



DRAFT Minutes
State Board of Education
May 4, 2023

Brooke Axiotis
Des Moines

Rodney Bradley
Denison

Cindy Dietz
Cedar Rapids

Cassandra Halls
Carlisle

Brian J. Kane
Dubuque

Mike May
Spirit Lake

Mary Meisterling
Cedar Rapids

Nathan Peterson
Iowa City

John Robbins
Iowa Falls

Sophia Van Houten
Student Member
Ida Grove

Chad L. Aldis
Director and
Executive Officer

The State Board of Education (State Board) meeting was held on May 4, 2023, in person at the Iowa Department of Education, Grimes State Office Building, 400 E. 14th Street, Des Moines, Iowa.

State Board members present were Brooke Axiotis, Cindy Dietz, Cassandra Halls, Brian Kane, Mike May, Mary Meisterling, Nathan Peterson, John Robbins and Sophia Van Houten.

Iowa Department of Education (Department) staff members present were Chad Aldis, Shan Seivert, Jeremy Varner, Earl Whipple, Thomas Mayes, Rachel Bosovich, Heather Doe, Eric St Clair, Cassandra Cline, Tina Wahlert, Eric Heitz, Marietta Rives, Tom Wood, Kathy Bertsch, Barb Anderson, Barbara Ohlund, Gwen Nagle, Iseblia Arzola, Kimberly Villotti, Janet Boyd, Maryam Rod Szabo, Kelly Faga, Stephanie TeKippe, Amy Gieseke, Dennis Harden, Heather Meissen, Jen Rathje, Lora Vargason, Tom Deeter, Jeanette Thomas, Susan Selby, Rachel Kruse, Patricia Townsend, Jina Brincks, Song Luong, Holli Marolf, Lisa Albers, Derek O'Riley, Bryan Bauer, Steve Ervin and Carol McMains.

Also in attendance were: Josh Van Houten; Sara Russell; Rebecca Bates, American Institutes for Research; Dana Oswald and Stephen Henderson, William Penn University; Emily Shields and Kat Callahan, Community Colleges for Iowa; Juline Albert, Troy Jasman and Shane Ehresman, Western Iowa Tech Community College; Casey Drew, Kirkwood Community College; Corey Lunn, Choice Charter School; Mark Wiederspan, Iowa College Student Aid Commission; Grant Gerlock, Iowa Public Radio; Dar Danielson, Radio Iowa; Lucas Grundmeier, Des Moines Register; Kimberly Walsh; Lauren Linekin; Joe Davis; and Jane Dufoe, Office of Governor Reynolds.

State Board Business Meeting

John Robbins called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

The meeting was conducted in person, with remote access information provided in the notice of meeting.

Motion: Cassandra Halls made a motion and Cindy Dietz seconded to approve the meeting agenda.

Vote: The ayes were unanimous. The motion carried.

Communication

John Robbins made a statement regarding limiting the time of public comment based on the number of speakers.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Director's Report

Director Aldis shared information regarding his transition. He has been meeting internally with Department managers, teams and bureaus, and has been impressed with the commitment, professionalism and level of pride staff have in serving students and families.

Aldis provided updates regarding the Education Savings Account (ESA) initiative and 11 recently-completed comprehensive school visits led by Dr. Kimberly Buryanek, Administrator, Division of Learning and Results. He also shared information regarding the recent groundbreaking of career centers in Charles City and Storm Lake and the progress being made with the College and Career Transition Counselor/Coach program.

Given the busy legislative session, with many education-related laws passed, Director Aldis explained that Department staff will be preparing guidance for schools and educators, which will outline changes and provide resources and supports to continue to serve students.

Consent Agenda

Motion: Brian Kane made a motion and Nathan Peterson seconded to approve the consent agenda.

Vote: The ayes were unanimous. The motion carried.

