

Minutes
State Board of Education Meeting
Friday, March 18, 2016

The State Board of Education met Friday, March 18, 2016, in the Arkansas Department of Education Auditorium. Chair Toyce Newton called the meeting to order at 4:18 p.m.

Present: Toyce Newton, Chair; Ouida Newton, Teacher of the Year; and Johnny Key, Commissioner.

Present via phone: Mireya Reith, Vice-Chair; Vicki Saviers; Joe Black; Diane Zook; Dr. Jay Barth; Susan Chambers; Brett Williamson; and Charisse Dean.

Absent: none.

Action Agenda

A-1 Discussion of Additional Information Needed for March 31, 2016 Review of Charter Schools

General Counsel Ms. Kendra Clay said that at the March 10, 2016 State Board meeting members exercised their authority under Ark. Code Ann. § 6-23-703(a) and voted to review the determinations made by the ADE Charter Authorizing Panel regarding four charter schools. She said during the discussion on March 10, members did not discuss what, if any, additional information would be required from ADE, the public charter schools or the affected school districts.

Ms. Clay said pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. § 6-23-703 (b) (1), if the Board voted to review the final decisions made by the Charter Authorizing Panel, members are required to state the specific additional information required from the Department, the charter school or affected school districts.

Ms. Clay said in order to comply with the law's requirement that the State Board state the specific additional information requested a public meeting must be held.

Ms. Clay said she understood that on most agenda items the State Board reviews, if an individual Board Member has a question or needs additional information, that request would be made informally through ADE staff. She said the difference between those informal requests made by individual Board Members and the matter before the Board today was a law that outlines the process to request additional information from certain entities in the context of when the Board exercised the right to review a charter decision. She said the process outlined in law was that the Board state the additional information requested. She said that the only way a Board Member may request additional information in accordance with Ark. Code Ann. §6-23-703 was publically in an open

meeting.

Chair Toyce Newton polled each Board Member for a request of additional information.

Ms. Chambers requested that eStem Public Charter School and LISA Academy provide bridging information (facts) regarding charter and traditional public schools. She requested the demographics of each charter.

Ms. Chambers requested Little Rock School District identify the lost income if the charter expansions are approved. She requested additional information regarding the assumption that expansion of the charters would preclude the public school.

Mr. Black had no additional questions.

Mr. Williamson had no additional questions.

Ms. Saviers requested a link to the charter panel video for the four charters.

Ms. Reith requested that eStem Public Charter School and LISA Academy provide demographic data of students for the past five years, including this year, especially numbers of free- and reduced-lunch, ESL, and SPED students. She requested the numbers and same demographic data for the past five years of students on their respective waiting lists, including length of time each student has been on the waiting list. She asked for any discipline data and the systems use for discipline. She requested the attrition rate of students – how many students started at the charter school who actually completed school. She requested the cost per pupil data for the past five years, including public and private funds. She requested a comparison of the cost per pupil between the charter and the Little Rock School District.

Ms. Reith requested that the Little Rock School District provide demographic information of students (prior to graduation) that left the district in the past five years. She requested the seat availability of schools in the proposed expansion areas.

Ms. Zook requested that the Little Rock School District provide teacher absentee rate by school; RTI plan implemented at each school; the after-school and extended year programs available at each school; dyslexia progress at each school; number of students referred to ALE programs (in-school ALE and the ALE program with an LEA number for 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016); number of students returned to LRSD from private or homeschool; graduation rate for 2013-2014 and 2014-2015, racial percentage and free/reduced rate for each school in the district; the number of vacant seats in each school; and the area of town and whether the school is a magnet school or not.

Ms. Clay said all schools have been given a timeline of March 29 to submit the requested information to the ADE Charter Office.

Dr. Barth requested that eStem Public Charter School and LISA Academy provide the number of students currently on a waiting list; how often is the list purged; the reasons for removing students from the list; are students on multiple waiting lists or anything that would provide insight into how many folks are really still looking at these schools as an option.

Dr. Barth requested information from all four charters regarding the flow of students - which students are retained by the schools, where the students who are not retained go after leaving the charter, and what we know about the demographics and achievement levels of those students who leave and how they compare with the students who are retained.

Dr. Barth requested the Little Rock School District provide information on the potential loss of funds due to the expansion of charters and a plan of action to deal with the loss of funding including collaboration with charter schools south of the river.

Ms. Dean requested that eStem Public Charter School provide information regarding the proposed high school on the UALR campus including the division of grades, security, parking for students, how students will be dropped off and be picked up.

Ms. Zook moved, seconded by Mr. Williamson, to add Consideration of Rescission of State Board Decision's to Review the Charter Authorizing Panel's Decision Regarding the Imboden Area Charter School to the agenda. Ms. Reith and Dr. Barth voted no. The final vote was 6-2. The motion carried.

A-2 Consideration of Rescission of the State Board's Decision to Review the Charter Authorizing Panel's Decision Regarding the Imboden Charter School

After discussion by the Board, no motion was made.

Ms. Clay said the ADE would provide an opportunity for the public to access a link on the ADE website to make public comment.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:01 p.m.
Minutes recorded by Deborah Coffman.



Toyce Newton, Chair



Johnny Key, Commissioner of Education