

State Board News April 8-9, 2014

Nine members Board, John Bacon absent

Presentation by Coalition for Innovation Districts

Co-Chairs of the Innovative Districts Randy Watson, Superintendent of McPherson USD 418, and Beverly Mortimer, Superintendent of Concordia USD 333, spoke about the collaborations they hope to achieve through the initiative. Their districts represent the first two innovative districts selected by Governor Brownback and Chairpersons of the House and Senate Education committees through the new Innovative Districts designation. Dr. Watson asked the Board to consider approval of the applications and invited a member of the Board of Education to and KSDE to attend coalition meetings. State Board Chairman Jana Shaver directed Kansas State Department of Education staff to review the Innovative District applications and for the Board Attorney to present an opinion of the constitutionality of the statues requested exemption. This information will be provided in advance of the Board action in May.

Update on 2014 Assessments

KSDE Standards Director Scott Smith and Deputy Commissioner Brad Neuenswander reported on the status of the state assessments at the half-half point of the testing period. Dr. Smith discussed the unanticipated outside attacks on March 27 and April 1. Outside surges adversely affected the testing system causing delays and impaired function, but it was emphasized that no student data was ever in jeopardy. Work will be ongoing to increase protection of the system, communication with parents and educators, and resolve other testing engine challenges. Time for completing tests was extended to May 16.

Legislative Matters

Deputy Commissioner Dale Dennis provided details of the Senate substitute for House Bill 2506, legislation on school financing. He highlighted proposed reductions/adjustments to district's funding in supplemental general state aide and capital outlay state aid.

Amendments to Teacher Licensure Regulations

Susan Helbert, Assistant Director of Teacher Licensure and Accreditation, reviewed proposed amendments to teacher licensure regulations as recommended by the Professional Standards Board and the Regulations Committee. Three affected areas were proposed: special education, career and technical education, and out-of-state applicants. Changes also proposed to formalize Board policy on mentoring into regulation. The Board moved as an action item to determine whether or not to continue the adoption process by submitting the proposed regulations to the Department of Administration and Attorney General for their review.

Negotiated Agreement for Kansas School for the Deaf

Motion carried 8-0-1 with board members John Bacon absent and Steve Roberts abstaining. The Agreement is effective July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015.

Commissioner's Resignation Accepted

Motion carried 9-0 with Mr. Bacon absent.

Commissioner Diane DeBacker announced that she would be serving as Advisor to the Director General of the Abu Dhabi Education Council in Abu Dhabi located on the Persian Gulf. Brad Neuenswander was appointed Interim Commissioner of Education with duties to begin May 14, 2014. The Board appointed a three-person subcommittee of Board members to study a process for a Commissioner search and to report back to the Board. Board members Janet Waugh and Kathy Busch will join Chairman Shaver on the subcommittee.

The next Kansas State Board of Education meeting is scheduled for May 13-14, 2014, meeting in part at the Brown vs. Board of Education National Historic Site in commemoration of the 60th Anniversary.