

Minutes
State Board of Education
Friday, April 2, 2010

The Arizona State Board of Education held a Special Session meeting at the Arizona Department of Education, 1535 West Jefferson, Room 417, Phoenix, Arizona. The meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM.

Members Present:

Dr. Vicki Balentine
Dr. John Haeger (Telephonically)
Supt. Tom Horne
Mr. Larry Lucero
Mr. Gregory Miller
Mr. Jaime Molera
Mr. Jacob Moore
Dr. Karen Nicodemus (Telephonically)
Ms. Diane Ortiz-Parsons
Mr. Thomas Tyree

Members Absent:

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE

ROLL CALL

1. GENERAL SESSION

Dr. Balentine welcomed Mr. Miller and Mr. Tyree and asked all members to provide information on their experience and background.

Dr. Balentine thanked Ms. Mendoza and Ms. Owen for serving on the Board.

A. Consideration to elect State Board of Education Vice President for 2010

Dr. Balentine asked to consider an election for the State Board Vice President for 2010.

Mr. Molera moved to nominate Mr. Moore as Vice-President

Motion second by Ms. Ortiz-Parsons

Motion Passes

B. Presentation and discussion regarding fiscal year 2010 and 2011 budget adjustments. The Board may take action to modify Arizona's assessment system as a result of budget reductions.

Ms. Dugan stated in the budget that just passed, general fund support for testing was eliminated, and the full testing burden was placed on Proposition 301 administration funds. This uses up the full \$7 million of Proposition 301 monies that were previously used for Arizona Learns profiles, SAIS, solutions teams, coaches, school improvement, intervention in failing schools, academic standards and best practices. Unless there is some reduction in testing, which we are now proposing, this would gut Arizona's entire system of accountability, achievement profiles, SAIS, school improvement and intervention and development of standards.

The following is the pertinent part of Proposition 301:

7. After transferring monies pursuant to paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of this subsection, no more than seven million dollars may be appropriated by the legislature each fiscal year to

the Department of Education to be used for accountability purposes as described in Section 15-241 and Title 15, Chapter 9, Article 8.

Section 15-241 is the accountability system, including achievement profiles, school improvement, and intervention in failing schools. Title 15, Chapter 9, Article 8, is SAIS.

Ms. Dugan said in previous years, the legislature has allocated \$2.4 million of the testing cost to the \$7 million Proposition 301 fund. While the Department felt this was contrary to the language of Proposition 301, no complaint was made. Of the remaining \$4.6 million, the funds were divided as follows:

1. Achievement Profiles	\$.5 million
2. SAIS	\$.6 million (This is not enough for SAIS, and is supplemented with administrative funds.)
3. Solution Teams, Coaches, and School Improvement	\$1.5 million
4. Intervention in Failing Schools	\$1.3 million
5. Academic Standards and Best Practices	\$.5 million
6. Administering Dropout Prevention and Tutoring	\$.2 million

Substantial portions of these funds are spent outside of the Department, such as supplementing salaries of turnaround principals, solutions teams, mentor teachers and principals, etc.

Ms. Dugan proposed to save one-third of what we have been doing in achievement profiles, accountability, etc., by cutting \$1.5 million out of our \$10 million testing budget. We can do this by cutting writing tests to four grade levels (grade 6, 10, 11 and 12) and eliminating the norm-reference test in grades 2 and 9.

In the absence of this action, Arizona would need to consider suspending the entire Arizona Learns accountability system. Even if we could find a way to calculate the achievement profiles, it is dysfunctional to label schools as underperforming or failing without being able to do anything to help them.

Ms. Dugan stated Dr. Franciosi, Ms. Hrabluk and Ms. Lebo were present to answer any questions.

Mr. Molera asked what the consequences would be to the assessment system if the writing test was eliminated. Supt. Horne stated eliminating the writing test at grade 6 would serve as an incentive for principals to assure writing is taught at all grade levels in order to do well in 6th grade. Supt. Horne said for the schools were there was no writing test the achievement profiles would be based on the results for reading, mathematics and science.

