

**Minutes**  
**State Board of Education**  
**Thursday, December 10, 2020**

The Arkansas State Board of Education (State Board) met Thursday, December 10, 2020, in the ADE Auditorium with limited capacity in keeping with the Governor's directive and the guidance from the Arkansas Department of Health. Chair Ms. Charisse Cooksey called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m. Ms. Cooksey led a moment of silence.

Present: Ms. Charisse Cooksey, Chair; Dr. Sarah Moore; Dr. Fitz Hill; Ms. Kathy McFetridge (via Zoom); Ms. Ouida Newton; Mr. Steve Sutton; Ms. Susan Chambers (via Zoom); Ms. Adrienne Woods; Mr. Joel Lookadoo, 2020 Arkansas Teacher of the Year; and Mr. Johnny Key, Secretary

Absent: None

**Recognitions**

**Susanna Post**, Arkansas Teacher of the Year 2021 (presenters: Mr. Joel Lookadoo and Ms. Brandy Howell, DESE)

**Dr. Neil Oatsvall**, 2020 Gilder Lehrman American History Teacher of the Year Award (presenters: Ms. Rachel Horn and Ms. Melissa Starkey, DESE)

**Changes to Agenda**

Ms. Cooksey said that there had been a request from DESE Attorney Taylor Dugan to add consideration of licensure action for David Parkman to the agenda. Mr. Sutton, seconded by Ms. Woods, made a motion to add the consideration of licensure action to the agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

**Consent Agenda**

Presenter: Charisse Cooksey, SBE Chair

Ms. Newton moved, seconded by Dr. Moore, to approve the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously. Items included in the consent agenda are as follows:

1. Minutes
2. Newly Employed, Promotions and Separations
3. Review of Loan and Bond Applications
4. Consideration of Report on Waivers to School Districts for Teachers Teaching Out of Area for Longer than Thirty (30) Days, Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-309
5. Consideration of the Voluntary Consent to Surrender License for Case # 20-144 Russell Langley
6. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case # 21-025-Teresa Lawrence

7. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case # 21-022 Jeffrey Rainey
8. Community Service Learning Partner Site Applications

## **Action Agenda A**

### **A-1 Nominations for SBE Vice Chair**

Presenter: Charisse Cooksey, SBE Chair

Ms. Cooksey noted Mr. Brett Williamson's resignation from the State Board of Education. Both she and Secretary Key expressed gratitude for his service. Ms. Cooksey then opened the floor for nominations for vice chair. Dr. Moore, seconded by Dr. Fitz Hill, moved to nominate Ouida Newton. There were no other nominations. The motion passed unanimously.

### **A-2 Consideration of 1240 Waiver Request-Atkins School District**

Presenter: Tracy Webb, Coordinator of Monitoring and Systems Support

Description: Atkins School District is requesting a waiver of superintendent licensure and the required 178 instructional days for the 2020-2021 school year.

State Board members offered condolences to the Atkins School District and community for the loss of their superintendent to Covid. Ms. Newton moved, seconded by Mr. Sutton, to grant both waivers. The motion passed unanimously.

### **A-3 Consideration of 1240 Waiver Request Extension-Mountain Pine School District**

Presenter: Tracy Webb, Coordinator of Monitoring and Systems Support

The Mountain Pine School District is requesting an extension of the waiver for high school Library Media Specialist through the end of the 2020-2021 school year. The current waiver expires on March 8, 2021. A current staff member is working on certification and will complete the program prior to July 1, 2021.

State Board members asked clarifying questions. Ms. McFetridge moved, seconded by Dr. Moore, to approve the waiver extension. The motion passed unanimously.

### **A-4 State Board Meeting Dates for 2021-2022**

Presenter: Charisse Cooksey, SBE Chair

Dr. Hill moved, seconded by Dr. Moore, to approve the meeting dates for 2021-2022. The motion passed unanimously.

