

Minutes
State Board of Education Meeting
Friday, August 14, 2015

The State Board of Education met Friday, August 14, 2015, in the Arkansas Department of Education Auditorium. Chair Toyce Newton called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

Present: Toyce Newton, Chair; Mireya Reith, Vice-Chair; Diane Zook; Joe Black; Dr. Jay Barth; Vicki Saviers; Brett Williamson; Charisse Dean; Ouida Newton, Teacher of the Year; and Johnny Key, Commissioner.

Present via phone: Susan Chambers

Absent: none

Reports

Report-1 Chair's Report

Chair Newton said former Board Chair Ms. Brenda Gullett had been selected as the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) 2015 Distinguished Service Award winner.

Ms. Saviers said the article from Arkansas Teacher Corp celebrated three fellows that have been recognized as Teacher of the Year in their districts. The article was posted at <http://news.uark.edu/articles/26739/arkansas-teacher-corps-fellow-receives-teacher-of-the-year-honors>.

Ms. Saviers expressed best wishes to administrators, teachers and students as they begin the new school year.

Report-2 Commissioner's Report

Commissioner Key said Representative Charlotte Douglas sponsored the House Concurrent Resolution 1008, which designated the month of September as *Take Your Legislator to School Month*. He encouraged educators to begin conversations with their local legislators.

Report-3 ForwARd Report

Executive Vice President of the Rockefeller Foundation Mr. Cory Anderson said

ForwARd Arkansas (ForwARd) is a strategic partnership of the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, Walton Family Foundation and Arkansas Board of Education that aims to prepare all Arkansas students for success in college and the workplace. He said to accomplish its vision, ForwARd is creating a holistic plan for P-16 education in Arkansas, with specific recommendations for academically distressed schools and school districts. The ForwARd steering committee conducted significant research, input gathering and stakeholder engagement to develop its plan and lay the groundwork for implementation of its recommendations. He said the plan addressed goals to equip Arkansas students with the skills they need to succeed and goals to make 21st century preparedness available to all students. The focus areas include Pre-K, support outside the classroom, high quality classroom instruction, effective leadership, teacher pipeline, turnaround of schools in academic distress, and systems and policies. He said ForwARd is on track to publicly release its plan in Fall 2015.

The Board expressed appreciation for the ForwARd work and looked forward to the release of the plan.

Report-4 Q and A with selected schools in Academic Distress or Priority status

The State Board requested that select schools be present to answer questions regarding the improvement progress for selected schools in Academic Distress or Priority status. All school leaders were asked to describe how the school would work to remove itself from academic distress.

Lee County School District Principals Ms. Mary Hayden (Elementary) and Ms. Philistia Stanley (High School) said they studied the data and made adjustments to include professional growth plans for teachers and better scheduling of classes for students. Ms. Stanley said they still have vacancies for teaching positions. Lee County School District Superintendent Ms. Willie Murdock said she was actively seeking educators to fill these positions. She said several degreed people were interested in positions, but they were unable to pass the Praxis exam. Ms. Murdock said the district continued to seek recruitment and retention incentives. Ms. Murdock said the district used The Learning Institute (TLI) interim assessments. She said the Lee County School District is on track to fill the school board positions in September, but no one filed for one of the positions. Ms. Murdock said the Lee County community needed to support the district.

Dermott School District High School Principal Mr. Mike Duncan said the school was focused on improving 7th and 8th grades.

Earle School District High School Principal Ms. Juanita Bohanon said the high school focused on the data, provided targeted professional development,

implemented a data analysis protocol, created more time in the master schedule for professional learning communities, and collaborated with the elementary school regarding core instructional issues. She said the vertical alignment work began in the summer. She said the culture was changing to a more positive environment. Dr. Charity Smith, representing Fetterman and Associates, said low morale in a school/community may be a result of distressed labeling of a school. Earle School District Superintendent Mr. Ricky Nicks said the district has made several changes that are indicating improvement in the culture. He said the highest need was recruiting and retaining highly qualified educators. Ms. Bohanon said teachers are using the StudentGPS but she would welcome additional support. She said the embedded professional development has been very helpful to teachers. She said Education Consulting Services (ECS) has been the external provider for 10 years.

