

Minutes
State Board of Education
Tuesday, January 15, 2008

The State Board of Education met on Tuesday, January 15, 2008, in the Auditorium of the State Education Building. Randy Lawson, Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

The following Board members were present: Randy Lawson, Vice-Chair; Dr. Tim Knight; Brenda Gullett; Dr. Ben Mays, and Dr. Naccaman Williams. Also attending was Justin Minkel, 2007 Arkansas Teacher of the Year.

The following Board members were absent; Diane Tatum, Chair; Sherry Burrow; Jim Cooper and MaryJane Rebick.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Mr. Lawson noted that the absence of the Chair, Diane Tatum, was due to the recent death of her father. Mr. Lawson extended condolences to Ms. Tatum and her family as a result of this loss.

Mr. Lawson asked that the circulated Minutes for the December 10, 2007, meeting be revised to include a visit he made to the recognition event recently held at Bentonville High School. He also noted others who attended and participated in the event.

Mr. Lawson extended congratulations to Mr. Minkel on the birth of a daughter.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Dr. James provided highlights of the recently published Quality Counts Report in which Arkansas was ranked eighth in the nation with a B+ rating. He stated that the State's highest rating was in the area of teacher quality and the lowest was in student achievement, which was one of the lowest ranked categories across the country. Dr. James suggested that the student achievement ranking was linked to international data and international comparisons as well as national performance.

REPORT

Kimberly Millins provided an update on the design and implementation of the Annual Improvement Gains Model for determining school performance. Ms. Millins shared an updated timeline for establishing the model and outlined steps

for conveying the model to local school and district personnel. She stated that a report would be forthcoming on March 8 that would focus on standard setting.

Dr. Williams asked about timing when schools would receive the performance ratings. Dr. James indicated that schools can access that information now, but the ratings (rankings) will not become part of the accountability system until 2009.

Ms. Gullett asked if states could replicate the data assimilation that produced the D+ rating in student achievement. Dr. James responded that Ed Week does not provide the formula nor the standards used to prepare the rankings but indicated it was a mix of factors including NAEP, state performance data as compared to NAEP results as well as some international comparisons.

CONSENT AGENDA

Regarding the December 10, 2007, Minutes, Mr. Lawson requested adding a reference to his visit to Bentonville High School at the time of the Blue Ribbon award event.

Dr. Mays noted that the discussion of his points related to the Bald Knob report and the point of order were incomplete and he requested more detail be added to the discussion leading up to the point of order.

Ms. Gullett noted that her comments relating to study of the results of the e-STEM Charter Schools were not included, but that she did not intend any action nor make a motion that would be included in the minutes. But she noted that she hopes such a study committee will be formed to identify successes and strategies emerging from these schools that should be replicated for other schools in the state.

Dr. Knight moved approval of the Consent Agenda with the noted amendments to the December 10, 2008, Minutes. Dr. Williams seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

- Minutes – December 10, 2007 (as amended)
- Newly Employed, Promotions and Separations
- Commitment to Principles of Desegregation Settlement Agreement: Report on the Execution of the Implementation Plan
- Reports on Waivers to School Districts for Teachers Teaching Out of Area for Longer than Thirty (30) Consecutive Days, Act 1623 of 2001

ACTION AGENDA

Continuation of Hearing of Open Enrollment Charter School Application: Covenant Keepers College Preparatory Charter School – Little Rock

Dr. Mary Ann Brown was recognized to present this item. Dr. Brown outlined the status of this hearing and noted expectations of the Board for this meeting. Dr. Valerie Tatum was recognized to provide an update and answer questions. Dr. Tatum highlighted the documents presented in the Board materials. Dr. Mays asked if the revised budget documents included in the packet included the costs for utilities and plumbing. Chris Bell an accountant for Covenant Keepers showed him that revisions were included.

Dr. Williams moved approval of Covenant Keepers Charter School for five years. Dr. Knight seconded the motion. The motion passed on a voice vote 4 yes (including the chair) and 1 no (Gullett voted no).

Ms. Gullett explained that her no vote was based on her belief that there was a sufficient number of charter schools in the Little Rock area and one more was not needed. She stated that she recognized that much work had gone into the planning, but the school was not needed.

Progress Report on the Status of Districts Classified in Fiscal Distress for 2007-2008

Dr. Bobbie Davis was recognized to present this report. Dr. Davis noted legislation that established the fiscal distress classification required that the Department provide a progress report to the Board at least each six months. She reported that her staff work on a regular basis with each of the eight schools currently classified in fiscal distress. Dr. Davis' report indicated that each of the eight districts was making progress toward improving the financial status of the district.

Specific comments regarding each of the eight school districts can be found as part of the Court Reporter's transcript in the State Board Office.

Dr. Williams moved to accept the report as presented. Dr. Knight seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Consideration for Public Comment: Rules Governing the Requirements of a Criminal Background Check for the Employment of Personnel in School Districts

Scott Smith was recognized to present this item. Mr. Smith noted that this rule is presented to clarify the procedures for employment of personnel and securing criminal background checks on those employees.

Ms. Gullett moved approval for public comment. Dr. Williams seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Consideration for Public Comment: Proposed Rules Governing Criminal Background Checks for Substitute Teachers

Scott Smith was recognized to present this item. Mr. Smith noted that this rule is submitted to clarify issues related to background checks on substitute teachers, especially those that work in more than one district.

Dr. Williams moved approval for public comment. Ms. Gullett seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Hearing on Revocation of Certified Teacher's License: Deanna Bobo

Courtney Salas-Ford was recognized to present this item. Ms. Salas-Ford reported that Ms. Bobo was contacted about the intent of the Department of Education to recommend permanent revocation of her teacher's license. Ms. Bobo responded to the Department that she would not contest the revocation.

Dr. Mays moved permanent revocation of the teacher's license of Deanna Bobo. Dr. Knight seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Hearing on Revocation of Certified Teacher's License: Jeremy Claude Lewis

Courtney Salas-Ford was recognized to present this item. Ms. Salas-Ford reported that Mr. Lewis was contacted about the intent of the Department of Education to recommend permanent revocation of his teacher's license. Mr. Lewis responded to the Department that he would not contest the revocation.

Dr. Williams moved permanent revocation of the teacher's license of Jeremy Claude Lewis. Dr. Knight seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Hearing on Waiver Request for Certified Teacher's License: Jack Bailey

Courtney Salas-Ford was recognized to present this item. Ms. Salas-Ford reported that Mr. Bailey has responded through his attorney to contact by the Department of Education regarding the Department's intent not to recommend the requested licensure waiver. Ms. Salas-Ford requested that this item be rescheduled until the February Board meeting because schedule of participants could not be arranged to appear at this meeting.

Dr. Mays moved to table consideration of this item until the February Board meeting. Dr. Williams seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Adjournment

Dr. Williams moved Adjournment. Dr. Knight seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

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