

Minutes
State Board of Education Meeting
Friday, February 14, 2014

The State Board of Education met Friday, February 14, 2014, in the auditorium of the Department of Education building. Chair Brenda Gullett called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

Present: Brenda Gullett, Chair; Sam Ledbetter, Vice-Chairman; Alice Mahony; Dr. Jay Barth; Vicki Saviers; Toyce Newton; Diane Zook; Mireya Reith; Joe Black; Alexia Weimer, Teacher of the Year; and Dr. Tom Kimbrell, Commissioner

Absent: none

Reports

Chair's Report

Ms. Reith is working on the Rural Education committee with the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE). The committee is working on a report. She requested collaboration before her March meeting.

Ms. Saviers said she recently spent time with local school members from Wakefield Elementary to discuss the school's success. She recognized the efforts of the school principal.

Commissioner's Report

Commissioner Kimbrell said a joint NASBE meeting of chiefs and state board chairs will be held March 15-16 in Washington, DC. Ms. Gullett and Dr. Kimbrell will be participating.

Commissioner Kimbrell shared a letter that was sent to Secretary Duncan. PARCC and Smarter Balance states will continue to control student assessment data at the state level. Student data will not be released to the federal government. Arkansas data will be protected.

Commissioner Kimbrell thanked the Board for their support of the Common Core State Standards. He also recognized that many organizations also continue to support Common Core. Commissioner Kimbrell said the Division of Learning Services is preparing a communication packet regarding the issues that have been raised by some parents. The department will provide toolkits to be shared with parents. The toolkits will

provide communication tools regarding Common Core State Standards and PARCC assessments. Teacher of the Year, Ali Weimer, shared that teacher leaders are working to promote the communication regarding CCSS and PARCC.

Commissioner Kimbrell recognized Cody Decker, Assistant Commissioner for Research and Technology. Mr. Decker was recently promoted to Assistant Commissioner.

Update on Common Core State Standards, PARCC and School Improvement

Assistant Commissioner of the Division of Learning Services Dr. Megan Witonski said the communication toolkit will be helpful to districts but districts will need to take the responsibility of sharing the information. The department will continue to encourage districts to have conversations regarding Common Core and PARCC assessments. She said several organizations are also working to share this communication. Ms. Gullett requested the department consider more ways to communicate factual information with parents and provide an effective feedback loop.

Dr. Witonski reported that co-op literacy specialists are working to update literacy professional development for the summer. The department continues to work with SREB to support transition courses. Literacy Design Collaborative (LDC) and Math Design Collaborate (MDC) trainings continue with new schools registering in the spring.

Dr. Witonski said a training session was provided explaining that course code approval is due May 1, 2014. Training was also provided regarding the Foreign Language Frameworks. These training materials are posted on the ADE website.

Dr. Witonski said the educator leader cadre is working on sample instructional units for Common Core State Standards.

Dr. Witonski said Arkansas is part of the National Center and State Collaborative. A group of 25 states are working to develop new math and reading assessments for significantly cognitive delayed students.

244 districts are participating in the PARCC field test.

Dr. Witonski introduced a video message from Jeff Collum, Superintendent of Benton Public Schools. The school is implementing Common Core State Standards. Middle School Principal Sue Shultz shared the journey of implementing Common Core. She said it was an opportunity to implement strong standards and rigorous instruction. Seventh grade English teacher Jessica Herring wrote a blog in January titled "Why I don't Hate Common Core." She talked about the school curriculum and why it is beneficial to the students and the community. Seventh graders are successfully writing research papers. Middle school student Ethan talked about his sixth grade year and how involved he was in his learning. Seventh grade student Blakely talked about some of the topics she learned this year including civil rights and bullying. She skyped with a

Holocaust survivor. She visited Little Rock Central High School to learn more about the Central High Nine. Her class held a mock interview with the Little Rock Nine. Blakely said If using Common Core will help us be more competitive with the rest of the world, we should do it. Sue Shultz said the teachers have a trusting relationship with students and parents.

