



District of Columbia State Board of Education
DCSBOE



DC SBOE Working Session
April 1, 2015 at 4:30PM
441 4th Street, NW, Room 1114
Washington DC 20001

NOTES

Attendance (State Board Members and Board staff)

- Jack Jacobson, President
- Karen Williams, Vice President
- Mary Lord, At-large
- Laura Wilson Phelan, Ward 1(via phone)
- Ruth Wattenberg, Ward 3
- Kamili Anderson, Ward 4
- Joe Weedon, Ward 6
- Brian Contreras, Student Representative
- Jesse B Rauch, Executive Director
- Jamikka Briscoe-Kendrick, Staff Assistant
- Kelly Davis, Attorney Adviser

- **Working Session**

At approximately 4:36pm, Mr. Jack Jacobson, President of the State Board of Education (State Board), called the meeting to order. Mr. Rauch established a quorum.

- *State Diploma*

The State Superintendent of Education, Ms. Hanseul Kang, summarized the purpose of the draft regulations is to provide diplomas to the graduating students of Hospitality High School. Ms. Lord asked OSSE whether this would be better submitted as an emergency rulemaking, such as when the senior thesis requirement was removed from the graduation requirements. She further shared her belief that no other State Superintendent had the authority to issue state diplomas to SEA-managed schools. OSSE stated that the emergency threshold was very high to reach and therefore this did not appear to be an option. OSSE made an additional comment that they would prefer it to be a permanent standing rule to ensure a process in case the situation occurred again. Ms. Lord asked OSSE who was overseeing the education curriculum of Hospitality Schools and OSSE stated that there is a unit in OSSE that oversees this curriculum along with a partnership with DCPS.

Ms. Ruth stated that while she was in favor of Hospitality High School students receiving a diploma, she was not comfortable with the regulations being relaxed enough that other schools could abuse this mechanism in the future. Mr. Jacobson asked OSSE and Ms. Davis whether these proposed regulations

authorize OSSE to take over schools and Ms. Davis commented that it only authorizes OSSE to issue diplomas to schools that are managed by OSSE. OSSE agreed.

Ms. Lord commented that this school is very unique because the school relinquished its charter. Mr. Jacobson stated that the issue of the schools in the circumstance like Hospitality High School is a problem and the State Board along with OSSE has the authority to fix this problem and should fix the problem. Ms. Wilson Phelan asked OSSE the question of what OSSE will do once they issue the state diploma and how that process shall take place. OSSE provided the process for evaluating diplomas and determining adequacy for graduation and receipt of a diploma. Ms. Wilson Phelan asked why the language is broad. OSSE stated that while they do not want this to happen again, they want the rules to be in place in case this happened again.

Ms. Anderson stated that perhaps OSSE can look deeper into the issue to narrow the scope of the regulations. OSSE stated that they will look into this but it is important that OSSE ensures that the students receive a “free and appropriate education” (FAPE) as well as provide an equal education for all. Ms. Wattenberg stated that she was still uncomfortable with the broad language and stated that language could be added that limits the rules to be limited to students graduating in the year of 2015. Mr. Jacobson stated that he sees the regulations as solving a problem and this is a way to solve the problem. Mr. Weedon stated that he fully supports that Hospitality High School receive a diploma he just has concerns of state take over schools.

- *Annual Report-Calendar 2013*

Mr. Jacobson started the presentation about the annual report stating that he and the staff made many edits and asked for the State Board to make any comments. The report will go out under the names of Mr. Jones and Ms. Lord because it addressed the issues under their tenure in leadership. Mr. Jacobson is hopeful that the State Board votes on the report in the next couple of weeks. Mr. Rauch clarified the dates of who was leadership and who shall be signing off on certain calendars.

- *Committee Report-Chronic Absence*

Ms. Anderson led the discussion on the report and spoke directly to the recommendations. Ms. Anderson briefly summarized the recommendations. Essentially, there will be further investigation into the 80/20 rule with several reports being requested by the State Board. Ms. Wattenberg inquired about several components of the recommendations and Mr. Weedon stated that he would like OSSE to look at the individual schools and how are schools actually classifying schools. Mr. Weedon stated that he believed that there are a lot of actions on the ground level that highlight inconsistencies. The State Board tabled the discussion to later in the meeting so that OSSE could give its presentation on State Diplomas.

Ms. Anderson returned to the discussion concerning Mr. Weedon’s point that he would like the investigation to be more at a school level. Ms. Williams did not believe that OSSE has the authority to investigate the actual school. Mr. Rauch confirmed with OSSE that they do not have the authority to go directly into a school without going through the LEA. Mr. Jacobson stated that we can put it in the report and work with Deputy Mayor of Education but the State Board should not expect that OSSE can go the school level. However, Mr. Jacobson recognized Mr. Weedon’s concerns.

Ms. Wattenberg wants to know if there is a way that after August 2015 there will be some relief to the schools that are being burdened by the data systems that impose this regulation. Ms. Wattenberg wants relief for the schools by Fall 2015. Mr. Weedon stated that he does not have a problem with the 80/20 but questions whether the data is accurate and the right students are being reported to the court system. Ms. Anderson stated that the recommendations in the report have been drafted to have agencies respond to the State Board's concerns.

Ms. Anderson brings the motion to vote on the report and it is seconded by Ms. Williams. It was approved by a unanimously by a roll call vote. The meeting was adjourned.