

ADE DAILY NEWS CLIPS

March 4, 2013

LR school chief interview tonight (Arkansas Democrat-Gazette)

LITTLE ROCK — The Little Rock School Board is set to meet tonight to interview the last of four candidates for superintendent of the state's largest school district.

The board's interview with candidate Walter Milton Jr., who is leaving as superintendent of Springfield, Ill., schools, will be in private.

But just as they could meet the other three candidates, the general public, parents and employees will have the opportunity to interact with Milton today.

Public sessions at the District's administration building, 810 W. Markham St., include:

12:30-1:30 p.m., meet-and greet session for the general public.

4-5 p.m., PTA Advisory Council and parents.

5-6 p.m., for district employees.

The district's television channel (Comcast Channel 4 and U-verse Channel 99) will broadcast the 12:30 p.m. session live. The streaming video of each candidate's session is available at lrzd.org.

The other candidates, who were interviewed last week, are Connie Hathorn, superintendent of Youngstown, Ohio, schools; Stefanie Phillips, former deputy superintendent of the Clayton County, Ga., schools; and Dexter Suggs Sr., chief of staff of Indianapolis public schools.

The School Board plans to meet at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, when it may select a new superintendent or offer one of the candidates the job.

Board members are searching for someone to replace Superintendent Morris Holmes, who originally planned to leave June 30 but who has now decided to step down later this month.

Lack of tax refunds pushes state revenue up (Arkansas Democrat-Gazette)

State finance officials say a lack of individual income-tax refunds last month helped push Arkansas' revenue above officials' expectations and above last year's numbers.

The Department of Finance and Administration on Monday said the state's net available revenue in February totaled \$210.1 million. That's \$20 million above last year and \$15.7 million above forecast. The state's revenue for the year to date is \$99.2 million above forecast.

The department said the results were mainly driven by the relative lack of individual income-tax returns received. Individual income-tax refunds were \$4.5 million below last year and \$11.6 below forecast.

Sales tax and corporate income-tax collections were above forecast and last year's figures. Individual income-tax collections were above last year but below forecast.

'Flipped learning' catching on at Prairie Grove (KFOX, El Paso, TX)

Anne Minton didn't have to spend 25 minutes of class time teaching a grammar lesson on verbals, a class of verbs that function as other parts of speech in sentences.

Instead, she developed a series of six slides about verbals for her eighth-graders to watch on a computer at home. She sent them an eight-question quiz by e-mail to gauge their understanding of the lesson. Minton's pupils at Prairie Grove Middle School completed the quizzes and submitted them online.

Teachers nationwide are diverging from the traditional classroom model of lectures, note-taking and homework assignments. Thousands are experimenting with "flipped learning," in which they record lectures or create slideshow presentations for students to watch as homework. Sending the lectures home frees up class time for other activities.

Flipped learning can be done intermittently or as part of a daily classroom routine.

Minton, who teaches pre-Advanced Placement English, turned to flipped learning to teach the basics of grammar and literary terms, and to help address problems that appear in students' writing. She produces a 10- to 15-minute lesson every Monday and Wednesday, accompanied by a quiz.

That allows her to devote more of her 90-minute class period to writing, reading and analysis, she told the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette (<http://is.gd/9Q5DLV>).

"As teachers, we compete with video games, texting, music, Internet, movies," Minton said. "So rather than compete with it, why not join it?"

The videos keep her students engaged in learning outside of the classroom, teaching them that learning is ongoing, she said.

"They're on the computer anyway," she said. "It's a fun way to grab their attention."

Minton's 90-minute class period begins with a short writing assignment. Students can watch the flipped lesson and complete the quiz in class if they weren't able to do it the previous evening. Then they complete the writing assignment as homework instead.

If three-quarters of the students understand the lesson, they can move forward on other assignments, Minton said.

"I can tell my time is better spent," Minton said. "I can make sure everybody gets what they need."

A flipped class allows for more learning and at a higher level than rote memorization does, said Kari Arfstrom, executive director of the Flipped Learning Network, a national network of educators. The network has grown since January 2012 from 2,500 members to 11,000 members nationwide, with 37 members from across Arkansas.

The concept developed in the spring of 2007 out of necessity for two chemistry teachers in a rural Colorado high school of 950 students, Arfstrom said. They were tired of repeating lectures for students who missed their classes because of ball games and school activities. The teachers discovered software that would allow them to record a PowerPoint slideshow with voice and annotations, and then convert it to a video file that could be shared online.

The recorded lectures were so popular, students asked them to do more, Arfstrom said. Students then began watching recorded lectures for homework and completed their assignments, labs and tests in class. In 2012, teachers Jonathan Bergmann and Aaron Sams published *Flip Your Classroom: Reach Every Student in Every Class Every Day*.

Some teachers set up cameras in the front of their classrooms and simply give the lectures and notes that they ordinarily would in a classroom of students, Arfstrom said. Others record what they write, type or display on the screens of electronic tablets.

"You have to make sure all students have access to it," Arfstrom said.

Nationwide in 2010, an estimated 71.1 percent of households had access to the Internet, according to annual survey data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau. In Arkansas, 58.8 percent of households had Internet access.

Greg Biggers adopted a modified version of flipped learning several months ago for his eighth-grade math class at Harrisburg Middle School, he said. Students have the option of watching each five- to seven minute video at home or at the beginning of class, said Biggers, who has taught for nine years at the school in Poinsett County.

"Instead of the students trying to keep up with the teacher taking notes, they can rewatch it," Biggers said of the instruction.

Instead of spending the bulk of his 45-minute class period teaching from the front of the classroom, Biggers spends it answering questions and working with smaller groups.

At Prairie Grove Middle School, Minton's eighth-graders may not need to remember what gerunds, infinitives and participles are, but they need to know how to use them correctly, she said.

"Flipping the lesson helps me manage my classroom because everyone has something to focus on and everyone is learning at his or her own pace," Minton said.