

Minutes
State Board of Education Meeting
Monday, October 11, 2010

The State Board of Education met Monday, October 11, 2010, in the auditorium of the Department of Education building. Dr. Naccaman Williams, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 1 p.m.

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

Absent: Mr. Jim Cooper and Ms. Toyce Newton

Reports

Chair's Report:

Chairman Williams explained the late start of the regular monthly meeting was due to the annual meeting of the three state boards on education. He said the boards heard updates on Common Core, Arkansas Works and the Arkansas Scholarship Program.

Commissioner's Report:

Commissioner Kimbrell announced the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for Colleges and Careers (PARCC) was awarded an additional \$15.9 million grant to help with policy and to develop a communications plan.

Report on Committee on Inter-School Athletics:

Dr. Mays gave an update on the work of the committee established to look at inter-school athletics reporting. He explained the current rule that ties total coaches' salaries to athletic facilities costs does not give the accuracy needed for transparency. He said the committee was looking at tying athletic facilities operational costs to total facilities costs by factoring in the total square footage of athletic buildings as a proportion of total district buildings, and then using that proportion as a starting point. Dr. Mays said some fine tuning/bookkeeper guidance will be needed to accommodate for buildings that share utilities meters, for buildings that are used for both athletics and academics and for outside playing fields that don't have to be heated, cooled and generally maintained in the same way as in other buildings.

Arkansas Advanced Initiative for Math and Science Progress Report

Tommie Anthony, Director of the Arkansas Advanced Initiative for Math and Science (AAIMS), reported Arkansas students ranked top in the nation for increased qualifying scores on math, science and English Advanced Placement tests between 2009 and 2010. The ranking holds for both overall student achievement and for minority student achievement.

Ms. Anthony explained that AAIMS had been implementing its three-year program with a grant from the National Math and Science Initiative. The AAIMS program combined training, teacher-and-student support and incentives in 24 schools throughout Arkansas during its first two years.

Scores for those schools added this past school year reflect a 74 percent increase in qualifying AP scores in math, science, and English, nine times the national average. The first group of schools, announced in 2008, had a 69 percent, two-year increase in qualifying students, and a 202 percent two-year increase for minority students in math, science, and English.

Report on Pulaski County Special School District

General Counsel Jeremy Lasiter and Bill Goff, Assistant Commissioner for Fiscal and Administrative Services, gave an update on the status of Pulaski County Special School District.

It was reported that, at this time, the PCSSD is not in violation of the Standards of Accreditation and does not meet the criteria for being classified in academic distress.

The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) expressed in three letters to the PCSSD concern for the District's fiscal status. In June of 2010, based upon a legislative audit, ADE wrote a letter to PCSSD indicating there were findings in the audit that, if not corrected, could result in identification of fiscal distress. It was made clear that if the issues persisted in January 1, 2011, the PCSSD could be identified as being in fiscal distress.

Another letter was written to the PCSSD in August 2010, notifying the District of some non-material indicators of fiscal distress. A follow-up letter was written to PCSSD on September 8, 2010, addressing those non-material indicators.

It was reported that ADE staff is providing PCSSD technical support and assistance in an effort to resolve those issues. However, if those efforts are unsuccessful, the PCSSD could be identified as being in fiscal distress.

Ms. Gullett asked what options were available if a critical mass of PCSSD patrons were dissatisfied and felt there were issues to be addressed.

Mr. Lasiter said there was a provision under the law for members of the electorate to petition the State Board either for consolidation, annexation or for detaching the territory from the district.

Mr. Ledbetter noted repeat findings in the legislative audit and the inability of the PCSSD school board to function appropriately to deliver optimal educational services to students. He urged continued monitoring of the situation.

Osceola Communication, Arts and Business School, Osceola, Arkansas

Dr. Mary Ann Duncan, Charter School Coordinator, apprised the Board of some governance and financial issues occurring at Osceola Communication, Arts and Business School in Osceola. Dr. Duncan said the original charter indicated two charter boards: one that was a 501 (c) (3) entity board and the other that encompassed a board of directors for local governance of the school. An audit process revealed the necessity for combining the boards. The boards are working to resolve the issue.

Dr. Duncan said the school had financial issues regarding reporting and maintaining appropriate child nutrition records. The school hired a consultant and is working to maintain fiscal APSCN reporting and oversight.