### **A-5 Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board to Waive the Application Fee for First-time Five-Year Standard Educator's License (including by reciprocity)**

Presenter: Dr. Ivy Pfeffer, Deputy Commissioner

Description: It is the recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board that the \$75 application fee for First-time Five-Year Standard Educator's License (including by reciprocity) be waived, effective immediately, until April 1, 2021.

State Board members asked clarifying questions. Ms. Woods moved, seconded by Mr. Sutton, to approve the recommendation. The motion passed unanimously.

### **A-6 Computer Science and Computing Initiative Update and Consideration of the Adoption of a Resolution of Commitment to Elementary and Secondary Computer Science Education**

Presenter: Anthony Owen, State Director of Computer Science

Description: The Arkansas Department of Education Office of Computer Science will provide an update on the Arkansas Computer Science and Computing Initiative including a presentation on 2020-2021 school year enrollment numbers.

In addition, the Arkansas Department of Education Office of Computer Science is requesting that the State Board of Education adopt a resolution Expressing their Commitment to Elementary and Secondary Computer Science Education. This resolution, #CSResolution, is the result of a national effort that Mr. Owen has been partnering with other states and national leaders to develop. The Office of Computer Science also asks the State Board to encourage all districts and schools in Arkansas to adopt the resolution.

State Board members asked clarifying questions. Dr. Moore moved, seconded by Dr. Hill, to adopt the resolution. The motion passed unanimously.

### **A-7 Consideration of the Adoption of the Arkansas Computer Science and Computing Standards and Courses for High School**

Presenter: Anthony Owen, State Director of Computer Science

Description: The Arkansas Computer Science and Computing Initiative standards for high school courses are designed to provide understanding of concepts in computer science that are necessary for students to function in an ever-changing technological world. Through these standards, students will explore, apply, and move toward mastery in skills and concepts related to Computational Thinking and Problem Solving; Data, Information, and Security; Algorithms and Programs; Computers and Communications; and Professionalism and Impacts of Computing. These standards help students learn to accomplish tasks and solve problems independently and collaboratively. These standards give students the tools and skills needed to be successful in college and careers including computer science, computing, and other fields.

State developed pathways within the Arkansas Computer Science and Computing Initiative all begin with common year-one standards which allow for consistency across the state and all

schools. These common standards address the basic knowledge and skills needed for any student entering a technology-based field.

Standards and courses under consideration for adoption include:

- Computer Science and Computing Practices
- High School Computer Engineering
- High School Cybersecurity
- High School Data Science
- High School Game Development and Design
- High School Mobile Application Development
- High School Networking
- High School Programming
- High School Robotics
- High School Independent Study
- High School Internship

The course standards have been grouped into one-credit (typically yearly) standards to afford the classroom educator additional flexibility in their curriculum choices; however, the course codes remain based on one-half credit (typically semester). Each state-developed pathway will have three credits (six pathway specific course codes) worth of Computer Science Flex Credit (465XXX) course codes.

Implementation of the Arkansas Computer Science Standards for High School Computer Science and Computing Courses begins during the 2021-2022 school year.

ADE is requesting that the Arkansas State Board of Education (SBE) not place any prerequisites on the Arkansas Computer Science and Computing Initiative high school courses, but allows for schools to place students in any of the courses based on ability and desire. The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) recommends that districts develop and formally adopt a written policy outlining placement protocols. Evaluation tools and placement criteria will be the responsibility of the local districts.

It is the recommendation of ADE that the SBE and ADE authorize schools to enroll students across levels in the same sections of the master schedule (a.k.a. stacking) as long as the number of students does not exceed Standards of Accreditation maximums and/or ratios and the school can reasonably assure a high-quality educational experience for all students within that section.

ADE is specifically requesting that the SBE adopt all portions of the documents except the teacher clarification notes. The teacher clarification notes follow the standard[s] to which they apply and are indicated by the word "NOTE."

State Board members asked clarifying questions. Ms. Newton moved, seconded by Ms. Chambers, to adopt the Arkansas Computer Science Standards and Courses for High School. The motion passed unanimously. Ms. Chambers moved to allow technical and grammatical changes to the standards, it was seconded by Ms. Newton. The motion passed unanimously.

