

Minutes
State Board of Education Meeting
Monday, April 11, 2011

The State Board of Education met Monday, April 11, 2011, in the auditorium of the Department of Education building. Dr. Naccaman Williams, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9 a.m.

Present: Dr. Naccaman Williams, Chairman; Dr. Ben Mays, Vice-Chair; Sherry Burrow; Jim Cooper; Brenda Gullett; Sam Ledbetter; Alice Mahony; Vicki Saviers; Toyce Newton; Dr. Tom Kimbrell, Commissioner; and Vandy Nash, Arkansas Teacher of the Year

Absent: None

Reports

Chair's Report:

Ms. Gullett gave an overview of the NASBE/CCSSO Conference held at the end of March. She was part of a group that spent a couple hours with Secretary Arne Duncan discussing hot topic education issues. She said the Secretary was resolute in not granting waivers from Adequate Yearly Progress. Instead, he asked states to contact their congressional delegates and urge them to authorize ESEA.

Commissioner's Report:

Dr. Kimbrell reported the General Assembly was completing final work on redrawing the state's congressional districts. He said the Department had some hard work ahead in developing rules for recently enacted legislation particularly regarding the teacher excellence and support system effective 2014-15, the same time as full implementation of Common Core State Standards and a new assessment system.

National Title I Distinguished School Program

Eastside Elementary School in the Rogers School District was recognized for its school-wide academic performance over the past two years. Gibbs Albright Elementary School in the Newport School District was acknowledged for reducing the academic achievement gap between sub-groups. Both schools represented the state at the National Title I conference in January.

Coordinated School Health: School Flu Vaccination Clinics

Randy Lee, Director of Local Public Health, expressed appreciation to the Department and the state's school districts for their assistance in offering flu vaccinations to students in grades K-12. According to Mr. Lee, approximately 300,000 doses were administered in the seasonal school clinics. He said vaccinating school-age students

helps reduce the spread of flu which means fewer parents missing work.

Consent Agenda

Ms. Gullett moved, seconded by Ms. Saviers, approval of the Consent Agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

Items included in the Consent Agenda:

- Minutes of the March 14, 2011, Board Meeting
- Commitment to Principles of Desegregation Settlement Agreement: Report on the Execution of the Implementation Plan
- Newly Employed, Promotions and Separations
- Waivers to School Districts for Teachers Teaching Out of Area for Longer than 30 Days
- A revolving loan application for Norphlet School District--\$75,760; and ten—second lien bond applications—Bald Knob School District--\$1,455,000; Bryant School District--\$25,655,000; County Line School District--\$1,270,000; Cutter Morning Star School District--\$215,000; Glen Rose School District--\$460,000; Hamburg School District--\$635,000; Parkers Chapel School District--\$1,045,000; Pottsville School District--\$1,560,000; Russellville School District--\$10,450,000; Southside School District--\$2,070,000.
- A progress report of five school districts in fiscal distress—Armored, Forrest City, Helena-West Helena, Strong-Huttig and Yelleville-Summit.
- Sanctions for Teachers as Recommended by the Professional Licensure Standards Board
 - Ronald Hart
 - Clem Bilgischer
 - Brenda Taylor

Action Agenda

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

Arkansas Better Chance 2010-11 Funding Recommendation

Ms. Mahony moved, seconded by Ms. Saviers, to approve a recommendation for Arkansas Better Chance funding in the amount of \$12,000 to the Jefferson Comprehensive Care PAT program. The motion carried unanimously.

Consideration for Awarding Waiver Day – Jasper School District

Kerry Saylor, Jasper School District Superintendent, reported his district missed 11 days due to inclement weather. He said the district would make up 10 days by using three (3) days of spring break, Good Friday and by adding the remainder of the days to

the end of the school year. Mr. Saylor requested a one-day waiver making the 2010-2011 school year a total of 177 instructional days.

Mr. Cooper moved, seconded by Mr. Ledbetter, to grant the one-day waiver. The motion carried unanimously.

Classification of District in Fiscal Distress—Dermott School District

Bill Goff, Assistant Commissioner for Fiscal Services, presented a recommendation to identify the Dermott School District as fiscally distressed because of declining fund balances. The district did not appeal the designation.

Ms. Saviers moved, seconded by Mr. Cooper, to identify the Dermott School District as being in fiscal distress. The motion carried unanimously.

Classification of District in Fiscal Distress—West Side Cleburne County School District

Bill Goff, Assistant Commissioner for Fiscal Services, presented a recommendation to identify the West Side Cleburne County School District as fiscally distressed because of declining fund balances. The district did not appeal the designation.

Mr. Ledbetter moved, seconded by Ms. Mahony, to identify the West Side Cleburne County School District as being in fiscal distress. The motion carried unanimously.

Classification of District in Fiscal Distress—Earle School District

At the request of the school district, this item was postponed until the May State Board meeting.

Request for District Conversion Charter School Hearing: Little Rock School District Felder Alternative Learning Academy

Dr. Larry Russell, Charter School Education Program Analyst, presented a request from the Little Rock School District to surrender the charter of the Felder Alternative Learning Academy effective June 30, 2011.

