall assess at least ninety-five percent of its students on the annual statewide student assessment. (S/C)

Schools Not Appealing Citation:

0442700	FOUNDERS CLASSICAL ACADEMIES OF ARKANSAS	0442706	FOUNDERS CLASSICAL ACADEMIES OF ARKANSAS WEST LITTLE ROCK
1803000	WEST MEMPHIS SCHOOL DISTRICT	1803033	EAST JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
3505000	PINE BLUFF SCHOOL DISTRICT	3505042	PINE BLUFF HIGH SCHOOL
6001000	LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT	6001007	DUNBAR MAGNET MIDDLE SCHOOL
6001000	LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT	6001047	TERRY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
6001000	LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT	6001082	LITTLE ROCK SOUTHWEST HIGH SCHOOL
6002000	NORTH LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT	6002082	NORTH LITTLE ROCK HIGH SCHOOL
6053700	RESPONSIVE ED SOLUTIONS PREMIER HIGH SCHOOL OF LITTLE ROCK	6053703	PREMIER HIGH SCHOOL OF LITTLE ROCK
6062700	RESPONSIVE ED SOLUTIONS PREMIER HIGH SCHOOL OF NORTH LITTLE ROCK	6062703	PREMIER HIGH SCHOOL OF NORTH LITTLE ROCK
7203000	FAYETTEVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT	7203703	FAYETTEVILLE VIRTUAL ACADEMY A DISTRICT CONVERSION CHARTER SCHOOL
7242700	RESPONSIVE ED SOLUTIONS PREMIER HIGH SCHOOL OF SPRINGDALE	7242703	RESPONSIVE ED SOLUTIONS PREMIER HIGH SCHOOL OF SPRINGDALE

A motion to grant Accredited-Cited status for the above-listed schools was made by Mr. Randy Henderson, seconded by Mr. Jeff Wood. The motion unanimously passed.

VI.4.b. Consideration of Appeal for Standards Violation of 1-C.1.1

Item VI.4.b. was presented by Ms. Deborah Coffman, ADE Assistant Commissioner, Public School Accountability. Ms. Shastady Wagner, DESE Attorney Specialist provided the guidelines to the State Board.

DESE recommends Accredited-Cited Status for the following schools for violation of 1-C.1.1 Each public school shall assess at least ninety-five percent of its students on the annual statewide student assessment. (S/C).

The following schools have appealed the status.

District LEA	District Name	School LEA	School Name	% Tested ELA	% Tested Math
2104000	DUMAS SCHOOL DISTRICT	2104021	DUMAS HIGH SCHOOL	84.38	90.63
6052700	GRADUATE ARKANSAS CHARTER	6052703	GRADUATE ARKANSAS CHARTER HIGH	28.19	30.61
6003000	PULASKI COUNTY SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	6003703	DRIVEN VIRTUAL ACADEMY	85.92	88.60
6003000	PULASKI COUNTY SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	6003127	JOE T. ROBINSON HIGH SCHOOL	86.54	92.05

VI.4.b.1) Consideration of Appeal of Accreditation – Citation Status for Dumas High School – Dumas School District

Item VI.4.1 was presented by Ms. Deborah Coffman. Present via ZOOM representing Dumas School District were Dr. Camille Sterrett, Superintendent; Dr. Arthur Tucker, District Test Coordinator; Ms. Brandi Anthony, Counselor/Building Test Coordinator; and Mr. Jacob Lanehart, Principal.

DESE recommends Accredited-Cited Status for the school for violation of 1-C.1.1 Each public school shall assess at least ninety-five percent of its students on the annual statewide student assessment. (S/C)

The school has appealed.

A motion to place Dumas School District on Accredited-Cited status was made by Dr. Sarah Moore, seconded by Ms. Lisa Hunter. The motion passed with a vote of 6 yes – 1 opposed (Mr. Jeff Wood).

VI.4.b.2) Consideration of Appeal of Accreditation – Citation Status for Fayetteville Virtual Academy

Item VI.4.b.2 was presented by Ms. Deborah Coffman, DESE Assistant Director, Public School Accountability. Present via ZOOM was Ms. Mary Claire Hyatt, General Counsel, Fayetteville Public Schools.

DESE recommends Accredited-Cited Status for the school for violation of 1-C.1.1 Each public school shall assess at least ninety-five percent of its students on the annual statewide student assessment. (S/C)

The school has appealed.

A motion to sustain the appeal of Accredited-Cited status for Fayetteville Virtual Academy was made by Mr. Jeff Wood, seconded by Ms. Kathy McFetridge. The motion unanimously passed.

