

Minutes
State Board of Education Special Session
Monday, June 11, 2007

The Arizona State Board of Education held a Special Session at the AmeriSchools Academy, 1333 West Camelback Road, Phoenix, Arizona. The meeting was called to order at 10:05AM.

Members Present

Mr. Jesse Ary
Dr. Vicki Balentine
Ms. Martha Harmon
Superintendent Tom Horne
Mr. Larry Lucero
Ms. Anita Mendoza
Mr. Jacob Moore
Dr. Karen Nicodemus
Ms. Cecilia Owen

Members Absent

Dr. John Haeger
Ms. Joanne Kramer

1. GENERAL SESSION

Dr. Nicodemus thanked members for making time for another Special Session and Ms. Mendoza for providing the facilities for today's meeting.

- A. Presentation and discussion regarding State Board of Education vision and mission statements.

Dr. Nicodemus asked members to convey thoughts/suggestions regarding the Vision/Mission draft provided and that at a future date this be discussed for possible action/adoption.

- B. Presentation, discussion and possible action relating to Arizona's minimum course of study and competency requirements for graduation from high school. Discussion may include, but is not limited to, implementation strategies and possible modifications to Arizona Administrative Code R7-2-302.

Dr. Nicodemus introduced this item stating that the purpose of the day is to initiate the discussion around high school graduation requirements and look at graduation drop-out rates. She noted the importance of looking at these topics objectively and that the compelling evidence is that most states are looking at this issue. She added that there is validity to the discussion of the haves and have-nots and to the debate of looking at this nationally as well as internationally. Dr. Nicodemus stated that today's purpose is to start by saying what is the right thing to do for our students in preparing them for the 21st century knowing that a lot of work is needed to determine how best to get there and how that may be achieved. She added that at the Achieve Conference, it was said that sometimes it feels like we are in a relay race as we hand off the baton to the next entity, but that the work of ADE, SBE, P-20, etc., is about aligning the systems to assist students in moving through the education process.

Ms. JoAnne Hilde facilitated the discussion noting that many schools look at 7-12 as high school with 4 or 3 years of math. Ms. Hilde provided a discussion outline, included in the materials packet, and added that members are urged to voice how they feel on these particular subjects and that this may also guide future meetings/discussions/decisions. Ms. Hilde added that today's exercise will also help members develop a system for decision making.

Ms. Hilde noted that questions to be considered in today's discussion include:

- Do we need to look at rethinking the curriculum
- Do we need to look at those standards

- Do we need to look at them now or in the system of how they will be reviewed

Ms. Hilde added that members need to feel free to state how they stand on individual issues and classes.

Superintendent Horne commented that statistics on middle school students show that 90% want to go to college but only 20% graduate from college and added that information will be provided for SBE members in this regard. He added that funding was also requested from Legislature to make online education more available but was not granted this year.

Mr. Lucero stated that measurement is driven toward the institution; school is held more accountable than the individual. He added that in the past there seemed to be individual learning plans but that focus seems to have waned. Mr. Ary noted that an aspect of NCLB should be to work with individual students so they can succeed. Ms. Mendoza remarked on the need to make sure the ground work is established that will support each student.

Dr. Nicodemus noted that graduation requirements and graduation rates equal a dual agenda

- State establishes graduation rate and a plan to get there
- Personal learning plans are one of the tools that will close the gap

Dr. Balentine noted that the SBE needs to consider plans that may be implemented differentially throughout the state and a parent sign-off component could be helpful in assuring student success.

