

Minutes
State Board of Education
Special Session, Monday, March 19, 2001

The State Board of Education met in a special session via telephone conference call on Monday, March 19, 2001. Luke Gordy, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. and requested that the roll be called.

The following Board members responded present to the roll call: Luke Gordy, Chairman; Richard Smith, Vice-Chairman; JoNell Caldwell; Claiborne Deming; William Fisher; Robert Hackler; Shelby Hillman; Betty Pickett; Lewis Thompson, Jr.; and Anita Yates.

No Board members were absent.

Raymond Simon, Director, Department of Education; Scott Smith, staff attorney; Tim Gauger, attorney from Attorney General's Office and other staff were present in the Auditorium of the Department of Education Building where the call originated.

Mr. Gordy stated that the special meeting was called to address the agreement between the Little Rock School District and the State of Arkansas. He requested that Mr. Simon make any introductory comments. Mr. Simon stated that the information provided in the print materials sent to Board members via Federal Express contained the text of the agreement as well as a summary of the issues. Mr. Simon then requested that Tim Gauger, attorney representing the State, comment about the conditions of the Agreement. Mr. Gauger briefly summarized the information in the print document and indicated that by allowing the Little Rock School District the option of restructuring its bonded debt, the State would save in excess of \$150 million which would be payable to other districts in the state. Such payment would be required because of the millage voted by the Little Rock District last fall. He noted that if the State Board signs the Agreement, the same agreement is scheduled for presentation to the Little Rock School Board at 5:00 p.m. for approval. Mr. Gauger also stated that some provisions of the Agreement may require approval of the federal court.

Ms. Pickett asked if the Agreement covered the situation that would occur should the Little Rock District seek an additional millage increase during the next seven years covered by the agreement. Mr. Gauger suggested that additional negotiations would have to occur between the State and the District.

Mr. Fisher noted that the parties have worked long and hard to reach a feasible Agreement that would be fair to all parties and this proposal seems to be in the best interest of the District and the State. Mr. Fisher moved adoption of the proposed Agreement and that Raymond Simon be authorized to enter into the agreement on behalf of the Board. Mr. Smith seconded the motion.

Mr. Gordy requested that the roll be called for a voice vote of the Board. The motion carried on a 8-1 vote. (Pickett voted no.)

Ms. Hillman moved that the Board approve the Little Rock School District application for bonded debt issuance and authorize Raymond Simon to approve the issuance of bonds by the Little Rock School District. Mr. Hackler seconded the motion.

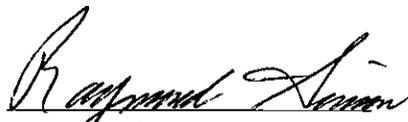
Ms. Pickett asked if the application for bonded indebtedness request falls within the guidelines used to approve such requests from other districts. Patricia Martin responded that it does and that the Department Loans and Bonds Committee met last week and reviewed the application and recommended approval to the Board.

Mr. Gordy requested that the roll be called for a voice vote of the Board. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Fisher inquired if the Board needed to take action on the other materials sent to the Board by Mr. Simon during the next regular meeting. Specifically, he referred to the issue of the Standards requirement for vocal and instrumental music in each school. Mr. Simon indicated it would be added to the April agenda. Mr. Fisher requested that staff prepare information for the Board indicating how many schools may be experiencing difficulty in meeting the music requirement.

Mr. Hackler moved adjournment. Mr. Smith seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

The minutes were recorded and reported by Dr. Charles D. Watson.


Raymond Simon, Director


Luke Gordy, Chairman