Chairman Gullett requested Report 5 be presented next on the agenda.
Report-5 Academic Distress Report

Assistant Commissioner of Public School Accountability John Hoy said Section 10.08.1 of the Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment and Accountability Program and the Academic Distress Program required the Department to annually review and report to the Board the academic conditions existing in each academic distress school district. Lee County School District and Strong-Huttig School District remain on academic distress.

Ms. Zook requested a list of priority schools. She also requested the academic distress districts report to the Board at a future meeting. Dr. Kimbrell said the Department will bring a list of academic distress schools for Board approval.

Ms. Newton asked for information about the status of priority schools. Mr. Ledbetter also asked if the priority schools are making progress.

Mr. Ledbetter asked if there had been any leadership change in Lee County and Strong-Huttig. Mr. Hoy said the superintendent and building principals are new at Lee County. Ms. Mahony asked if Lee County was fully staffed. Dr. Karen Walters said two licensed teachers are on ALP for Special Education.

Superintendent Saul Lusk gave a brief statement about the progress at Strong-Huttig.

Ms. Saviers expressed concerns that these students are not making enough progress. She said we need to have a bigger vision and sense of urgency.

Report 4: Quality Digital Learning Study (QDLS) Update

Dr. Barth introduced Report Item #4. As a member of the committee, he learned about the technological challenges even though ADE and partners have made remarkable strides on this issue. The work will not end with any decisions that are made over the next couple of months because technology issues will be front and center in the future. The quality of broadband is only part of the issue. We need to train technology leaders around the state.

Dr. Ed Franklin reported Act 1280 mandated the Quality Digital Learning Study (QDLS) committee develop a plan to facilitate and deliver a quality digital learning environment

for public education. Reports, minutes, and maps are available on the ADE website.

Dr. Franklin reported that many schools do not have the recommended 100 kilobytes per student. He said we need to build for the expansion of the future. He recommended starting with the existing infrastructure and optimizing E-Rate and other available resources. He said we need to leverage existing private provider networks. We need to continue to provide professional development so schools know how to use the tools that are available. Dr. Franklin said a full report will be ready in early May.

Director of Policy and Special Reports Susan Harriman said Governor Beebe has asked that \$10 million, one-time unprecedented funds, be appropriated this session. These funds have the potential to be matched with approximately \$40 million of federal money for the "last mile". The E-rate process is complicated; ADE and DIS are providing support to schools. Ms. Harriman said there are many districts that need help and the team is reaching out to assist. Ms. Harriman said they are studying the North Carolina model.

Dr. Kimbrell said Senator Key asked that schools re-evaluate their initial results of the survey. The Department sent the survey back out and asked schools to revisit. He said we are hoping to get better information about what is actually available in schools. Dr. Kimbrell said the co-op in Helena/West Helena is a good example. The co-op did an E-Rate application on behalf of all schools and reduced rates to the schools and worked with the providers. Co-ops may be able to attract and retain the technology staff that can work with the districts.

Office of Intensive Support Quarterly Report

Andrew Tolbert, superintendent of the Office of Intensive Support, presented information regarding districts in state takeover fiscal distress, and academic distress.

Currently, the Office of Intensive Support is working with eight districts: Dollarway, PCSSD, Mineral Springs, Helena-West Helena, Lee County, Strong-Huttig, Hughes, and Western Yell County.

Ms. Gullett asked Board members to consider the presentation and to submit questions to Mr. Tolbert for the March meeting.

Report-7 Arkansas Teacher Cadets Program Receives Gold Medal Givers 2014 Award

Report 7 was postponed until the March meeting.

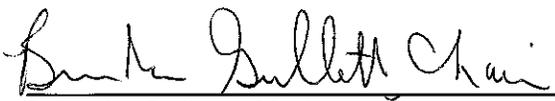
Report-8 Arkansas Teacher of the Year Report

Report 8 was postponed until the March meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:07 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Kimberly Friedman and Deborah Coffman.


Brenda Gullett, Chair

Dr. Tom W. Kimbrell, Commissioner