## **A-8 Consideration of the Adoption of the Arkansas Computer Science and Computing Standards and Courses for Grades K-8 and Coding Block for Grades 7 and 8**

Presenter: Anthony Owen, State Director of Computer Science

Description: K-8 Embedded Standards

The Arkansas Computer Science and Computing Standards for Grades K-8 provide an introduction to computing concepts which are to be embedded across content areas and are intended to support existing classroom learning activities. The standards support critical thinking through the essential skills of computational thinking and algorithmic problem solving. The course strands, content clusters, and content standards are to be taught in an integrated manner, not in isolation. Integration of basic computer science skills and knowledge through practical classroom experiences promote connections to all subject areas and to the real world. When appropriate, educators should determine and implement the most beneficial student collaboration strategies (e.g., pairs, small group, whole group) for optimal learning. Formal assessment of these standards is not required.

### **Coding Block Standards**

The Coding Block for Grades 7 or 8 is designed to be taught during a standalone block of time for a minimum of four continuous weeks. Students will examine how to formulate algorithms in addition to creating, analyzing, testing, and debugging computer programs in order to solve real-world problems. Students are required to use a text-based programming language to accomplish these tasks. These standards are not to be embedded in activities spread out over multiple courses, but within a dedicated course section.

Schools are to ensure that every student receives instruction necessary to meet these standards in either their 7th or 8th grade year. Schools may choose the implementation mechanism that works best for their school and students. Options for implementation include, but are not limited to:

- The standards within this block taught as a module within any course or specified period of time during the student's 7th or 8th grade year
- The standards within this block taught as part of a high school level programming course for which the school has received approval to offer to 7th or 8th graders

The teacher of record for the Coding Block for Grades 7 or 8 must hold an Arkansas Educator's License in any content area, which allows them to instruct students of the grade level who are taking the block. Though the licensure is open to any content area, it is the responsibility of the school and teacher of record to ensure that the individual providing the instruction has the requisite knowledge needed to teach the block.

Implementation of the Arkansas Computer Science and Computing Standards for Grades K-8 and Coding Block for Grades 7 and 8 begins during the 2021-2022 school year.

Standards under consideration for adoption include:

- Computer Science and Computing Practices

- Arkansas Computer Science and Computing K-4 Standards
- Arkansas Computer Science and Computing 5-8 Standards
- Coding Block for Grades 7 or 8

ADE is specifically requesting that the SBE adopt all portions of the documents except the teacher clarification notes. The teacher clarification notes follow the standard[s] to which they apply and are indicated by the word "NOTE."

State Board members asked clarifying questions. Ms. McFetridge moved, seconded by Ms. Woods, to approve standards for K-8. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Sutton moved, seconded by Ms. Woods, to allow technical and grammatical changes to the standards. The motion passed unanimously.

### **A-9 Consideration of Educator Licensure Waiver Request-David Parkman**

Presenter: Taylor Dugan, DESE Attorney

Description: The Division sent notice to Educator Parkman that he was disqualified from holding a teaching license for a disqualifying offense. Mr. Parkman requested a waiver of the disqualifying offense.

State Board members asked clarifying questions. Ms. Woods moved, seconded by Dr. Hill, to approve the waiver. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Cooksey adjourned the meeting until 1:00 p.m.

## **Action Agenda B**

### **B-1 Arkansas Leadership Academy RFP recommendations**

Presenter: Dr. Ivy Pfeffer, Deputy Commissioner

Dr. Pfeffer noted that in a previous meeting the Board approved a proposal for an RFP to allow for participants to apply to be an operator for the Arkansas Leadership Academy. She introduced Dr. Moore, chair of the RFP Subcommittee. Dr. Moore discussed the application and review process. She enumerated the reasons for the subcommittee's recommendation to move forward with Arkansas Public School Resource Center (APSRC). Carrie White and Scott Smith from APSRC answered clarifying questions from State Board members.

