

Minutes
State Board of Education Meeting
Monday, April 8, 2013

The State Board of Education met Monday, March 11, 2013, in the auditorium of the Department of Education building. Jim Cooper, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9 a.m.

Present: Brenda Gullet, Vice Chair; Dr. Jay Barth; Sam Ledbetter; Alice Mahony; Toyce Newton; Mireya Reith (via conference call); Joe Black; Dr. Tom Kimbrell, Commissioner; and Kim Wilson, Teacher of the Year

Absent: Jim Cooper, Chair; Vicki Saviers

Reports

Chair's Report:

Ms. Gullett chaired the meeting in the absence of Mr. Cooper.

Reporting on the NASBE Legislative Conference held March 27-29 in Washington, DC, Dr. Barth said conference attendees had opportunity to visit with Congressional members on ESEA reauthorization issues. Education Secretary Arne Duncan spent about an hour with the group discussing the challenges states were facing with new accountability systems and preparing for the online delivery of next generation assessment systems.

Commissioner's Report

Dr. Kimbrell said the legislative session was in the home stretch. He expressed hope for keeping education funding at the projected level. Based on changes in law, the Department will have many new rules to write.

He congratulated Ms. Reith on her recent honor as a Champion for Change. Ms. Reith was recognized at an event at the White House in March.

Informational Update on Common Core State Standards and PARCC

Assistant Commissioner Dr. Laura Bednar provided the State Board copies of the updated Common Core State Standards strategic plan. She said the plan included shifting the focus from standards to include stakeholders in communicating the work. She indicated a follow-up summit would be held to engage partners in the Common Core work. She expressed appreciation to the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation and the Walton Family Foundation for their help.

Consent Agenda

Consent Agenda Items C-4, C-5 and C-9 were pulled from the consent agenda for further discussion.

Ms. Newton moved, seconded by Mr. Ledbetter, approval of the Consent Agenda with exception of Items C-4, C-5 and C-9. The motion carried unanimously.

Items included in the Consent Agenda:

- Minutes of the March 11, 2013, Board Meeting
- Commitment to Principles of Desegregation Settlement Agreement: Report on the Execution of the Implementation Plan
- Newly Employed, Promotions and Separations
- Review of QZAB Allocation Application
- Progress Report on the Status of Districts Classified in Fiscal Distress—Alpena, Bismarck, Brinkley, Cutter Morning Star, Drew Central, Hartford, Helena-West Helena, Hermitage, Mineral Springs, Pulaski County Special and Western Yell County
- Sanction for Teachers as Recommended by the Professional Licensure Standards Board
 - Rachel Jennings Barger
 - James Ethrig Floyd
 - Jason Ryan Hathcock
 - Kate Hoover
- Voluntary Surrender of Arkansas Educator's License
 - Kelly O'Rourke
 - Joe Lee Svetleic
 - Ashley Renae Wolfe

C-4 Waivers to Educational Agencies for Teachers Teaching Out of Area Longer than 30 Days

Ms. Mahony questioned the Department granting a waiver to a private school.

Dr. Karen Cushman, Assistant Commissioner for Human Resources and Licensure, said the Department was responsible for licensing all teachers. The individual in question holds a K-6 license and wanted to add career technical.

Ms. Mahony moved, seconded by Mr. Black, approval. The motion carried unanimously.

C-5 Review of Loan and Bond Applications

Ms. Mahony requested information on the application for the Omaha School District.

Cindy Hollowell, Finance Program Coordinator, explained the school district had sufficient millage for repayment and needed the funds to complete an air conditioning project.

Dr. Barth moved, seconded by Mr. Ledbetter, approval. The motion carried unanimously.

C-9 Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for a Written Reprimand and a Fine of \$50 for Case # 12-107—James Ethrig Floyd

Ms. Mahony pointed out the PLSB Subcommittee reduced the sanction from a two-year suspension to a written reprimand and a fine.

Mr. Ledbetter moved, seconded by Mr. Black, approval. The motion carried unanimously.

Action Agenda

(Complete records of the hearings are available in the State Board office.)

Mr. Cooper announced Agenda Items A-6 and A-9 were pulled from the agenda.

Consideration of Arkansas Better Chance Grant

Paige Cox, State Pre-K/ABC Administrator, presented a request from the Division of Childcare and Early Childhood Education for approval of a grant in the amount of \$213,685 to Rutgers University for the ABC Longitudinal Study.

Dr. Barth moved, seconded by Ms. Mahony, approval. The motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of Voluntary Surrender of District Conversion Public Charter School: Murfreesboro High School in the South Pike County School District

Roger Featherston, Superintendent of the South Pike County School District, said his district decided not to implement the New Tech model at Murfreesboro High School because of loss in enrollment and grant funds. He requested the State Board approve his district's request to surrender the district conversion charter status.

Dr. Barth moved, seconded by Mr. Black, to accept the surrender of the district's conversion charter. The motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of Request for Renewal of Open-Enrollment Public Charter School: Covenant Keepers College Preparatory Charter School

Mary Perry, Charter School Coordinator, presented a request from Covenant Keepers College Preparatory Charter School to amend its charter by scaling back grade levels served from 6-12 to 6-8, a relocation of the school and a seven-year renewal.