Osceola School District High School Principal Ms. Tiffany Morgan said recruitment and retention was an issue for Osceola. She said the school board was supportive of the School Improvement Grant (SIG) to provide incentives for retention of highly qualified teachers. She said the school had a strategic plan for response to intervention (RtI) for literacy and math. She said the school has a curriculum and assessment system in place. She said the school was working toward a 1-1 technology plan. She said the school was fully staffed for the 2015-2016 school year. She said the district was collaborating with the business community to address staff attendance issues. Osceola School District Superintendent Mr. Mike Cox explained the recruitment and retention policy.

Little Rock School District McClellan High School Principal Mr. Henry Anderson said math and literacy facilitators are in place for this school year and are providing professional development for teachers. He said the teachers are working together and time was scheduled weekly for collaboration. He said the biggest challenge was keeping the momentum going throughout the year. He said the local community was reaching out to assist with support.

Little Rock School District Henderson Middle School Principal Mr. Frank Williams said the school was focused on sustaining the culture of success in the school, using data to inform the standards based instruction, increasing collaboration among math and literacy teachers, development of the school leadership team to focus on student success and address needs of struggling learners, and enhancing the after-school program. He said he was also addressing faculty attendance issues. Mr. Williams said he was supporting a mentoring program for students. He said volunteers have been very supportive and active. He said parents were participating in school programs.

Little Rock School District Hall High School Principal Mr. Larry Schliecher said 35 teachers completed ESL training and were ESL endorsed. He said they were utilizing the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model. Mr. Schliecher said the assistant principals would be in classrooms observing

teachers and providing feedback. He said the school was utilizing professional learning communities to analyze data and provide intervention. He said having an effective leadership team was a focus for this school year. He said faculty attendance has been an issue. He said the school used the READ 180 as an intervention program and would also be using the MATH 180 program this year. He said the Hall High Neighborhood Association has been very supportive of the school. Mr. Schliecher said the Master Principal Program has helped him be more inclusive of teachers in the planning process for the school. Little Rock School District Deputy Superintendent Mr. Marvin Burton said the Newcomer Center was in need of support for expansion. He said the staff had visited other newcomer centers in Northwest Arkansas for recommendations for improvement. Little Rock School District Hall High School ESL Coordinator Dr. Leslie Purdy-Hoyt said Hispanic students want to come to the newcomer center for the additional support. Mr. Schliecher said reading was the most critical issue for the students.

Little Rock School District J.A. Fair High School Principal Ms. LaGail Biggs said the focus was data-driven instruction. She said the instruction and intervention needed to be more targeted to the needs of the students. She said professional development and scheduling has been provided to support this implementation. She said the school was addressing the graduation rate through before-school and after-school credit recovery and early intervention in the ninth grade. She said City Year has been very supportive.

Little Rock School District Superintendent Mr. Baker Kurrus said the district was focused on the academic distressed schools but was also working equally hard to assist and guide all of the schools. He said grade level reading was essential. He said failure anywhere is failure everywhere.

Little Rock School District Cloverdale Middle School Principal Ms. Wanda Ruffins said the school was focused on professional development and instruction. She said the average reading level of students was below grade level and, therefore, the school will use READ 180 and MATH 180 for intervention. She said all teachers received training in SIOP. She said the school was working on a positive culture of teacher-student relationship to reduce discipline issues.

Little Rock School District Baseline Academy Principal Mr. Jonathan Crossley said the school has been engaged in professional development specific to the needs of the school. He said eleven staff members were bilingual. He said the school would be collaborating with parents and the youth specialist to ensure positive discipline.

Pulaski County Special School District (PCSSD) Jacksonville High School Assistant Principal Ms. Katrina Mills said the school would be using READ 180 for reading intervention. She said the school has double blocked algebra class. She said tutoring was provided after school. PCSSD Superintendent Dr. Jerry

Guess introduced the new principal, Mr. Jack Smith.

Pulaski County Special School District Wilbur Mills High School Principal Mr. Duane Clayton said some students would be enrolled in a double blocked algebra class. He said the school was fully staffed this year. He said the assessment system would inform the instruction. He said junior and senior students would be mentoring freshmen and sophomores. He said the teachers were using BloomBoard and the feedback loop was working.

Helena-West Helena School District Superintendent Dr. John Hoy said the systemic issues were being addressed at the district level. He said as a member of the Phillips County Leadership he has been able to make many contacts. He said the support from Mr. Andrew Tolbert, State Superintendent of the Office of Intensive Support, and his team has been very helpful with the changes needed in the district. He said an AdvancEd comprehensive evaluation was essential in guiding the systemic changes needed in the district. He said a district leadership team and a school improvement team were employed to address the progress of the district. He said the academic walks were helping the administrators to see the progress and provide feedback to teachers. He said the graduation rate was reflective of the reading issues.

