

Minutes
State Board of Education
Monday, March 8, 2004

The State Board of Education met on Monday, March 8, 2004, in the Auditorium of the State Education Building. JoNell Caldwell, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

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

No Board members were absent.

Ms. Caldwell stated that she was pleased to open the meeting by recognizing teachers who have received awards for excellence from the Milken Family Foundation. She recognized Janinne Riggs, coordinator of the Milken Awards program for Arkansas, who reviewed the Foundation's criteria for selection of the awardees. Ms. Riggs also welcomed previous recipients of the award who were present. Ms. Caldwell presented trophies to Kristy Kidd, Dunbar Magnet School, Little Rock Public Schools and Melissa Miller, Farmington School District. She also noted that these recipients would be further honored at a national convocation in Washington, DC, later this year at which time they will receive cash awards in the amount of \$25,000 each.

Interim Director's Report

Mr. Courtway reminded Board members that April 1, 2004, is the deadline for the State to receive proposals from the 57 school districts with fewer than 350 students, which are required to administratively consolidate or annex under the provisions of Act 60 of 2003 2nd Extraordinary Session of the Arkansas 84th General Assembly. He noted that the Board has major responsibility for reviewing these petitions. He affirmed that these are unprecedented times for education in Arkansas and for the extraordinary responsibility placed on the Board by this legislation.

Consent Agenda

Ms. Shelby Hillman moved that minutes from three special Board meetings (February 27, 2004, March 1, 2004 and March 4, 2004) be added to the consent agenda for consideration. Dr. Westmoreland seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Ms. Hillman moved approval of the Consent Agenda as amended. Mr. Gordy seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

- Minutes – February 9, 2004

- Minutes – February 27, 2004
- Minutes – March 1, 2004
- Minutes – March 4, 2004
- Commitment to Principles of Desegregation Settlement Agreement: Report on the Execution of the Implementation Plan
- Newly Employed, Promotions and Separations

Action Agenda

Act 1738 of 2003 Exemptions

Patricia Martin was recognized to present this item. Ms. Martin stated that one school district proposal was presented for consideration. She reported that the proposal had been reviewed by staff and deemed to meet all criteria for approval. Ms. Rebick moved approval of the proposal as presented. Ms. Hillman 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 of 2001.

Dr. Charity Smith was recognized to present this item. Dr. Smith highlighted the number of proposed waiver requests and stated that none were from districts in academic or fiscal distress. Ms. Rebick asked how, or if, school districts know of highly qualified teachers who might be available to fill those positions. Dr. Smith noted that currently the only way the Department knows if a highly qualified teacher has been employed is through on-site monitoring or review of accreditation reports, which will not be completed until May.

Ms. Hillman observed that during school year 2002-2003, it was determined that a large number of waivers were requested because of the long time it took to complete the certification process. She noted that the persons for whom the waiver requests were made met the qualifications for licensure, but the final documents had not been delivered. She asked if this continued to be a problem area for the current school year. Dr. Smith responded that great progress had been made in the Department's ability to issue licenses, the backlog of work has been cleared, and currently the Department responds to licensure requests within ten days.

Ms. Rebick moved approval of the waiver requests as proposed. Mr. Gordy seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

A complete transcript of deliberation pursuant to Action Items A – 3 through A – 6 was prepared by a court reporter. The reader may refer to that text, which is available upon request from the State Board of Education liaison office. These Minutes contain only the actions taken by the Board on these issues.

Renewal Application: Open Enrollment Charter School : Benton County School for the Arts

Dr. King moved to table consideration of the continuation application until the Charter School submits additional documentation concerning audit reports, loans secured locally, and revision of achievement goals consistent with No Child Left Behind and state performance standards. Ms. Tatum seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Renewal Application: Open Enrollment Charter School: Academics + (Maumelle)

Dr. King moved to table consideration of the continuation application until the Charter School submits additional documentation concerning audit reports, loans secured locally, and revision of achievement goals consistent with No Child Left Behind and state performance standards. Ms. Tatum seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Department staff was directed to work with these schools to update the proposal consistent with the motion and have the revisions prepared and submitted prior to Friday, March 12, 2004.

Renewal Application: Conversion Charter School – Blytheville Charter School and Alternative Learning Center

Ms. Hillman moved to extend this Charter for one year. Mr. Lawson seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Conversion Charter School Applications

Mr. Gordy moved that each of these applications be considered independently. Ms. Hillman seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Cabot School District

Mr. Gordy moved that Cabot School District Conversion Charter School proposal be approved. Ms. Hillman seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Emmet School District

Mr. Gordy moved to deny the Emmet School District Conversion Charter School proposal. Ms. Hillman seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Vilonia School District

Mr. Gordy moved approval of the Vilonia School District Conversion Charter School proposal. Dr. King seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Teaching License – James Smith

Ms. Rebick moved permanent revocation of the license. Ms. Tatum seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Teaching License – Gregory Seawood

Ms. Rebick moved the request for renewal not be granted and that Mr. Seawood never be granted an Arkansas teaching license. Mr. Lawson seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Teaching License – Leon Harris, Jr.

Mr. Gordy moved to permanently revoke the license. Mr. Lawson seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Other Business

Ms. Caldwell named the Nominating Committee and requested that they prepare a slate of officers for the 2004-2005 fiscal year and that the Committee make its initial report at the May meeting. Members of the committee are: Shelby Hillman, Chair; Diane Tatum; and Dr. Jeanna Westmoreland.

Ms. Rebick informed the Board that the U.S. Department of Education is convening a national symposium on technology and accountability as related to No Child Left Behind in St. Louis on March 10-12, 2004. She indicated her desire to attend that conference and requested she be designated as a representative of the Board and be reimbursed for expenses. Ms. Caldwell reminded Board members that previous action by the Board restricted travel except when it was approved by Board action. Mr. Lawson moved that MaryJane Rebick be designated to represent the Board at the St Louis conference. Mr. Gordy seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Ms. Caldwell requested that staff prepare a policy statement that could be considered by the Board at its April meeting that would establish guidelines for approval of official travel by the Board.

Ms. Hillman moved adjournment. Dr. Westmoreland seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

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

Tom Courtway, Interim Director

JoNell Caldwell, Chair