Rules: Chapter 20 – Students First Act / Education Savings Accounts (Adopt Emergency and Notice of Intended Action)

Thomas Mayes, General Counsel, shared information regarding Chapter 20 – Students First Act / Education Savings Accounts. This rule making adopts a new Chapter 281—20, the administrative rules for the education savings account provisions of the Students First Act. New rule 20.1 provides definitions for the program. New rule 20.2 sets out eligibility requirements for participation. New rule 20.3 sets parameters for the application process. New rule 20.4 provides for administration and accountability for the program.

This rule making requires two actions: 1) approve emergency rules to go into effect immediately; and 2) provide notice and seek public comment at the same time.

There was discussion regarding communications and marketing regarding the application process, whether public school districts are required to provide information to families, addressing equity concerns, rules regarding reporting, statutory requirements, the appeal process, timelines for the application process and final rules, application deadline and homeschool eligibility.

Motion: Mary Meisterling made a motion and Brian Kane seconded that the State Board adopt emergency rules for Chapter 20.

Vote: The ayes were unanimous. The motion carried.

Motion: Brian Kane made a motion and Cindy Dietz seconded that the State Board give notice of its intent to adopt Chapter 20.

Vote: The ayes were unanimous. The motion carried.

William Penn University Educator Preparation Program Approval

Maryam Rod Szabo, Administrative Consultant, Bureau of Community Colleges, presented the William Penn University (WPU) Educator Preparation Program Report. WPU offers teacher preparation programming.

The Department conducted a program review and site visit in September 2022 under Iowa Administrative Code 281-79. WPU has met Chapter 79 standards without condition.

Discussion topics included the growth in distance learning in response to the Teacher and Paraeducator Registered Apprenticeship (TPRA) Program, annual reports to the Department, addressing compliance concerns, sustainability, training faculty for distance learning, determining success, surveys sent to cooperating teachers, administrators and recent graduates and feedback from advisory committees.

Stephen Henderson, Chair, Education Division, WPU, shared information regarding the review process, addressing areas of concern, rapid growth experienced and resolving issues.

Motion: Brian Kane made a motion and Nathan Peterson seconded that the State Board grant full approval to the William Penn University Educator Preparation Program through the next review scheduled for the 2029-2030 academic year.

Vote: The ayes were unanimous. The motion carried.

Western Iowa Tech Community College Interim Accreditation Report

Amy Gieseke, Chief, Bureau of Community Colleges, presented the Interim Accreditation Report for Western Iowa Tech Community College (WITCC), an associate-degree granting institution.

The Department conducted the interview portion of the evaluation on November 9-10, 2022. The report reflects the review team's observations and determinations made during WITCC's interim visit. As mandated by Iowa Code section 260C.47, the accreditation team, including two external peer reviewers, assessed WITCC's compliance with eight Iowa State Accreditation Standards via a structured process of document review and interviews. The team also reviewed the most recent Higher Learning Commission (HLC) regional accreditation report to ensure that any findings have been addressed. Iowa's process has been designed not to duplicate HLC's accreditation process.

A presentation was provided outlining the state accreditation cycle and process, WITCC's institutional profile and state standards.

Juline Albert, Vice President of Learning, and Troy Jasman, Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services and Chief Financial Officer, WITCC, shared a presentation highlighting WITCC's facilities, diverse student body, dedicated faculty and staff, successful initiatives and graduation rates.

There was discussion regarding enrollment numbers for the instrument repair program, satellite center locations, an updated non-discrimination statement and articulation.

Motion: Cassandra Halls made a motion and Mike May seconded that the State Board grant continued accreditation for Western Iowa Tech Community College through the next comprehensive site visit in fiscal year 2028.

Vote: The ayes were unanimous. The motion carried.

Iowa Community Colleges Certified Budget Report – Fiscal Year 2024

Lora Vargason, Consultant, Bureau of Community Colleges, presented the Iowa Community Colleges Certified Budget Report for Fiscal Year 2024. The State Board has statutory responsibility, under Iowa Code chapter 260C.17, to annually review and approve the community college certified budgets.

