

Minutes

State Board of Education
Monday, June 28, 2004

The State Board of Education met via telephone conference call on Monday, June 28, 2004. JoNell Caldwell, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 10:00. Dr. Charles Watson sounded the roll and determined that all members were present.

Board members present: JoNell Caldwell, Chairman; Shelby Hillman, Vice-Chairman; Sherry Burrow; Luke Gordy; Dr. Calvin King; Randy Lawson; MaryJane Rebick; Dianne Tatum; and Dr. Jeanna Westmoreland.

No members were absent.

Consideration of Recommendation from Arkansas Better Chance Program (ABC) Grant Awards

Ms. Caldwell recognized Tonya Russell to present this item. Ms. Russell stated that the purpose of the recommendations was to fund awards to support pre-school programs with new revenue generated during the Second Extraordinary Session of the 2003 General Assembly. She requested that two awards on the recommendation list (Saratoga School District and Delta Special School District) be deferred due to the fact that those districts are slated for annexation to other districts as of July 1, thus the award will have to be funded through the new administrative structure that includes each of those districts.

Ms. Rebick asked if any site visits were planned to schools or other entities proposing to open new programs under these awards. Ms. Russell responded that it was the staff's intent that each site be visited before the final award is made. Ms. Rebick asked for an indication of what such visits would entail. Ms. Russell stated that the agency would rely on a document from North Carolina State University at Chapel Hill, NC for basic site recommendations. She also noted that each site would be required to have a degreed teacher with other staff so that there would be a student to teacher ratio of 10:1.

Ms. Burrow inquired about schools that met the criteria for funding, but did not submit an application or that the application submitted was not of the quality to meet the funding criteria. Ms. Russell responded that not all eligible schools submitted a proposal and some were not fundable. She noted that each site would have the opportunity to have a technical assistance visit with assistance in writing a successful proposal. She also noted that the staff would be preparing notices to districts that failed to submit a proposal and cite the legislation stating the intent for all schools designated as Title I School Improvement should provide a pre-school program.

Ms. Burrow asked about the status of the Clarendon application. Ms. Russell stated that the Clarendon District currently has a program in place and the request for that district is to add additional children.

Ms. Tatum asked if any of the children who reside within a district, which did not submit an application were being served by another entity such as a regional service cooperative. Ms. Russell replied yes. She also noted that in such cases if the needs of the children were being met, the school/school district would not have to prepare another proposal.

Mr. Gordy asked how many of the proposals were from first-time recipients. Ms. Russell stated that 11 out of 50 had not participated in the pre-school programs of ABC before.

Ms. Russell also stated that there may be a need to come back to the Board at a later time with additional recommendations after technical assistance visits are complete and eligible schools revise or submit new proposals.

Ms. Hillman moved approval of the listed recommendations as amended. Ms. Rebick seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Consideration of Final Approval for Rules Governing Administrative Consolidation or Annexation of Public Schools in Arkansas (Act 60 of the Second Extraordinary Session of 2003)

Scott Smith stated that two actions are needed: first to continue the emergency Rules until final Rules are adopted and secondly to adopt final Rules. Mr. Smith read a statement documenting the need for extending the emergency Rules.

Mr. Lawson moved extending the emergency rules through July 8, 2004, or until permanent Rules become effective. Ms. Tatum seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Mr. Lawson moved adoption of the permanent Rules as submitted with deletion of any reference to the "emergency" clause. Ms. Tatum seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Consideration of Final Approval of Administrative Annexation of the McNeil School District to Stephens School District

Scott Smith stated that this annexation was previously approved conditionally waiting sanction from Federal court. He stated that Judge Harry Barnes of El Dorado ruled that the proposed annexation did not interfere with desegregation efforts and that the annexation could continue as conditionally approved. Ms. Tatum moved adoption of the proposed administrative annexation removing the

conditional approval. Dr. Westmoreland seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Board members again expressed appreciation to Luke Gordy for his years of service and leadership to the Board.

Mr. Gordy moved adjournment. Ms. Hillman seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 10:20 a.m.

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

Director, Dr. Kenneth James

Chair, JoNell Caldwell