Dr. Balentine asked if testing at the 5th grade level instead of 6th was considered to ensure every elementary school had the elementary writing component. Ms. Dugan stated 30% of schools are K-6, Supt. Horne stated if the Board prefers the writing test could be moved to the 5th grade. Ms. Ortiz-Parsons stated she would support that change.

Dr. Nicodemus asked if there was consideration to limit testing at the high school level. Supt. Horne stated the number of students re-taking the tests is fairly small and the savings are relatively small.

Mr. Molera asked if there are Federal funds that could be used to help the School Improvement Teams that assist under performing schools. Ms. Hrabluk stated Federal funds can only be used for schools not making AYP.

Supt. Horne stated RTTT requires a first grade accountability system. Suspending the accountability system completely would make it impossible for Arizona to compete. Dr. Haeger stated there are budget lines that have not been touched and the decisions proposed could put school under scrutiny.

Dr. Balentine stated her view in the field the accountability and support systems are important. Testing could be at every grade level if alternatives are considered. Supt. Horne stated the Federal government could penalize if 95% of students are not tested.

Mr. Miller stated Challenge Charters have tested at every grade level using other testing systems such as DIBLES and various testing tools as well as AIMS and Norm Reference.

Mr. Molera stated he continues to be concerned about making a decision without having further information. The field has expressed they do not want to go back and reduce testing.

Ms. Roberta Alley stated random sampling part of the cost savings would be reduced, long term this could be a solution but short term it would not have much impact.

Supt. Horne stated he would propose a motion that would be a one year suspension only and the Board could re-visit the matter. A decision is required as soon as possible due to the jobs that are in question.

Supt. Horne moved to suspend for one year only the writing assessment other than in grades 5, 10 11,12 and the Norm Reference assessment in grades 2 and 9; and for the Board to revisit what would happen after one year

Motion second by Mr. Miller

Dr. Balentine asked if members would like to discuss the motion.

Ms. Hrabluk stated the Title I funds received would have to go to schools that are not making AYP. The plan would be to use Title I School Improvement funds to support under performing schools. The system will continue to have a system of support for schools that are under improvement and schools that are in the bottom 5% as established by Federal law.

Dr. Nicodemus asked if this proposal is the only option. Supt. Horne stated the suspension of the proposed tests would save the jobs of the several sections that support school improvement.

Mr. Molera asked if the sales tax increase would have an impact on this decision. Ms. Dugan stated the potential sales tax failure would not further impact this issue.

Ms. Alley stated there would be an impact on the contract with the Pearson Group. There would be savings if the writing is suspended.

2. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

- Mr. Andrew Morrill stated the budget information provided by the Department is not specific or enough and the lack of support from policy makers will impact student instruction. Systemic support for education with an entire mapped out plan. It is unfortunate that the Board has to make the decision.

Dr. Balentine stated the motion on the floor was to suspend for one year only the writing assessment at grades 5, 10, 11, 12 and to suspend the Norm Reference components at grades 2 and 9.

Motion

Yes

Mr. Miller

Supt. Horne

Dr. Balentine

Mr. Moore

Ms. Ortiz-Parsons

Mr. Tyree

Dr. Nicodemus

Nay

Molera

Lucero

Dr. Haeger did not vote

Motion passes

Dr. Balentine stated her yes vote was based on the very limited options.

Dr. Nicodemus moved for ADE leadership and Mr. Yanez form a committee for the purpose of reviewing the action and moving forward in a proactive way to ensure Arizona has a meaningful and assessment accountability system in improving learning for all students

Second by Supt. Horne

Mr. Lucero asked for a status report in respect to the progress made or issues identified and for the reports to be presented at the April and May Board meetings.

Amendment to motion approved

Motion passes

3. ADJOURN

Mr. Lucero moved to adjourn

Motion second by Ms. Ortiz-Parsons

Motion passes

Adjourned at 10:37am