

Minutes
State Board of Education
Telephone Conference Call Session
Tuesday, July 27, 2004

The State Board of Education met via telephone conference call on Tuesday, July 27, 2004. Dr. Charles Watson sounded the roll and determined that a quorum was present. JoNell Caldwell, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

The following Board members were present: JoNell Caldwell, Chairman; Dr. Jeanna Westmoreland, Vice-Chairman; Sherry Burrow; Shelby Hillman; Dr. Calvin King; MaryJane Rebick; Dianne Tatum; and Dr. Naccaman Williams.

The following Board member was absent: Randy Lawson.

Ms. Caldwell welcomed Dr. Naccaman Williams to the Board and stated that Board members look forward to the August meeting to welcome him in person.

Ms. Caldwell recognized Tonya Russell to present the report from the Arkansas Better Chance Program. Ms. Russell stated that the recommendations represent proposals from schools and other entities designed to provide pre-school programs for children primarily from schools/communities in which the school has been designated in need of improvement. Additionally, Cathy Stegall reported that minor revisions were made to materials distributed to the Board.

Ms. Russell described the three categories of funding included on the report.

Ms. Rebick inquired about the deadline for receiving proposals from "high priority" schools. Ms. Russell responded that proposals were received from a large percentage of the "high priority" districts. She noted that some of the proposals were a direct result of technical assistance provided to those districts and that assistance would continue until every eligible entity has received the needed technical assistance to assure a quality proposal.

Ms. Rebick asked when approved entities would receive funding. Ms. Russell responded that the full staff has as its goal to visit each funded site within the week and that visits would be completed before funding is issued. She indicated that a primary concern is a quality facility that is safe and appropriate for young children. She further indicated that funding should be available so that these pre-school programs can begin at the same time as the regular school year.

Ms. Burrow asked about sites that were identified as not needing a program. Ms. Stegall responded that some sites currently have quality pre-school programs for children who are eligible to participate in this program. She avowed that in those cases no additional funding is necessary.

Ms. Hillman asked about the educational requirements for staff that provide instruction in these programs. Ms. Russell responded that the lead teacher in the program is expected to have licensure as a pre-K teacher; however, the program would work with those having K-6 licensure. She further stated that additional teachers in the program should have an associate degree or preparation in the child development credential program.

Dr. Williams inquired if the application process was an annual process. Ms. Stegall responded yes, that each program is expected to apply for renewal on an annual basis and often there are additional funds for new programs. She noted that the ABC staff appears on the Board agenda at least once a year to consider renewals and new applications.

Dr. Williams also inquired about the criteria that established the schools as high needs schools. Ms. Stegall noted that that information was provided by the Department and it is based on the Benchmark exams. Ms. Russell added that other assessment strategies such as kindergarten screening are also considered.

Ms. Rebick asked about the monitoring of the programs. Ms. Russell affirmed that the accountability for results is very high and critical to the success of this program. She also noted that training will be set up to implement accountability measures and to establish tracking of student's achievement in school.

Ms. Tatum moved that the suggested amendments be added to the recommended list. Ms. Burrow seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

Dr. Westmoreland moved approval of the total recommended list including amendments. Ms. Hillman seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

Ms. Tatum 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.

Director, Dr. Kenneth James

Chair, JoNell Caldwell