Dr. Valerie Tatum, School Director, said the high school had been a challenge and created too many problems with teacher turnover and impeding middle school growth. She said the school would work with other area schools to transition those high school students.

Ms. Newton moved, seconded by Mr. Ledbetter, to grant the request to relocate the school, to eliminate the high school grades and a three-year renewal of the charter. The motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of Request for Open-Enrollment Public Charter School Charter Amendments: SIATech Little Rock

This item was pulled from the agenda at the request of SIATech.

Classification of District in Fiscal Distress

Department of Education staff announced the Hughes School District had been identified for fiscal distress because of audit findings of financial mismanagement. In the 2012 audit, the district was cited for problems that included failing to prevent, detect and correct accounting errors totaling more than \$1.1 million in the general fund and exceeding its Title I federal funds budget by more than the allowable 10 percent without the Department’s approval. The district did not appeal the fiscal distress status.

Dr. Barth moved, seconded by Ms. Newton, to approve the fiscal distress classification of the Hughes School District. The motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of Academic Distress Classification: Lee County School District

Assistant Commissioner John Hoy informed the State Board the Lee County School District had been identified for academic distress status because fewer than half of the district’s students—47.64 percent—achieved at a proficient level. Mr. Hoy said the score was a three-year average. He said ADE had 15 days to assemble a team to assess the district and 60 days to present the district its findings.

Ms. Newton moved, seconded by Mr. Black, to approve the academic distress classification for the Lee County School District. The motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of Academic Distress Classification: Strong Huttig School District

Mr. Hoy made the same recommendation of academic distress classification for the Strong Huttig School District. In Strong Huttig, 45.44 percent of students were proficient.

Ms. Newton said her cousin's employment with the district would not impact her decision.

Dr. Barth moved, seconded by Mr. Ledbetter, to approve the academic distress classification for the Strong Huttig School District. The motion carried unanimously.

Hearing on Waiver Request for Certified Teacher License – Cynthia Marie Bead-Spearmon

Department staff said Cynthia Marie Bead-Spearmon's application for license renewal was denied because of a federal felony theft of government checks conviction in 1984 and notification of a true finding on the Child Maltreatment Central Registry.

The Department verified Ms. Bead-Spearmon's name had been removed from that list.

Ms. Bead-Spearmon said she thought the old felony offense was no longer on her record and did not intentionally withhold information.

Ms. Mahony moved, seconded by Mr. Black, to grant the waiver with the stipulation of probation for a period of two years and no other disqualifying conviction or violation of code of ethics. The motion carried unanimously.

PLSB Hearing – Request for Consolidated Hearing for Case 12-145 – Veda Ann Struble and Case 12-146 – Teresa Dee Keiter for Written Reprimand and \$50 Fine

This agenda item was pulled at the request of the educators.

Consideration of Waiver of National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Repayment of State Funds – Carolyn Jennings

A recommendation was made to waive the repayment obligation of \$2,500 because of Ms. Jennings' inability to complete the requirements of NBPTS due to physical and emotional distress caused by the death of her husband.

Dr. Barth moved, seconded by Ms. Newton, to waive the repayment obligation of Carolyn Jennings. The motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of New Praxis I Core Academic Skills for Educators Tests and Cut Scores to be Effective September 1, 2013

Educational Testing Service (ETS) provided information from a January 2013 multi-state standard setting study for new Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators (Praxis I) tests. These tests have been newly developed to align with the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics and will replace the current Praxis I Pre-Professional Skill Tests (PPST) in Reading, Writing, and Mathematics. The Praxis I subtests measure whether candidates entering a teacher preparation program have the necessary reading, writing, and mathematical knowledge/skills.

The ADE recommended adopting the Praxis I Reading (5712) with a cut score of 156, Praxis I Writing (5722) with a cut score of 162, and Praxis I Mathematics (5732) with a cut score of 150 replacing Praxis I Reading (5710), Praxis I Writing (5720), and Praxis I Mathematics (5730) respectively.

Ms. Newton moved, seconded by Dr. Barth, approval of the Praxis I Pre-Professional Skill Tests in reading, writing, and mathematics effective September 1, 2013. The motion carried unanimously.

Consideration for Approval for Public Comment: Proposed Revisions of Rules Governing the Code of Ethics for Arkansas Educators

The proposed rules include a reduction in the fee to receive a standard license from \$100 to \$75 as reflected in the fee table in Appendix B. The fee table was also revised to eliminate the three-year initial license and the advanced license, which are no longer issued by the Department.

Mr. Ledbetter moved, seconded by Ms. Newton, to release the proposed rules for public comment. The motion carried unanimously.

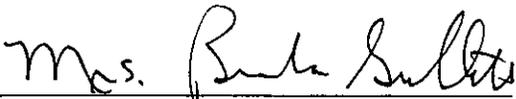
Dr. Rolando Hemphill

Dr. Hemphill said he was offering a free workshop on how to go to college in seven easy steps. He encouraged those with a need for the workshop to contact him.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:46 a.m.

These minutes were recorded by Phyllis Stewart.


~~Mr. Jim Cooper~~, Chair
Mrs. Brenda Gullett


Dr. Tom W. Kimbrell, Commissioner