Alignment members in agreement

- SBE and ABOR leadership should discuss
 - Partner agreements
 - Expectation to be able to do college level work and career preparation
 - Math, English
 - All entities meet jointly
- Academic subject areas to review/change
 - Social Studies – add ½ year economics; moves to 3 years of Social Studies requirement
 - SBE received letter in February 2004 signed by high school teachers on task force requesting addition of economics as statewide requirement
 - June '05 and '06 no action taken by SBE
 - Basically has been discussed for close to three years
 - Not aware of significant objections
 - Dr. Balentine stated that she supports inclusion of economics in Social Studies increase but that the impact on schools will enter into the discussion

Ms. Hilde urged members to build a “box” for planning and implementation of the whole package rather than making decisions a piece at a time. She noted that the SBE will need to decide whether implementation will be done on a one-time basis or in staggered increments.

Mr. Moore noted that the total number of credits be part of the decision and whether that may mean adding or subtracting from any particular subject/course. Dr. Nicodemus suggested that members can indicate which subjects/courses they may want to discuss further before a final decision is made.

Ms. Owen arrived at 10:30AM during the previous discussions.

Matrix of members' current opinions:

	English 4	Social Studies 2.5	Math 2	Science 2	Fine Arts/CTE 1	World Language	Electives 8.5
Dr. Balentine	4	3 including economics	4 with default concept	3	1	2	Senior year integration options
Ms. Mendoza	4	3 * with integration of economics	4	3	2	2	With integration options
Mr. Ary	4+ re-visit content of English standards	3	4	3	2	2+	Default or requirement terminology
Ms. Harmon	4	3 but economics could be part of math	4 with menu for students to choose from but mandatory in some way	3		2	
Ms. Owen	4	3	4	3	1	1	
Mr. Moore	4	3+ including economics	4	3	open	2	(want to stay with mandatory rigorous requirements to maintain standards)
Mr. Lucero	4	3 add economics but re-think mix of components as world history	4	3		2	(key is in math and science from business point of view)

Dr. Nicodemus	4	3		3	mandatory with bridges where there could be a default state	2	students should be able to demonstrate basic outcomes and then pursue multiple pathways
Mr. Horne	4	3	4	3	2	2	

Mr. Horne summarized that the default is to help those students who may have dropped out, where they can take the rigorous curriculum and then opt out if they have met the minimum requirements and passed AIMS. He noted that states with default curriculum allow students to graduate if they have not met all requirements, adding that default in other states means to sign off and take less. He suggested that there might be a basic diploma and then another one depicting a more rigorous curriculum completion. Clarification of this method is:

- Mandatory
 - established core curriculum
- Default
 - implies that there are options that may have multiple pathways or multiple curricula that rule could clarify
 - refers to the rigorous curriculum but a student could graduate with 3 years of math as default is defined here

Dr. Balentine suggested leaving 1 credit in Fine Arts/CTE and not fight the possible war.

Additional comments:

- Ms. Owen has been working with high school drop outs in the past five years and the defining problem is poverty
 - after interviewing a variety of students the overall consensus was that they wished they had taken 4 years of math that included a menu of personal finance, personal planning, etc.
- concern about the drop-out rate; work must be done on making rigorous curriculum relevant as students need to see its importance
- smaller class sizes for students that need extra support may help
- SBE needs to look at financial support of schools/districts to carry out the new requirements
- Do not lose sight of early investment and look at what is occurring in early years (elementary)
- math has absence of two years of reinforcement
- setting benchmarks
- reverse credit with community college
- latitude at local level to define courses
- fewer electives to bring total requirements to 22 credits

Questions to ask regarding dual credit courses:

- what does dual credit mean
- alignments
- who are the instructors; etc

- default curriculum refers to rigorous curriculum and students would have to agree with parents to decrease this requirement
- referred to average graduation rate by years of math chart: in order to avoid increase in drop-out rate math shows aptitude problems; for students who want to take other coursework this requirement would have a negative impact
- need to allow students the ability to have options
- seems that members are saying the same thing but with different terminology
- a literary minded student would not be going into technology but may want to study literary things for the rest of their high school time
- students with more options make the decision closer
- some states have chosen default and are now moving to mandatory
- don't want to create more drop-outs
- keep rigorous for good preparation
- moral responsibility is to see how we get them where they should be

Superintendent Horne noted that:

- some states adopted mandatory curriculum and had to give it up
- have to deal with realities
- states with mandatory 4-year requirement in math will have to change
- 99% of kids choose rigorous curriculum and make it work

Mr. Ary:

- would like to know who the researchers are that made some of these statements
- need to work on what makes students quit rather than giving them an escape valve

Ms. Mendoza noted that some schools in Colorado couldn't maintain in Algebra II but now have a "unified math" course.