Troy Jasman, provided information regarding the community college budget process.

Casey Drew, Vice President and Chief Financial/Operations Officer, Kirkwood Community College (KCC), responded to questions regarding budget submitted by KCC.

There was discussion regarding the timing of budget submission, certified budget process, financing of debt, stress testing of budgets and verification of beginning fund balances.

Motion: Brian Kane made a motion and Mike May seconded that the State Board approve the Iowa Community Colleges Certified Budgets for Fiscal Year 2024.

Vote: The ayes were unanimous. The motion carried.

Overview of Dyslexia Supports

Barb Anderson, Administrative Consultant, and Kathy Bertsch, Administrative Consultant, Bureau of Learner Strategies and Supports, shared information around the Department's dyslexia priorities and progress.

A presentation was shared which outlined the Department's dyslexia efforts, collaboration between the Department and Iowa Reading Research Center (IRRC), progress on the Dyslexia Task Force recommendations and next steps.

There was discussion regarding the size of the dyslexia endorsement second cohort, sustainability, diagnosing dyslexia, screening, the number of hours required for the endorsement, progress being made, staffing needs, teacher shortages, recruitment, resources for parents, collaborative action plans with the IRRC, success in other states, college preparedness and the percentage of students meeting early literacy benchmarks.

2022 Iowa Teacher of the Year End of Year Report

Marietta Rives, Consultant, Bureau of School Improvement, provided background regarding the Iowa Teacher of the Year program and introduced Sara Russell, 2022 Iowa Teacher of the Year.

Russell shared highlights from her year of service as Teacher of the Year.

Board Reports

John Robbins recently presented at the Iowa School Business Management Academy and met with a state senator regarding parent rights.

Cindy Dietz shared that she met with staff from the Grant Wood Area Education Agency to gain a better understanding of the role of the AEAs and attended a meeting of the Governor's STEM Council.

Mike May indicated that he routinely reaches out to teachers and students to learn what is on their mind. He visited several school districts.

Sophia Van Houten introduced herself as the new Student Member on the State Board. She is very active in school and her community and has a great appreciation for the education system.

Brian Kane shared that as a Catholic school board member, he has been receiving lots of questions regarding ESAs.

New State Board member Mary Meisterling introduced herself. Meisterling is a public school advocate, former Ohio community college teacher and has also served on the Cedar Rapids Schools Board, Grant Wood AEA board and Governor's STEM Advisory Board.

Cassandra Halls provided information regarding the recent outdoor classroom and greenhouse ribbon cutting in Carlisle and thanked Director Aldis and Sara Russell for joining. Halls also shared that the Community Colleges for Iowa Conference will take place July 19-20 in Cedar Rapids.

Nathan Peterson explained that the Charter School Sustainability Group had their first meeting and he is excited to dig into that work.

Brooke Axiotis shared it has been enlightening to see the policies that have been discussed over the years by the State Board as they impact her son's educational experience.

Charter School Monitoring Report

Kassandra Cline, Chief, Bureau of School Business Operations, and Janet Boyd, Consultant, Bureau of School Improvement, provided a report regarding two charter schools approved by the State Board to begin in school year 2022-2023 – Choice Charter School (Choice Charter) and Hamburg Charter High School (Hamburg).

Pursuant to Iowa Code 256E.3 and Iowa Administrative Code r. 281-19.13, the State Board is required to monitor performance and compliance of each approved charter school. The report to the State Board is based on incremental reporting provided by each charter school including the following components: student enrollment, programming, student success, staffing, finance and local board meetings.

Boyd thanked State Board members Nathan Peterson and Mary Meisterling for their participation in the first meeting of the Charter School Sustainability Group.

Boyd's report regarding Choice Charter included information regarding not meeting offer and teach requirements and the librarian requirement.

There was discussion regarding student assessments and the librarian issue.

