

Minutes
State Board of Education Study Session
Wednesday, March 29, 2006

The Arizona State Board of Education held a Study Session at Cactus Middle School, 1160 East Kortsen Road, Casa Grande, Arizona. The meeting was called to order at 1:15PM.

Members Present

Mr. Jesse Ary
Mr. Bill Estes
Ms. JoAnne Hilde
Superintendent Tom Horne
Ms. Joanne Kramer
Mr. Larry Lucero
Ms. Anita Mendoza
Dr. Karen Nicodemus

Members Absent

Dr. Vicki Balentine
Dr. Michael Crow
Ms. Cecilia Owen

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE

ROLL CALL

Ms. Owen is attending her Senate confirmation hearing this afternoon.

Ms. Hilde thanked Cactus Middle School in Casa Grande for hosting today's meeting and Ms. Kramer for making all the arrangements.

1. Presentation and Discussion Regarding AZ LEARNS Items for Discussion Include, but are not Limited to:
 - A. Overview and Summary of Current School Classification Formula
 - B. Impact of Recent Formula Changes
 - C. Summary of Proposals for Formula Modifications

Dr. Robert Franciosi, Deputy Associate Superintendent, Research and Evaluation Section, Arizona Department of Education, stated that his division is primarily responsible for all school accountability measures done throughout the year including:

- NCLB, AYP and AZ LEARNS evaluations
- School report cards
- Graduation and dropout rate studies
- Test data management
- Data support for the agency

Dr. Franciosi noted that today's presentation regards Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) which is required by NCLB, and AZ LEARNS which is required by state law. Dr. Franciosi utilized a PowerPoint presentation which is included in the materials packet and noted that this report will show the impact at the overall school level and at the individual school level after one year.

The following factors were pointed out during introductory discussions:

- Statute states that all tests will be at level, but tests designed for students who are at the 9th grade level, for example, but read at the 3rd grade are permitted
 - AIMS-A for students who don't read
 - AIMS-A II for students who read at 3rd grade level or below
 - AIMS-A III for students who perform at a higher level than 3rd grade but not at their grade level

Further discussion ensued during the presentation and some of the points brought up were:

- AIMS is the only test now being used to measure student achievement
- A certain percentage of all students must meet the annual measurable objectives each year as progress is made toward 100% proficiency by 2014 including the special groups specified by NCLB
 - racial/ethnic groups
 - free and reduced lunch students
 - special education students
 - English Language Learner students
- Concern regarding the 100% expectation for students to be proficient in the state's academic standards by 2013-2014 and whether this expectation is driving schools' dropout rate
 - This requirement is in its third year so there is not sufficient data at this time to make a determination
- Will there be significant changes in the NCLB requirements when a new president is elected
 - Overriding feeling at the NASBE Legislative Conference was that there will be some differentiation between the goals and what is achievable but the re-authorization is on a calendar with a possible extension to 2008 and may possibly undergo some changes that address some of the concerns from across the nation
 - NCLB will probably be looked at again in 2009 regarding the re-authorization as a whole bill
 - Dr. Franciosi noted he hasn't seen research about the impact this might have
 - There is research regarding the high school tests and the dropout/graduation rates
- Members would like to see a sample of the actual report that parents receive regarding the school's report card, classifications, etc.
 - The sub-group results are reported on the ADE web site in the school report cards
- If failing students can be identified via their Student Accountability Identification System (SAIS) number then there should be a plan to assist the special students
 - Ms. Kramer noted that schools are aware of which students need assistance and the schools are doing whatever is necessary to assist them
- Severely handicapped students can take AIMS-A and if they all pass they can be used in the AYP score
- Non-standard accommodations/modifications can be utilized
 - Reading test read to student
 - Allowing use of calculator in Math test
 - Asking for grace period from the federal government to develop test that will modify standards
 - AIMS-A II has been developed and AIMS-A III is being developed but is waiting on federal approval
- The Board needs to be proactive about the laws that are being made and about the issues that concern teachers and parents and students
- This year the system uses the SAIS graduation rate to reflect the most current year available (2005 graduates)
 - This is the first class that had to face AIMS graduation requirements