Math Issues:

- all agree 4 years required as rigor curriculum
- some want default (opt out) with option of fewer math credits
- other default is 4 years of math with multiple pathways with required base
- required base

2. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Ms. Janice Stiles, K-12 curriculum specialist math and Social Studies, Paradise Valley USD, stated:

- supports economics and proposes financial oriented courses with economics
- sufficiently rigorous to use Algebra I concepts
- personal finance and investment concepts, computer programming and statistics
- need for menu of classes

Ms. Elizabeth Velard, Arizona Council on Economic Education, stated:

- relevance is that economics teaches about decision-making in every area of life
 - stay in school
 - why does it matter
 - why learn math
 - how will it be used in real life
- Economics is about rigor and teaches analytical skills
 - gathering information and using information to make an informed decision
 - understanding global economy and entrepreneurial decisions

Ms. Velard provided members with a CD containing various economic lessons to peruse.

Ms. Nancy Foote, 20 year classroom teacher, Higley USD, stated:

- district requires economics and 3 years of math
 - Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II with no exceptions
- sees pain when student realizes they have to take Algebra II
- suggested SBE consider alternative pathways and 3 year requirement
- if parents see that a child needs extra help and has problems with requirements, should be able to opt out
- can't find math teachers now and with an additional requirement, need would double

Lunch break at 12:20PM and reconvened at 12:50PM

Consolidated thoughts:

Mandatory requirements for everyone

Default choices:

Math – 4 years; Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Options

- Menu
 - not a four year set curriculum but some base of requirement plus multiple other options
 - Algebra and Geometry; combo of Algebra I and II and Geometry
 - need more information: what is Algebra II
 - what is in Algebra II that makes it a requirement for college
 - consortium for Algebra II assessment
 - applications of math to real life experiences
 - how do other states define menu/classes
 - assessments
 - state, district, portfolio, grades
 - passage of AIMS only current determinate of math knowledge
 - what are passage rates relative to classes completed
 - technology job readiness – critical thinking- how much training to be job ready
 - business community has taken an informal position but Algebra II is foundation
 - scenario building from ADE for 4 years of math
 - multiple districts may have ideas
 - brain development of 7th and 8th graders
 - 88% of public district schools do not require algebra II
- How are we going to increase number of math teachers
 - Amphitheater pushes math in 8th grade but don't give it as a high school credit
 - if requirements are increased they are in affect for the following year's 9th graders
 - how many schools provide Algebra coursework in 8th grade
 - after AIMS classes, application/practicals
 - bridge standards past 10th grade level will be suggested soon
- Math task force/process has begun; standards after 10th grade (AIMS) will be course by course
 - opportunity to raise awareness and create higher standard
 - what are districts doing now with courses and number of credits
 - opinions of educators
- Consensus/beginning point for increasing graduation requirements
 - English 4
 - Math 4

- Social Studies 3
- Science 3 (Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Earth Science – Biology is tested)
- Fine Arts/CTE 1 or 2
- World Language 1 or 2
- Electives 6.5 or 8.5
- Total 22 or 24 and keep 8.5 in Electives
- Integration/CTE Multiple Pathways
- Default would include Math, Science, Language as they are the new areas
 - what is default curriculum
 - need to set the target and work with Legislature regarding resources to meet requirements

Overview of today's purpose:

- get consensus around the specifics
- clarification of grey areas around the agreement
- Math is a study session of its own
- how many study sessions to finalize goals
- timeline to accomplish goals/implementation of requirements
- advocacy piece