Consent Agenda

Mr. Ledbetter moved approval of the Consent Agenda, seconded by Ms. Burrow. The motion carried unanimously.

Items included in the Consent Agenda:

- Minutes of the September 13, 2010, Board Meeting
- The transfer of ownership of ABC grantees:
 - One to Grow On Child Care Center to ABC Preparatory Academy
 - First Baptist Church Child Care to C.B. King Memorial School, Inc.
 - UAM-College of Technology to C.B. King Memorial School, Inc
 - 20 Slots to the Lamar School District
- 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
- Seven-second lien bond applications (Benton-\$11,060,000; Fayetteville-\$19,540,000; Fort Smith-\$7,940,000; Fort Smith-\$8,000,000; IZARD County Consolidated-\$785,000; Lincoln Consolidated-\$2,000,000; Wonderview-\$1,555,000) and five-voted bond applications (Fayetteville-\$31,460,000; Jonesboro-\$19,000,000; Lawrence County-\$2,685,000; Palestine-Wheatley-\$4,975,000; Van Buren-\$5,600,000).
- Sanctions for Teachers as Recommended by the Professional Licensure Standards Board
 - Rose Marie Haynes
 - Karla Garrison
 - Melissa Moore
 - Greg Smith
 - Andy Connard
 - Nancy Myers
 - William Dobbins

Action Agenda

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

Consideration of Report on the Status of the Arkansas Public Charter Schools Program

Charter School Coordinator Dr. Mary Ann Duncan presented a report on the status of public charter schools in the state. The report included school profiles, financial reports and test results for the open enrollment charter schools. School profiles and test scores for 2009-2010 were included for district conversion public charter schools.

Board members requested the report be revised to include student growth and attrition information. It was suggested that if a charter was closed during the school year it be noted on the first page of the school's report.

Commissioner Kimbrell explained that the Charter Review Council would be conducting a thorough review of charter schools that would help guide the direction and data collection for next year's report.

Ms. Mahony moved, seconded by Ms. Saviers, to table the report until the November 8, 2010, meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of Policy Waiver to Conduct One-Year Pilot on Concurrent Course and High School Credit Effective Fall Semester 2010

Dr. Jim Purcell, Director of Arkansas Department of Higher Education, asked the Board to consider a one-year policy waiver to allow for awarding one unit of high school credit for one 3-semester credit hour college-level course offered by an Arkansas public college. The waiver would allow a student in grade 12 to be enrolled in a combination of concurrent college, developmental education and high school courses that count toward high school graduation.

General Counsel Jeremy Lasiter suggested revising the Rules Governing Concurrent College and High School Credit for Students Who Have Completed the Eighth Grade to include a pilot project for school year 2010-2011. He asked the Board to consider putting the revised Rules out for public comment.

Mr. Ledbetter moved, seconded by Ms. Gullett, approval for public comment Rules Governing concurrent College and High School Credit for Students Who Have Completed the Eighth Grade. The motion carried unanimously.

Hearing on Waiver Request for Certified Teacher's License—Corey Garrett

Staff Attorney Drew Blankenship told the Board that Corey Garrett pled guilty to delivery of a controlled substance, a felony, in 1995 making him ineligible for a teaching license.

Mr. Garrett said he completed the teacher preparation program prior to learning he was not eligible for a teaching license. He said he served the five years of probation and thought his record had been expunged.

Mr. Ledbetter 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.

Public Comment—Helena-West Helena School District

Leigh Lewis, an employee of the Helena-West Helena School District, told the Board she had been demoted from her position as business manager to a secretarial position. She admitted making some errors but said she was used as the fall guy for the district's current financial status. Ms. Lewis said uncontrolled spending and overstaffing were the real reasons for the district being in fiscal distress.

Public Comment—Pulaski County Special School District

Mr. Ben Rice, Jacksonville civic leader, and State Representative Mark Perry asked the Board to back their efforts to form a Jacksonville School District separate from the Pulaski County Special School District by supporting their Friend of the Court brief filed in the district's litigation regarding unitary status.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

These minutes were recorded by Phyllis Stewart.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dr. Naccaman Williams", written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Naccaman Williams, Chairman

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dr. Tom W. Kimbrell", written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Tom W. Kimbrell, Commissioner