- Will look at the affect this requirement had on the graduation rate
- Federal government will not permit using the fifth year for graduation results
 - Would have accommodated those students that needed an extra year to complete graduation requirements
- Considering GEDs has been looked at but there is an effort to make all states look consistent
- SAIS follows students when they move from school to school
- If a student disappears they must be entered in a special category until they are identified as attending a particular school and the category is then changed in SAIS
- Applied to have a growth model for this year in February and received initial feedback last month
 - Should have final word in May
 - See slide “Elements in Place” which shows what Arizona already has in place
- Could the same SAIS number be used from P-20 facilitating tracking the student’s progress throughout school
- Proposed Growth Model
 - The student is counted as though proficient this year and must continue progress in order to be counted
 - Schools should get credit for their efforts in assisting students who need extra help
 - In the case where a student comes to school a week or so before AIMS is given the school is not required to count mobile students
 - Students must have attended the school for at least a year
- Sample Growth Path
 - Need research from AIMS to show growth path that is possible at particular levels
- AYP/NCLB
 - School and individual report data is available
 - Schools are implementing individual plans for failing students’ intermediate assistance

The Board took a break at 2:30 PM and reconvened 2:45 PM

- AZ LEARNS
 - Will begin using MAP rather than Stanford 9/Norm Referenced Test as these were not based on state standards
 - Norm referenced test compares students across the country
 - State compares students with standards set by the teacher groups
 - Don’t anticipate having to ask the SBE for new standards this year but data must be analyzed completely first
- In looking at data what would generate the need for an adjustment that should not be perceived as trying to manipulate the end result
 - If score went from 7% underperforming to .7% underperforming it could mean that the mark should be raised so there is always an objective
 - Raise the bar to encourage higher achievement
 - It is an assumption that school improvement is continuous improvement
- Need to get this information to the community so they understand the purpose in moving the bar

- If the number falls, we should look at pockets of students in every school that need help rather than say the school is not doing an adequate job
 - Look at students as individuals rather than looking at a school as a whole
- One piece of legislature authorizes teams to work with schools if they desire help
 - Need to find out what can be done to help underachieving students
 - Large percentage are located in certain districts
- How to Measure Performance: Status
 - For NCLB it is the percentage of students passing test this year
- How to Measure Performance: School Improvement
 - Successful schools are able to increase percentage of students passing every year
 - Will compare how kids did in 2006 to the baseline in 2004
 - Standards were set at every grade level according to the feds
 - Teachers determined the difficulty of the questions
 - The change in high school math score effected 3500 out of 63,000
 - Kids are studying harder and learning more and a case cannot be made that the bar was lowered
 - Test became more appropriate to what it was intended to measure
 - 160 people took part in proposing the above changes
 - Teachers determined the standards and the kids are tested on those standards
 - If passing rate raises to 60% in 2004 then 65% because of the change, there might be some need for adjustment
 - A one-time modification might move schools to performing
- How to Measure Performance: Student Growth
 - Credit for increased number of passing and reducing number of students in “falls far below”
 - Schools are scored for increasing student achievement and decreasing percentage of “falls far below”
- MAP
 - Will ask SBE to make a change in calculations averaging scale scores
 - New MAP calculations (AIMS)
 - Calculate difference year to year and then average
 - Growth is typically about 20 points from year to year so the average student made 200% of typical and is higher than necessary to be proficient
 - Benchmark to compare growth
 - Gives schools credit for moving student above proficiency to an even higher level where the feds do not allow this
 - Parents demanding more rigor in curriculum
 - MAP is nearly 1/3 of possible points (AYP =1)
 - Pushes schools whose students are all highly performing
 - May not grow at the same rate as a student in a lower level of performing
 - Status and Growth can get 18 points together
 - If highly performing school with all highly performing students can get all 18 points in status only