Additional questions/comments:

- how is SBE willing to strategically discuss
- groundwork needs to be laid with Legislators, etc
- continue conversations to raise awareness
- sense is that others will agree with suggestions to date
- careful how information is shared
- be analytical
- urge rigorous programs
- some states' programs may fail and we don't want to do that
 - possible failures in other states
 - no safety valve for kids having trouble
 - one state showed that it was ahead of many others but there were no state standards set
- important to have standards by which to measure
- don't think statewide courses are necessary as long as state standards are adhered to
 - key is standards with assessments
- make sure not setting up unintended consequences
- have individual learning plans and allow test to see if student is meeting expectations to move on
- reason testing was done at 10th grade was to give student multiple chances to improve
- allow a baseline to reach or exceed and high school exam with something on paper for intended consequence

Foreign Language

Science

- earth science, biology, chemistry, Scholars msg. physics
- bio-science, astronomy
- diploma process does not require physics
- academic diploma should require biology, physics, chemistry

- scholars physics
- biology within first two years of high school
- current statute requires SBE to make modifications to graduation requirements
- SBE cannot pass a rule that impacts capital expenditure
- SBE has to research what impact may be made on capital expenditures/facilities
 - Ms Pollock will research and explain
- options of delivery
- define terms of science courses: physics, bioscience, genomics, astronomy
- if differentiating diplomas, academic diploma should include chemistry, earth science, biology

CTE

- update on state level embedding of academic standards
- availability/certification of CTE instructors
- AIMS data-why and how do CTE students score higher
- receive information in advance of SBE meetings with opportunity to ask questions

Fine Arts

- don't want to lower requirements

Physical Education/Comprehensive Health

- parking lot issue to be discussed further
- require student involvement in extra-curricular athletic activities
 - parking lot issue to be discussed further

Board's direction on change:

- consistency on multiple pathways
- opt out option / rigorous (unresolved)
 - fully mandated with transition time
- option: expected is rigorous but an optional Diploma A or Diploma B

Timeline for fact gathering and decision making

- complete dialog in October
- rule draft in October
- implementation plan based on feasibility study
- fiscal impact study results are mandatory before making rule changes
 - use broad delivery methods and accessibility
- conduct study to see broad impacts and write rules to allow districts to offer additional coursework via distance learning, etc., that would not have adverse fiscal impact
- meet with Legislators regarding funding needs, etc.
- implementation plan ready for input prior to meeting with Legislators
- regional meetings for input in September
 - need agenda and guidelines for input from districts
 - collaborate with ACF, P-20, ASBA, etc.

Unresolved

- full mandated with transition time
- opt out option/rigorous
- Diploma A – Diploma B (as is)

Another study session regarding Math

Feasibility Study needed regarding impact on schools/students

- use broad delivery methods + accessibility
- complete dialog in October
- implementation plan ready for input prior to meeting with Legislators
- regional meetings for input in September
 - need agenda and guidelines for input from districts
- collaborate with ACF, P-20, ASBA, others
- seniors – number of credits needed
- electives and extra-curricular activities
- school day
 - high school = 4 hours presently
 - what does a typical day look like for a freshman, sophomore, junior, senior
 - number of credits needed by seniors
- staffing
- resources
 - how much it costs for each credit hour added
- teacher professional development
- district level implementation
- impact on ADE

Advocacy for additional resources

- presentational fact sheet for members
- stair-step implementation outlined/time-framed
- identify triggers that would be advisable for SBE to look at to evaluate progress
- special sessions in August and September
- may be point where outside assistance will be necessitated to assist

Parking Lot Issues

- MS learning plans
 - loss of focus on individual student's planning
 - parent involvement – sign off
- aggregate credits required
- ESL for literacy
- senior year
- *Economics / alternate paths
- multiple diplomas
- health / physical education
- required involvement physical activities

3. ADJOURN

The Board adjourned at 3:35 PM