Interim Executive Director Report  
State Board of Education Meeting  
February 19, 2013

I attended the Missouri State Board of Education meeting on February 19, 2013 in Jefferson City. My impressions and reactions are recorded below. Although nothing in the agenda directly affected arts education on the surface, I wonder if we might have missed an opportunity to affect teacher training rules in a positive way. See below for my musings on that topic. One area for concern is that the two vacancies on the Board left by the departures of Archie and Ponder have not yet been filled.

The meeting was gavelled to order by Peter Herschend at 9:30 a.m. Members in attendance were Herschend, Jones, Still, Demien, and Shields.

Herschend noted that schedule conflicts made it necessary for two members of the board to leave by mid-afternoon and asked for all participants to be succinct but complete. He didn’t wish to shortchange anyone, but at the same time the members had to leave early. The agenda modification to accommodate shortened hours was approved.

Minutes were approved

Herschend noted that the art on the wall had not changed since last meeting. By next meeting, student artwork from Caruthersville, Kirkwood and Soldan will be displayed.

He also noted that they would be honoring Sybil Slaughter next month. He acknowledged Margie VanDeven who has been promoted to Deputy Commissioner for Learning Services. Essentially she is the go-to person now for all curriculum related matters.

Board Comments—Herschend noted the success of the regional Forums so far.

NASBE Report—Still reported that the national conference was in Washington DC and said there was still time for members to register.

Still moved for a closed session at the next board meeting which passed

The Consent Agenda passed.

Officer election was held. Peter Herschend is President and Michael Jones is Vice-President.

The major order of business was the report on MEGA—Missouri Educator Gateway Assessments. The report as presented to the board is at the State Board of Education site under the agenda item dealing with the assessments. It was a lengthy presentation by Pearson Consulting about the new, more complex, but supposedly more discerning series of measurements that would allow the state to assess whether potential teachers were ready for the classroom or not. At the end of the report a series of probing questions were asked
  Still asked about the number of tests that would be administered and the cost.
  Still asked about the tendency of standard tests to unfairly eliminate minorities
  Still asked about the setting of a pass rate
  Still especially disliked the idea that teacher review committees would not be paid.
Demien asked whether the tests could be used to check on effectiveness of each college training program.
Shields asked for a complete talk through of what a teaching candidate would face in tests.
Herschend asked about the use and intention of the profile test.
Jones asked about cultural competence and finding enough candidates from lower socio-economic classes.
Shields asked about who would set the content.

After those questions the representative from ETS described the new look of the student teaching and portfolio evaluations. Again more questions were asked.
Shields asked about the use of pass and fail.
Still asked again about costs, final tally for each candidate will be in the $600 range as compared to the roughly $300 now.
Still asked how this improves upon current practice.
Shields noted that there is already a disconnect between superintendents and college training programs about what is needed to train teachers. can this be fixed.
Jones worried about the extra requirements chasing prospective teachers from the field.
Nicastro replied that this was about elevating the profession.
Herschend asked about pre-screening for potential building/district leader candidates.
He also worried about the short adoption time frame—pilot to begin in fall 2013.
He asked at the end of the day, how will we know this is working.

The report ended and the board took a 10 minute break.

**Observation**—The basic competency test is broken down into 5 areas—communication arts, writing, math, science, social studies. Yet, someone who is profoundly ignorant of American culture could be approved to teach. Should there be an Arts Competency component? Especially with the onset of Common Core, an ability to access the Arts for effective lesson delivery should be a consideration. Fraught with difficulty, I know, but I wondered. I also wondered about a public speaking/presentation competency.

Item H. Early childhood education rule was discussed. It would require more visits with families and require districts to comply with all 4 components of EC requirements. Vote was taken and the rule was approved.

Item I. A rule on applications for teaching certificates when the applicant has a criminal background. Said applicants would have to come before the board and receive unanimous approval. Passed.