Dr. Moore moved, seconded by Dr. Hill, to move forward with the RFP recommendation of the Arkansas Public School Resource Center. The motion passed unanimously.

### **B-2. Consideration of State Board Action under the Arkansas Educational Support and Accountability Act, Ark. Code Ann. § 6-15-2901 et seq.: Dollarway School District**

Presenter: Lori Freno, General Counsel

Description: Under the AESAA, if a school district is classified by the State Board as being in need of Level 5 -- Intensive support and is placed under State authority, and has not demonstrated to the State Board and the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education that

it has met the criteria to exit Level 5 -- Intensive support within five (5) years of the assumption of authority, the State Board shall annex, consolidate, or reconstitute the school district. Ark. Code Ann. 6-15-2917(c)(1). On December 10, 2015, the State Board classified the Dollarway School District and assumed authority over the District. The State Board is to consider whether the District met the criteria to exit Level 5 -- Intensive support, and if not, whether the District should be annexed, consolidated, or reconstituted.

Ms. Freno summarized previous Board actions regarding Dollarway School District, as well as the Board's statutory requirement to consider whether the Dollarway School District has met the criteria to exit Level Five Intensive Support. If the Board does not believe the exit criteria have been met it must decide whether the district will be annexed, consolidated, or reconstituted.

Secretary Key addressed the Board. He gave background on the reasons, both fiscal and academic, for state takeover of Dollarway five years ago. He praised the work that has been done by the District, community, and DESE since then and noted the District shows improvement in multiple areas. He stated that the District also faces significant challenges. He referenced the presentations and reports that have been given to the Board over the last few months and stated that the District is not yet at a sustainable level of implementation of the elements necessary for long-term student success. He recommended annexation of the Dollarway School District into the Pine Bluff School District, effective July 1, 2021. He assured members that if they approve this action, the Arkansas Department of Education will provide ongoing dedicated support for the success of the District.

Ms. Cooksey noted that there were public comments from the Dollarway community. Ms. Newton moved, seconded by Dr. Moore, to accept public comments from people not signed up in advance. The motion passed unanimously. The following people made public comments:

- Dr. Ryan Watley, CEO of Go Forward Pine Bluff
- Martavius Proctor, graduate of Dollarway School District
- Joni Alexander, Pine Bluff City Council Member

Ms. Cooksey noted that some public comments had come in via email. She thanked all for their comments and advocacy.

Board members discussed the options and asked clarifying questions. Ms. Newton, seconded by Mr. Sutton, made the following motion:

I move that, effective July 1, 2021, the Dollarway School District will be annexed to the Pine Bluff School District and the Dollarway School District will be dissolved, because the conditions for annexation have been met, including the annexation is in the best interest of the Dollarway School District based upon the District's failure to meet the requirements to exit Level 5 Intensive Support pursuant to the Arkansas Educational Support and Accountability Act. The annexation is in the best interest of the Dollarway School District based upon the District's failure to meet fiscal distress requirements pursuant to the Arkansas Fiscal Assessment and Accountability Program. And the annexation will not hamper, delay, or in any way negatively affect the desegregation efforts of a school district or districts in the state of Arkansas.

Additionally, the name of the receiving district will remain the Pine Bluff School District.

The district will have one superintendent.

The closure of any school within the district boundary of either the affected Dollarway School District or receiving Pine Bluff School District must be approved by this board for the duration of the time that the Pine Bluff School District remains under State authority.

And the Division will create a transition committee with personnel from both the receiving Pine Bluff School District and affected Dollarway School District that will provide feedback and assist in the communication efforts to the District employees and the community.

A roll call vote was conducted and the motion passed unanimously.

**New Business**

There were no new business items.

**Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

**Adjournment**

Ms. Cooksey adjourned the meeting at 2:26 p.m.

*Meeting minutes recorded by Brittany Kincaid*

X \_\_\_\_\_  
Ms. Charisse Dean (Cooksey)  
Chair

X \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Johnny Key  
Secretary