Helena-West Helena School District Central High School Principal Mr. Ernest Simpson III said the leadership team was aggressively addressing the issues. He said the school was establishing a credit recovery program. He said the curriculum has been aligned through a partnership with Fetterman and Associates. He said a new parent facilitator has been assigned to assist with improving parent communication and involvement. He said parents have been attending Sunday meetings and are becoming involved. Helena-West Helena School District Curriculum Director Ms. Linda English said the district participated in career coaching.

Commissioner Key said the Helena-West Helena Community Advisory Board positions are being reorganized to match the new zones in the district. He said additional training will be provided to these board members.

Pine Bluff School District High School Principal Dr. Michael Nellums said the school was fully staffed for the first time in four years. He said the ninth grade was moved to the high school. He said the school would assess each student in math and literacy at the beginning of the year and monitor progress throughout the year. He said the school was collaborating with business partners to bring authentic learning to the students. He said the school would have a juvenile probation officer on site this year to assist with the large percentage of students involved in the court system. He said the school was double blocking time for students struggling in math and literacy and using the co-teaching model to support special education students.

Pine Bluff School District Executive Director of Teaching and Learning Dr. Monica McMurray said the supplemental programs have been aligned. She said the district would use Compass Learning and TLI assessments. She said master schedules would reflect common planning time for teachers. She said the infrastructure has been put in place to support teaching and learning. She said the district was working on a communication plan to improve community support. Pine Bluff School District School Improvement Officer Ms. Alesia Smith said she had been meeting with parents to communicate the expectations from the district.

Pine Bluff School District Jack Robey Middle School Principal Mr. Donald Booth said the superintendent has been very responsive to the needs of the school.

Pine Bluff School District Belair Middle School Principal Ms. Suzette Bloodman said the communication with the district has improved. She said her school was fully staffed. She said the students have been strategically placed to receive the best instruction and intervention. She said the school provided after school and Saturday school to support students. She said the parents were coming to the school and the teachers were very excited to start the new school year.

Forrest City School District Superintendent Dr. Tiffany Hardrick said the district framework and conditions for success have been put into place. She said schools have been reconfigured. The district held several parent meetings to get feedback from the community. She said the ALE has been redesigned.

Forrest City School District Lincoln Academy Principal Ms. Jana Richie said the schedule had been redesigned to provide common planning and collaboration time for teachers. She said an intervention time was scheduled daily. She said instructional coaching with feedback would be provided for all teachers. She said teachers are beginning the Rtl training.

Forrest City School District Jr. High School Principal Mr. Carlos Fuller said professional development on instructional strategies had been provided to educators. He said the subject area teachers would be meeting monthly to review the effectiveness of the strategies in meeting the needs of the students.

Forrest City School District High School Principal Mr. Osceola Hicks said his framework included a ninth grade academy, an Rtl program, and a very focused staff. He said the school would have a reading interventionist.

Dollarway School District High School Principal Mr. Jeff Spaletta said they are working on the 45-day plan. He said the school was fully staffed. He said the parent involvement committee hosted a parent summit and the staff was conducting parent meetings. He said the staff had been collaborating throughout the summer. He said the leadership team was in place and had been meeting. He said communication, collaboration and parent involvement have been the focus of the work to date.

Dollarway School District Superintendent Ms. Patsy Hughey said the school board had received training. She said Ms. Annie Bryant was leading the parent committee. She said the district was reducing spending on external providers. She said the district was interviewing for the school improvement specialist position.

Dollarway School District Assistant Superintendent Dr. Melvin Bryant said the district would be using READ 180 and MATH 180 as interventions.

School Improvement Director Dr. Richard Wilde said the Dollarway School District had been working throughout the summer. He said the team had been working on the 45-day plan. He said the school board had received training. He said the school board needed to understand their role is to govern by policy. He said Ms. Hughey would be scheduling additional training.

Report-5 Computer Science Report

Computer Science Coordinator Mr. Anthony Owen provided a monthly report on the progress of Governor Asa Hutchinson's Computer Science Initiative. He also shared a timeline of events for upcoming work.