Cline provided an update regarding Choice Charter around finance and operations and shared the following statement from Barb Guy, Chief, Bureau of Student and Family Special Education and Services, who was unable to attend the State Board meeting:

In early March, the Department began a focused inquiry into Choice Charter's implementation of state and federal special education law as a result of concerns brought to the Department. The intent of focused inquiry was to learn more about Choice Charter's day-to-day operations and to identify any supports the Department could provide to ensure the success of Choice Charter students and the appropriate implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. A team of six special education staff reviewed various materials, documents, data sets and IEPs and conducted a virtual site visit. The site visit included an overall overview of the Charterverse and interviews with staff, parents and students. A draft report will be shared with Choice Charter this week. The report includes strengths, recommendations and a few areas of noncompliance. Specific findings will be shared at a later date as the report will not be finalized until after Choice Charter has a chance to review the draft. As a general statement, however, the interviews with staff, parents and students were overwhelmingly positive, describing an educational option that is flexible and meets the mental health needs of students, which sometimes contribute to lack of success and engagement in traditional school environments.

Boyd shared that Hamburg will not meet offer and teach requirements.

Discussion topics included the financial literacy requirement, waivers and new legislation which may make changes to offer and teach.

Cline provided information regarding Hamburg's financial challenges and stated that Department staff will continue to provide technical assistance to Hamburg and Choice Charter on a regular basis.

Dennis Harden, Chief, Bureau of Career and Technical Education (CTE), shared that he had recently traveled to Hamburg and met with Superintendent Wells and the CTE teachers. Harden was impressed by staff willingness to engage with the students to ensure they find the correct path for each and every student in the programs. Hamburg has engaged with local business and industry, which will provide work-based learning experiences for the students.

There was discussion regarding the number of students enrolled in Hamburg's CTE programs.

State Government Alignment Update

Director Aldis provided information related to the Department's progress in implementing planning and internal changes per the recently-passed state government alignment legislation. Coordination continues with the Iowa STEM Council, Board of Educational Examiners, Iowa

College Student Aid Commission, Iowa School for the Deaf and Iowa Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired. The new alignment structure creates opportunities to gain efficiencies through shared services and support.

The Department will add 350 employees, many of which will be remote in Cedar Falls or Council Bluffs. Department staff have been working in cooperation with the Department of Administrative Services and the Department of Management to support the merging agencies and ensure a smooth transition.

The Department alignment integration team meets weekly and has made great progress on goals, timelines and deadlines.

There was discussion regarding remaining customer focused, impact to the work of the State Board, staff concerns, early training and easing anxiety concerns.

Heather Doe, Chief, Bureau of Communications and Information Services, provided an update regarding statewide branding, updates to agency websites and timelines for that work.

Legislative Update

Eric St Clair, Legislative Liaison, shared that the Legislative Session recently wrapped up and that the Department will prepare a comprehensive summary analysis of the legislation passed this session impacting education.

St Clair provided brief updates regarding legislation related to ESAs, State Supplemental Aid, state government alignment, assignment of restrooms based on gender, student and teacher safety issues, issues with student discipline and behavior, complaints against licensed practitioners, reforming Chapter 12 to provide school districts with additional flexibility, transparency around curriculum, library materials, parent and guardian rights, intra-district transfers, education appropriations, the Gap Tuition Assistance Program and a task force established to focus on at-risk students.

There was discussion regarding legislation that did not pass this year and the role of the legislative liaison.

2024 Meeting Schedule

Meeting dates for 2024 were shared and board members were reminded of a special meeting to be held on December 14, 2023 to address rules.

Motion: Brian Kane made a motion and Cindy Dietz seconded that the State Board approved the 2024 meeting schedule as presented.

Vote: The ayes were unanimous. The motion carried.

It was moved by Mary Meisterling and seconded by Nathan Peterson to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 1:47 p.m.

John Robbins
President

Chad L. Aldis
Director