

**Minutes
State Board of Education Meeting
Friday, January 9, 2015**

The State Board of Education met Friday, January 9, 2015, in the Auditorium of the Department of Education Building. Chairman Sam Ledbetter called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

Present: Sam Ledbetter, Chairman; Toyce Newton, Vice-Chair; Alice Mahony; Dr. Jay Barth; Diane Zook; Mireya Reith; Joe Black; Vicki Saviers; Kim Davis; Jonathan Crossley, Teacher of the Year; and Tony Wood, Commissioner.

Absent: none

Reports

Chair's Report

Ms. Mahony said Dr. Barth, Ms. Reith, and she would be going to the National Association of State Board of Education (NASBE) conference next week. Ms. Reith has been asked to chair the Career Readiness Study Group for NASBE.

Ms. Zook said she visited Fort Smith School District to observe classrooms and was very pleased with the work in the district.

Mr. Crossley said he was selected for a Lowell Milken Unsung Hero Fellowship and would be going to Kansas this spring to meet with other fellows.

Commissioner's Report

Commissioner Wood said five Arkansas districts have been recognized on the 5th Annual Advanced Placement District Honor Roll. He said the Beebe School District, Bryant School District, Paris School District, Pulaski County Special School District, and Woodlawn School District were honored for increasing access to AP course work while simultaneously maintaining or increasing the percentage of students earning scores of 3 or higher on AP exams.

Recognition of 2015 Teacher of the Year - Ouida Newton

Special Projects Manager Mr. John Kaminar said Ms. Ouida Newton has been selected as the 2015 Teacher of the Year. He said Ms. Newton is a math teacher from Poyen High School. Mrs. Newton was also named the Arkansas

Rural Education Teacher of the Year and Arkansas Middle Level Math Teacher of the Year.

Ms. Newton said she was very honored and felt a great responsibility to represent the teachers of Arkansas.

Commissioner Wood said to see the relationship of Ms. Newton with her students was a very special opportunity.

Update on Content Standards and Assessment

Assistant Commissioner Dr. Debbie Jones said Arkansas was selected to be a pilot state for the Virtual Resource Project, whose purpose is designed to bring the collective national resources of the various institutions together to develop innovative, virtual learning tools. She said Ms. Cassandra Barnett, ADE Program Advisor for School Libraries was the state lead on the pilot.

Ms. Barnett said a summit is planned for July 2015 to provide professional development for teachers. She said the goals will take 3-5 years for schools to create content with many partners working to meet the goals. She said this will be an added resource to the current requirement for 8 books per child in the library.

Dr. Jones said Arkansas was in needs assistance in regard to special education district monitoring. She said the Special Education Unit was transitioning to a need-based tiered monitoring system.

Dr. Jones said School Based Health Centers are available in 23 schools. School Based Health Services Director Ms. Jerri Clark said most of the school-based health centers are funded by the School-Based Health Center Initiative Grant. She said oral health and dental programs are not a requirement of school-based health centers.

Dr. Jones said the Arkansas Department of Education received official approval from the United States Department of Education for two waivers. She said middle school students will take only one math assessment. She said middle school students enrolled in Algebra 1, Geometry or Algebra 2 would take the assessment for the course enrolled. Students would not take both the middle school math assessment and the end-of-course assessment. Dr. Jones said Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Algebra II and 11 English Language Arts (ELA)/Literacy are optional for districts to administer in the 2014-2015 school year. High schools are still required to administer a college and career readiness assessment, per Commissioner's Memo LS-15-028.

Grade Inflation Report

Public School Accountability Coordinator Mr. Elbert Harvey said the 2013-2014 Grade Inflation Report was required by ACA 6-15-421. He said the report was based on the results of the 2013-2014 state mandated tests, and included for each high school, the number of students receiving a grade of "B" or above in the corresponding course who did not pass the end-of-course assessment on the first attempt. He said the report also included the name, address, and superintendent of any high school in which more than twenty percent (20%) of the students received a letter grade of "B" or above, but did not pass the end-of-course assessment on the first attempt.

Update on Equitable Access Plan and Proposed Rules for Educator Preparation Programs

Assistant Commissioner for Human Resources, Educator Effectiveness and Licensure Ms. Ivy Pfeffer said recruiting, preparing, developing and supporting great teachers has a direct impact on the learning and success of students. She said research confirmed that the most important school factor in a student's success is a strong teacher and excellent teachers are especially important for our neediest students. She said states have been asked to submit comprehensive educator equity plans and also to improve teacher preparation programs. She said the agency would be receiving technical assistance from Learning Forward and the South Central Comprehensive Center to finalize the Arkansas plan that is due for submission by June 2015 to USDOE.

Ms. Pfeffer said she and/or Educator Licensure Director Ms. Karli Saracini meet monthly with university deans to discuss teacher preparation programs. She said the proposed educator preparation program rules would include more data collection and analysis. She said the education preparation report cards would include student learning outcomes, employment outcomes, survey outcomes and accreditation or state approval. She said the rules are still out for public comment.

Ms. Saracini said currently the state data systems – Arkansas Educator Licensure System (AELS) and Statewide Information System (SIS) – do not link to produce combined teacher preparation and teacher evaluation data. She said the agency was identifying the details that must be considered for a new data collection system. Ms. Pfeffer said it is important to have a system that provides reliable data for decision-making.

ForwARd Initiative

Ms. Kathy Smith, Senior Program Officer of the Walton Family Foundation, introduced Mr. Cory Anderson with the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, Mr. Ernesto Pagano with the Boston Consulting Group, Mr. Denver Peacock with the Peacock Group, and Mr. Jared Henderson working as ForwARd Manager. She said this team is leading the work on the ForwARd initiative to develop a comprehensive plan to strengthen public education in Arkansas with targeted recommendations for academically distressed schools and districts.

Mr. Henderson said the ForwARd partners and Steering Committee have worked with consultants from the Boston Consulting Group on the soon-to-be released report entitled The State of Public Education in Arkansas. He said the steering committee and partners will utilize the report to inform ForwARd's intensive public engagement and strategy development. He said ForwARd expects to complete the comprehensive plan for P-16 education in Arkansas in Spring 2015.

Chairman Ledbetter asked Mr. Kim Davis to join the ForwARd steering committee.

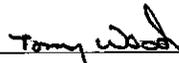
Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

Minutes recorded by Deborah Coffman.



Sam Ledbetter, Chair



Tony Wood, Commissioner of Education