VI.4.b.3) Consideration of Appeal of Accreditation – Citation Status for Graduate Arkansas Charter School

Item VI.4.b.3 was presented by Ms. Deborah Coffman, DESE Assistant Director, Public School Accountability. Also present representing Graduate Arkansas Charter School were Mr. David Jones, Legal Counsel; Ms. Katie Hately, Superintendent; and Ms. Antoria Harrison-Fitzgerald, Principal/District Test Coordinator.

DESE recommends Accredited-Cited Status for the school for violation of 1-C.1.1 Each public school shall assess at least ninety-five percent of its students on the annual statewide student assessment. (S/C)

The school has appealed.

A motion to sustain the appeal of Accredited-Cited status for Graduate Arkansas Charter School was made by Mr. Jeff Wood, seconded by Mr. Randy Henderson. The motion unanimously passed.

VI.4.b.4) Consideration of Appeal of Accreditation – Citation Status for Joe T. Robinson High School - Pulaski County Special School District

Item VI.4.b.4 was presented by Ms. Deborah Coffman, DESE Assistant Director, Public School Accountability. Present via ZOOM was Dr. Jay Pickering, Principal, Joe T. Robinson High School.

DESE recommends Accredited-Cited Status for the school for violation of 1-C.1.1 Each public school shall assess at least ninety-five percent of its students on the annual statewide student assessment. (S/C)

The school has appealed.

A motion to place Joe T. Robinson High School on Accredited-Cited status was made by Ms. Lisa Hunter, seconded by Dr. Sarah Moore. The motion passed with a vote of 6 yes – 1 opposed (Mr. Jeff Wood).

VI.4.b.5) Consideration of Appeal of Accreditation – Citation Status for Driven Virtual Academy - Pulaski County Special School District

Item VI.4.b.5 was presented by Ms. Deborah Coffman, DESE Assistant Director, Public School Accountability. Present via ZOOM was Ms. Leslie Ireland, Administrator, Center of Innovation/Driven Virtual Academy.

DESE recommends Accredited-Cited Status for the school for violation of 1-C.1.1 Each public school shall assess at least ninety-five percent of its students on the annual statewide student assessment. (S/C)

The school has appealed.

A motion to sustain the appeal of Accredited-Cited status for Driven Virtual Academy was made by Mr. Randy Henderson, seconded by Mr. Jeff Wood. The motion unanimously passed.

VI.5. Request for Waiver- LA-23-002; Johnson, Dennis

Item VI.5. was presented by Ms. Karli Saracini, ADE Assistant Commissioner, Educator Effectiveness and Licensure and Ms. Whitney James, DESE Attorney Supervisor. Also present was educator, Mr. Dennis Johnson and Mr. Cody Keith, Attorney.

The Arkansas Department of Education received information that the educator has a true report in the Child Maltreatment Central Registry. Per Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-410, the State Board shall not issue a first-time license nor renew an existing license and shall revoke any existing license not up for renewal of any person who has a true report in the Child Maltreatment Central Registry. The educator is requesting a waiver.

Mr. Keith requested on behalf of Mr. Dennis Johnson to waive Mr. Johnson's right to a hearing by the State Board.

A motion to grant the waiver request for Mr. Dennis Johnson was made by Mr. Jeff Wood, seconded by Ms. Adrienne Woods. The motion unanimously passed.

VI.6. Appointment of Nominating Committee for Chair and Vice-Chair

In accordance with the State Board's Operating Procedures, the State Board Chair will appoint a three-member Nominating Committee to nominate a Chair and Vice-Chair to serve effective July 1, 2023. The Committee will report its nominations to the Board at its April meeting. The election will take place by a roll-call vote at the April or May meeting.

Ms. Ouida Newton asked Mr. Randy Henderson, Ms. Lisa Hunter, and Mr. Jeff Wood to serve on the three-member Nominating Committee (Committee) to nominate a Chair and Vice-Chair for 2023-2024, effective July 1, 2023. They agreed to serve on the Committee; Mr. Henderson was appointed Chair of the Committee. The Committee will report to the State Board in April 2023.

New Business

None

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the State Board meeting was made by Mr. Randy Henderson, seconded by Mr. Jeff Wood. The motion unanimously passed. Chair Ouida Newton adjourned the State Board meeting at 1:30 PM.

Minutes recorded by Angela Scaife.

Jacob Oliva, Secretary
Arkansas Department of Education

Ouida Newton, Chair
State Board of Education

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