Assistant Commissioner for Educator Effectiveness and Licensure Ms. Ivy Pfeffer addressed issues with licensure for computer science. She said a committee was studying the Praxis exam and would be making recommendations.

Report-6 Learning Services Report

Assistant Commissioner of Learning Services Dr. Debbie Jones said the state received a \$5 million dollar school improvement grant. She said the grant would support a specialist to work with the priority schools in the Little Rock School District. She said the grant would focus on Response to Intervention (RtI).

Dr. Jones said the consolidated school health unit was working to get resources to students.

Guidance and School Counseling Director Ms. Suzanne Knowles said all schools reported in their 2015 Student Services Report that they have an anti-bullying program in place. She said the 2013 Arkansas Youth Risk Behavior Survey indicated 25% of Arkansas students reported being bullied on school property and 17.6% of students reported being electronically bullied during the last 12 months. She said professional development and resources are available to educators and school counselors.

Report-7 Update on Content Standards and Assessment

Assessment Director Ms. Hope Allen said the Assessment office was currently researching K-2 assessment options for 2016-2017. She said the current plan was to issue a Request for Proposal in the fall of 2015, train K2 teachers in the summer of 2016 and implement the new assessment in the 2016-2017 school year. She said the unit was using the work of the task force, led by Dr. Denise Airola as a guide for choosing the new assessment.

Ms. Allen said ACT and ACT Inspire communications and training are being provided to schools. She said accommodations would be available for students. She said the response for educators has been very positive. She said all schools are required to administer the ACT for eleventh graders, unless the parent opts out.

Report-8 Special Education Unit Report on the Arkansas IDEA Part B Determination

Special Education Director Ms. Lisa Haley said the Arkansas IDEA Part B Determination under Section 616(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a results-driven accountability system. The U.S. Department of Education has determined that Arkansas is "Needs Assistance" in implementing the requirements of Part B of the IDEA.

Report-9 Report from Special Committee on Academic Distress - Dollarway School District

Ms. Saviers said the Special Committee on Academic Distress met Friday, July 10, 2015 to hear a progress report on the Dollarway High School in the Dollarway School District. The Dollarway High School is identified in Academic Distress. She said that Ms. Hughey reported that trend data indicated that many students were not meeting proficiency. She said the school had three external providers and that gave the committee pause. She said Dr. Wilde submitted three recommendations. She said the progress would be monitored quarterly by the special committee.

The Board requested to hear the quarterly reports on the State Board action agenda.

Report-10 Arkansas TESS and LEADS Focus Group Report

Assistant Commissioner of Educator Effectiveness and Licensure Ms. Ivy Pfeffer

said the Arkansas's educator evaluation system was originally designed by a 36-member teacher evaluation task force formed in the spring of 2009 for the purpose of researching, evaluating and recommending a framework for summative evaluation. The task force designed the Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS) and Leader Excellence and Development System (LEADS) to include valid measures of professional practice as well as impact on student growth and performance. In 2011, the Arkansas General Assembly introduced and passed legislation defining TESS: a system to support effective teaching and leading in Arkansas schools. TESS and LEADS were piloted in the 2013-14 school year, and implemented statewide in 2014-15 with an online data management platform, BloomBoard.

Ms. Pfeffer said to inform the continuous improvement of TESS and LEADS, the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) invited the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) to conduct focus groups with teachers and administrators across the state in the spring of 2015. The purpose of the focus groups was to learn about TESS and LEADS implementation and gather honest feedback about how the systems could be improved.

Mr. Andy Baxter, Vice President for Educator Effectiveness for the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), said the work focused on feedback regarding the design and implementation of TESS and LEADS. He said SREB conducted focus groups in eight cities all around Arkansas between May 5 and 14, 2015. A total of 197 educators participated in 29 focus groups. Participants included 82 classroom teachers, 14 school-based specialists, 70 school leaders and 31 district-level leaders.

Mr. Baxter said the findings included:

1. TESS clarifies teaching standards.
2. Paperless system good. BloomBoard platform posed challenges in first year.
3. TESS takes a lot of time.
4. TESS requires structural and cultural changes in schools.
5. Concern about consistent implementation.
6. Participants had little knowledge about student growth components.
7. LEADS significantly lags TESS.

Adjournment

All members moved to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 4:01 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Deborah Coffman.



Toyce Newton, Chair



Johnny Key, Commissioner of Education