Total possible points = 27:

Performing = 13

Highly = 16

Excelling = 18

High school = 21 possible points

3rd grade

Reading	Status 4	Improvement 4	
Writing	Status 5	Improvement 3	gets 4.4 points
Math	3	5	gets 4.4 points

- Add by grade = 12.8 of the 18 points and classified as performing
- Can get higher rating if more points are scored in AYP, etc.
- Largest number gets more weight than smallest number
- MAP can be as much as 40% of grade
- Overview
 - Shows how points are combined to reach the school profile
- Changes to Formula
 - Now we have new numbers based on the Terra Nova
 - Have had separate ratings for K-8 and 9-12 even in same school but will ask for K-12 profile
 - Not a clean overlap between the two in statute so statute may need to be amended
 - AG informal opinion is that it may need a statutory change
- Projected timeline based on custom and history
 - Every effort is being made to get scores back to schools in a timely manner and high schools sooner than the lower grades
 - August approval is required for change in AZ LEARNS due to timeline data is received
 - Will provide any information necessary to facilitate an August decision
 - Need study session prior to August SBE meeting, perhaps in early August based on getting answer from feds in May when it is usually received
- 2005 Transition Year
 - Trying to utilize more positive language than “cut score” , i.e. performance threshold
- Results
 - Performance Plus has enough points to be highly performing or excelling but doesn’t hit the threshold to be excelling
 - Superintendent expects to maintain similar results in 2006
 - Have to have incentives for students to continue achieving
 - Schools have a great desire to have a high performing label
- School X
 - 2004 scores were baseline
 - Scenario is typical of schools in this status that participated in school improvement with the Solutions Teams
 - Scores will tell how the school is doing in sustaining its efforts

In further discussion the following areas were discussed:

- Concern that when we say performing the perception is that everything is good for the kids
 - The sense is that this is not always the case
 - Majority are not passing
 - Need to better understand the minimum threshold
- Next step is rewarding growth
- SBE now needs to say that to be performing a school has to be moving a certain percentage of students forward
 - Data has to be considered to know what percentage is feasible
 - Raise the bar for continuous improvement
 - Must have sufficient notice for future changes to be made
- How many performing schools have grades where students did not test out of proficiency
- Show the bar for the next number of years so schools are on notice as to the future requirements
- After schools receive a performing label they could lose services as the state is not authorized to have Solutions Teams helping performing schools
- Requires Pre-K and all-day-K commitment
- Labels should be explained as looking at different aspects of the school not just academic achievement
- Continuing raising the bar enables schools to catch the students that are not achieving
 - Can't be done suddenly
- Lay people need to understand that there is continuous improvement
 - Part of this goes to the perception of labels

In further discussion members requested a flow of the bills that are being discussed in legislature. Ms. Hilde reminded members that the SBE adopted a statement of principles in January 2006 that outlines the procedures members and the Executive Director follow in addressing legislature.

Mr. Estes noted that the SBE must begin looking at issues and perhaps discuss at a summer meeting the items the SBE is interested in introducing to the legislature in the fall. Ms. Hilde suggested looking at a possible date for a June retreat to discuss these kinds of items. It was also suggested that the SBE may be able to work with ADE sharing a paid lobbyist to assist in presenting items to legislature.

Mr. Estes added that we need to get to students making it more personalized, perhaps making funds and/or materials available as early as 3rd grade to assist students that may include a one-page primer of resources available for underperforming schools.

Ms. Mendoza stated that she distributed a copy of her thoughts from the NASBE 2006 Legislative Conference and a copy is included in the materials packet.

2. ADJOURN

Motion by Mr. Ary and seconded by Estes to adjourn. *Motion passes.*

Meeting adjourned at 4:26 PM