

Minutes
State Board of Education
January 13, 2003

The State Board of Education met on Monday, January 13, 2003 via telephone conference call. Dr. Charles D. Watson sounded the roll at 9:00 a.m. and determined that a quorum was present.

The following members reported present: Shelby Hillman, Chair; JoNell Caldwell, Vice-Chair; Luke Gordy; Robert Hackler; Peggy Jeffries; Dr. Calvin King; and Lewis Thompson, Jr.

No members were absent.

Chair's Report

Ms. Hillman reported attending the recent meeting of the Arkansas School Administrators Association.

Director's Report

Mr. Simon expressed appreciation to the Board for its willingness to meet via telephone conference call. He stated that the short agenda along with obligations of the staff due to the opening of the General Assembly entered into this choice of meeting venue. He reported that Board members would be interested in hearing the Governor's State of the State address on Tuesday as he opens the General Assembly and outlines his vision for education reform in our state.

Consent Agenda

Dr. King requested that Item C-4, Report of Waivers to School Districts for Teachers Teaching out-of-Field for Longer than Thirty (30) Consecutive Days, Act 1623, be moved to the Action Agenda for discussion.

Ms. Hillman requested that a letter be drafted from the Board to Mr. John Herring, who recently retired from the Maintenance Department after 43 years of service to the Department recognizing his service to the Agency, but especially noting his help in securing and reserving parking spaces for Board members. Ms. Hillman remarked that he was always at his post regardless of how cold or how hot the weather may have been. Dr. Watson will draft the letter.

Mr. Hackler moved adoption of the Consent Agenda as amended. Ms. Caldwell seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

- Minutes – Regular Meeting December 9, 2002
- Newly Employed, Promotions and Separations
- Commitment to Principles of Desegregation Settlement Agreement: Report on the Execution of the Implementation Plan
- Approve Payment of Stipends and Expenses

Action Agenda

Review of Open-Enrollment Charter School Application – Focus Centre of Learning, Inc

Scott Smith was recognized to present this item. Mr. Smith noted the presence of Randall Greenway, former coordinator of the Charter School Office, and Dave Floyd, Program Manager for School Plant Services. Mr. Smith stated that previously the Board had considered this proposal, had requested additional information and now must make a final decision as to the approval or denial of the application. He reported that additional information concerning the facility and the lease agreement had been provided as requested.

Mr. Gordy inquired if the staff was satisfied with the response from the developer on the items where clarification was required. Mr. Greenway and Mr. Floyd affirmed.

Mr. Simon reported that he had received a recent e-mail correspondence from Dr. Terry Fiddler, president of the Conway School District. Mr. Simon noted that each Board member was included in the address of the correspondence, but he was not sure that each member had opened the e-mail and read the letter. Mr. Simon read the letter from Dr. Fiddler. (A copy of the letter is attached to the Minutes.)

Dr. King moved approval of the Charter as revised. Ms. Jeffries seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Ms. Hillman extended congratulations to Mr. McClure and suggested that it was in the best interest of the students and the success of the Charter to seek and hire fully licensed teachers. She observed that the students proposed as attending the school are the ones most at risk of failure and most in need of highly qualified teachers.

Mr. Gordy inquired as to any conditions that should be extended concerning facilities. Mr. Greenway noted that any concerns that should be addressed would be included in requesting and receiving zoning approvals from the City of Conway.

Reduction of Board of Directors for Riverside School District

Scott Smith was recognized to present this item. Mr. Smith stated that this issue was submitted from the Riverside School District with all the appropriate documentation. He indicated the only question that might arise related to the fact that the number of board members was an even number. He determined that this would not be a concern and that there were no other questions.

Mr. Hackler moved adoption of the recommendation to reduce the number of board members for the Riverside School District to six (6). Dr. King seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Report of Waivers to School Districts for Teachers Teaching out-of-field for Longer than Thirty (30) Consecutive Days, Act 1623

Dr. King was asked to present his questions regarding this issue. Dr. King expressed concern related to the continued accreditation of a district that may have one or more

waiver requests. Dr. Charity Smith responded that any person that fills a teaching position should have appropriate licensure for that position. If a person is hired for the position and expects to continue in that position, that teacher must have or seek a plan that will lead to licensure or alternate certification. She explained that as long as that teacher is making progress toward licensure according to the established plan, no action would be taken against the accreditation of the district.

Dr. King inquired as to when accreditation of schools might come before the Board and the extent to which all districts were working under the same guidelines for establishing accreditation of the districts. Dr. Smith assured him that the same measures applied to all schools and districts.

Ms. Jeffries moved adoption of the waiver requests as presented. Dr. King seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Other Business

Ms. Hillman appointed JoNell Caldwell and Robert Hackler to a committee to draft procedures for evaluating the Director this year. She directed them to bring a report to the February Board meeting.

Mr. Simon announced the Annual Job Fair to be conducted January 17 and 18 and invited Board members to attend if possible.

Mr. Hackler moved adjournment. Dr. King seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 a.m.

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

Shelby Hillman, Chair

Raymond Simon, Director