Dr. Morris Holmes, Interim Superintendent of the Little Rock School District, explained that Felder Academy was started in 2005 as a joint project of the three Pulaski County school districts and the Pulaski County government to serve adjudicated youth. Dr. Holmes said the Pulaski County Special School District and the North Little Rock School District had withdrawn from the project leaving the Little Rock School District saddled with the costs.

Dr. Holmes said students could be served at the district's other alternative school saving the district approximately \$1.2 million per year.

Mr. Ledbetter moved, seconded by Dr. Mays, to approve the Little Rock School District's request to surrender the Felder Academy charter effective June 30, 2011. The motion carried unanimously.

Request for Open Enrollment Public Charter School Amendment: LISA Academy

Dr. Larry Russell, Charter School Education Program Analyst, presented a request from LISA Academy to amend their charter to include grades 4 and 5 and increase their student enrollment cap from 600 to 800.

Board members expressed concern that the high school program is on alert status because African American students and students from low-income families have failed to meet minimum achievement requirements on End-of-Course exams in algebra I and geometry.

Superintendent Cuneyt Akdemir said the high school program was quality and pointed to the college placement of recent graduates, the above-average student success rate on Advanced Placement exams and the school's ACT scores that are above the state's average.

Ms. Burrow moved, seconded by Ms. Newton, to approve the request to amend the charter to include grades 4 and 5 and increase the enrollment by 200. The motion failed six to two in a roll call vote.

Yeas: Newton and Burrow

Nays: Gullett, Mays, Ledbetter, Mahony, Saviers, Cooper

Consideration of Acceptance of Surrender of Teaching License by Ginger Robbin Garcia

Ginger Robbin Garcia surrendered her teaching license as part of a plea agreement in Crawford County for theft by deception.

Dr. Mays moved, seconded by Ms. Saviers, to accept the surrender of the teaching license of Ginger Robbin Garcia. The motion carried unanimously.

Hearing on PLSB Case #09-084 Steven Lynch

Katherine Donovan, PLSB counsel, said former Bergman School District coach Steven Lynch violated Standard 1 of the Code of Ethics when he failed to appropriately supervise and discipline students during a basketball camp. Ms. Donovan said the subcommittee recommended a written reprimand and \$50 fine.

Marcia Barnes, legal counsel representing Mr. Lynch, said the school district failed to assist Mr. Lynch in the investigation. She argued that Mr. Lynch responded as directed by the principal to conduct an investigation. Ms. Barnes asked that the finding and the fine be dismissed.

Mr. Ledbetter moved, seconded by Ms. Saviers, that the complaint was not substantiated and that the case be closed. The motion carried unanimously.

Hearing on Waiver Request for Certified Teacher's License-Barbara Flint

PLSB Attorney Katherine Donovan reported that when Barbara Flint applied for her initial teaching license it was discovered she had a felony theft of public benefits conviction from Faulkner County in 2002.

Ms. Flint said the conviction was because of failure to report all income. She graduated from college with honors and passed the first background check. After completing the field experience she discovered she failed the second background check. She said she paid the fine and served her probation and thought the record was sealed.

Ms. Newton moved, seconded by Ms. Burrow, to grant the waiver with the stipulation that while serving two years probation there would be no violation of Code of Ethics. The motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of Request to Suspend the Teaching License of Four National Board of Professional Teaching Standards Candidates Who Owe Money to ADE

Beverly Williams, Assistant Commissioner of Human Resources, Licensure and Teacher Quality, reported that Sam Davis, Teresa Grant, Michael Holcomb and Lamarica Miller failed to complete the NBPTS program and, therefore, owed the Department money. She said all attempts to contact the individuals and collect the money failed.

Mr. Cooper moved, seconded by Dr. Mays, to suspend the teaching license of the individuals until payment is received. The motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of New Praxis II Cut Scores in Art and Principles of Learning and Teaching to be Effective September 1, 2011

Assistant Commissioner Beverly Williams presented a recommendation for the following Praxis II assessments and cut scores:

Art Content Knowledge exam (#0134) with a cut score of 158
Art Content and Analysis exam (#0135) with a cut score of 161
PLT: Early Childhood exam (#0621) with a cut score of 157
PLT: Grades 5-9 exam (#0623) with a cut score of 160
PLT: Grades 7-12 exam (#0624) with a cut score of 157

Ms. Saviers moved, seconded by Ms. Gullett, to approve the Praxis II tests and cut scores. The motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of Waiver Requests for Licensure Purposes of Teachers Assisting in the Development of the Praxis II Exam for Instructional Facilitators

Beverly Williams presented a request for waiver from testing for the eleven teachers who assisted in the development of the Praxis II exam for instructional facilitators.

Mr. Cooper moved, seconded by Mr. Ledbetter, to approve the waiver. The motion carried unanimously.

The Board will discuss the instructional facilitator endorsement at the May meeting.

Request to Address the Board: Unifying Voices for Quality Education

Dr. Mary Olson, a member of the Unifying Voices for Quality Education organization in Helena-West Helena, addressed the Board and asked for assistance in stopping the elimination of 120 district employees. She said the reduction in force plan proposed by the school district needed to be stopped until the community has confidence in its superintendent and can develop a strategic plan.

Change in May Board Meeting

It was announced that the May meeting would be moved from May 9 to May 16.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:16 p.m.

These minutes were recorded by Phyllis Stewart.

Dr. Naccaman Williams

Dr. Tom W. Kimbrell