

State Board of Education
Minutes
Special Called Meeting via Telephone Conference Call
July 29, 1999

The State Board of Education met via telephone conference call on Thursday, July 29, 1999. The meeting was called to order by Luke Gordy, Chairman, at 9:10 a.m.

The following members reporting present as the roll was sounded by the operator: Luke Gordy, Chairman; Edwin Alderson; JoNell Caldwell; Robert Hackler; James McLarty; Betty Pickett; Richard Smith; and Anita Yates. Mr. Gordy declared a quorum was present and declared the meeting in session.

Members absent: Bill Fisher and Lewis Thompson, Jr.

Mr. Gordy indicated to the Board that the agenda for the special meeting included only one item, Final Approval of Rules and Regulations Governing Poverty Index Funding. He informed the Board that a second item was being added to the agenda to consider an increase in the budget line item for School Bus Liability Insurance.

Final Approval of Rules and Regulations Governing Poverty Index Funding

Mr. Simon informed the Board that one minor correction was being made to the version of the document that was mailed. On Page 6, Section 8.00 the phrase "as defined in Section 4.01" should be deleted. That correction was made in an earlier section, but was not carried forward.

Ms. Pickett questioned the rationale for setting the cut off for funding at the 75% free and reduced level. She stated a strong opinion to help the neediest children and neediest schools. Mr. Simon indicated that research suggests that an additional \$1,000 per poverty child in funding seems to be the critical point at which a difference can be made. At the 75% level approximately \$600 will be allocated for each child. Additionally, the federal programs, specifically Title I, provides another \$400 which together make the \$1,000. Simon indicated that the level would be reviewed each year depending on funds available and the number of children who qualify for free and reduced price lunches.

Ms. Pickett questioned the use of funds to purchase computers and software as described in Section 7.07.4. Mr. Simon indicated that funds were not to be used for general equipment such as desks, chairs, etc. However, staff did not want to completely close the door on items that if used appropriately, would support quality instruction.

Mr. McLarty indicated his support for the rules and regulations. He advanced a concern for the total responsibility given to the Director in Section 5.03 to establish the minimum poverty index level. His concern is that this be done in such a way as to be defensible so that schools near the cut off do not challenge the decision in the courts.

Mr. McLarty moved final approval of the Rules and Regulations Governing Poverty Index Funding. Mr. Smith seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Pickett requested that staff begin to consider indices other than the poverty index for determining the distribution of these funds.

Amend the Budget to increase the School Bus Liability Insurance Line Item by \$25,000.

Mr. Gordy informed the Board that when the invoice was received from the successful bidder to provide the Excess School Bus Liability Insurance, it included Arkansas sales tax in the amount of \$19,864.32, which made a total quote of \$516,472.32. Previously, \$500,000 was budget for this item which is not sufficient to cover the cost. The Board must consider a budget adjustment to assure full funding of this item.

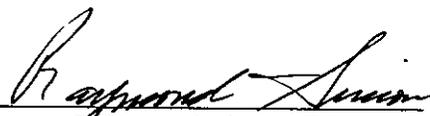
Mr. McLarty moved that the budget be amended to increase the line item for Excess School Bus Liability Insurance by \$25,000 making the total \$525,000 and that Additional Base Funding be reduced by \$25,000. Ms. Pickett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

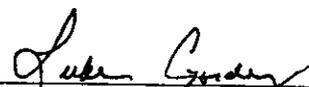
Other Business

Mr. Simon indicated that the Board retreat would begin at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday, August 8, 1999 and would run through 6:00 p.m. The agenda is being mailed.

Mr. Alderson moved adjournment. Ms. Pickett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Minutes recorded by Angela Billings and edited by Dr. Charles D. Watson


Raymond Simon, Director


Luke Gordy, Chairman