The meeting was called to order at 10:15 a.m. by the Chairman, Mr. Gidwitz, who asked Alison Harbour, the staff secretary to the Board, to call the roll. Ms. Harbour called the roll of members. A quorum was present.

The Chairman indicated that Dr. Steiner would be unable to attend the meeting in person this month due to an injury.

Ms. Branch moved that the State Board of Education hereby approves the minutes for the meetings held on December 12-13, 2001, and the Special meeting on January 4, 2002.

Mrs. Rogers seconded the motion, and it was passed by a unanimous voice vote.

The Chairman called for Agenda Item C., Public Participation. The following individuals spoke to the Board.

Jay Runner, Facilitating Coordinator in Agricultural Education in Rantoul, Illinois, spoke to the Board regarding teacher shortage and teacher retention. Mr. Runner explained that his handout contained information which details the agricultural teacher vacancies throughout the state (see Addendum II).
Gary Arnold, representing the Illinois Coalition of Non-public Schools, spoke to the Board regarding what his organization does and what types of non-public schools are represented in the Coalition. He thanked the Board for its continued engagement with the nonpublic school community, and he also expressed appreciation for the textbook loan program and the parent transportation reimbursement program. He informed the Board that fifteen percent of the state’s school population is educated in nonpublic schools. He concluded his comments by listing the following members of the Coalition.

Ad Hoc Committee for Illinois Home Education  
Alternative Schools Network  
Associated Talmud Torahs of Chicago  
Association of Christian Schools International  
Catholic Conference of Illinois (which includes the Archdiocese of Chicago)  
Community Foundation for Jewish Education  
Lutheran Schools (Evangelical, Lutheran Church of American, Missouri & Wisconsin Synod)  
Illinois Association of Christian Schools  
Illinois Montessori Society  
Independent Schools of Greater Chicago  
Islamic Schools  
Seventh Day Adventist Schools  
Solomon Schechter Day Schools  
Waldorf Schools

Heidi Biederman, representing LUDA, provided the Board and the Superintendent with information regarding her association. She thanked the Board for giving her the time to speak to them and she expressed her appreciation to Chairman Gidwitz for meeting with the LUDA superintendents on January 15. She offered the resources of LUDA and the wisdom and expertise of the superintendents. She indicated that her association feels very strongly that the new state superintendent should not be appointed until after the gubernatorial election.

Ms. Biederman stated that LUDA supports quality-balanced assessment and resources to implement staff development properly and successfully. She noted that her organization values comprehensive long-term education funding reform where every child will have an equal educational opportunity no matter where he or she lives. She told the Board that LUDA hopes the next state superintendent will have experience and demonstrated leadership and be a fierce advocate for children and public education.
Terri Devine, a parent from Orland Park, spoke to the Board regarding the Illinois Special Education Improvement Plan. Ms. Devine indicated that she is a parent of a nine-year old son with Down’s Syndrome and also has a daughter in the first grade. She told the Board that her son is educated in a supported manner in a regular education classroom. She commented that she was an attorney, serves on the State Advisory Council for the Education of Children with Disabilities, is a member of the board of directors for the National Association for Down’s Syndrome, and is also a member of the steering committee that began the process of creating the Special Education Improvement Plan for the State of Illinois.

Ms. Devine indicated that the State Advisory Council had held a special meeting recently and were overall supportive of the Plan, its vision, and how it can vastly improve outcomes for children in Illinois. She indicated that in the process of creating the Plan, the work group took a lot of information fundamentally from the steering committee’s efforts in guiding what they needed to present to the federal government. She stated that one of the other things that the group took great guidance from was the information that they received from parents, administrators, and others via input at different public forums.

Ms. Devine stated that it was very important that this Plan be implemented in order to rally the state, parents, and the administrators. She commented that this Plan will make education better for children with special needs and will help teachers and administrators.

Ruth Henning, of Project Choices, spoke to the Board regarding the Illinois Special Education Improvement Plan. She explained that Project Choices was an initiative funded by the Illinois State Board of Education to provide technical assistance to schools on the inclusion of children with disabilities in general education settings. She also indicated that she had been a member of the work group that crafted the Plan. She thanked Dr. Chris Koch and State Board staff for being honest and courageous regarding the level of growth that is needed in Illinois and the benefits that will accrue to children through that growth.
Susan Shea, representing the Illinois Education Association (IEA), spoke to the Board regarding the Middle-Level Certificate, the certification for directors of special education, and the Illinois Special Education Improvement Plan. She asked the Board to delay voting on the Middle-Level Certificate, and she also asked the Board to have more conversations around the issue of grandfathering. She explained that a broader net should be cast to include in the grandfathering provision certificate or approve holders who are not currently employed in these positions. She indicated that IEA was very supportive of having students educated in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), and having them educated in programs where they can make the greatest gains.

Laura Arterburn, representing the Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT), spoke to the Board regarding the Illinois Special Education Improvement Plan. She also welcomed Superintendent Wish and indicated that she agreed with Ms. Shea’s comments regarding the Plan. She indicated that IFT is concerned about the largely quantifiable number which they believe will be a set up for potential failure. She asked the Board to either lower the number or eliminate it. She also expressed concern regarding the cost of the whole process that is going to be necessary to move students into the regular classroom.

Ms. Arterburn noted that she was glad to hear Dr. Chris Koch make the statement that LRE runs the gamut of placements from a very restricted environment, which may be the least restricted environment for that student, to the regular education classroom. She commented that LRE just doesn’t mean regular education classroom but the supports that are going to be necessary and whole process of transition is a very difficult one. She reported that IFT believes that most special education departments in the various schools across the state do have the goal to get the students into the regular education classroom.

Ms. Arterburn indicated that taking a look at increasing the number of teachers that are certified in special education is also important, but it will be a tough road ahead especially with the projected teacher shortages and unstable economy. She closed her comments by informing the Board that most of the people that were a part of the (Office of Special Education Programs) OSEP committee have always fought for inclusion. She stated that she was not sure that the other side had been represented – the side that believes inclusion is not the answer in all cases.
Cynthia Woods, representing the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB), spoke to the Board regarding the Illinois Special Education Improvement Plan. She stated that she had served as a member of the steering committee representing the IASB and she had been peripherally involved in the entire process. She commented that the five goals presented were indeed lofty and she applauded them. She noted that these goals had come out of lots of time and effort.

Ms. Woods said that the goals are focused and results oriented and this is what her Association likes. She praised Chairman Gidwitz’s questions regarding the funding of the Plan and the right and successful way to implement it. She explained that it will be necessary to proceed cautiously with the implementation of the Plan. She commented that she also agreed with Ms. Shea and Ms. Arterburn’s comments and is very concerned about the funding issue. She encouraged the Board to look at this issue further.

Donna Baiocchi, representing ED-RED, spoke to the Board regarding the Illinois Special Education Improvement Plan. She wished everyone a happy “New Year” and also welcomed Superintendent Wish. She thanked Chairman Gidwitz and Mrs. Rogers for attending a meeting at the ED-RED offices regarding the superintendent search. She indicated that the meeting had been very successful and she appreciated their participation.

Ms. Baiocchi addressed the issues regarding the draft improvement plan developed by the OSEP work group. She indicated that there had been controversy regarding the process that was used to complete the self assessment. She stated that the controversy had been greatly diminished due to the efforts of Dr. Chris Koch, Respicio Vazquez, and others. She stated that she had attended discussion meetings in December and January which helped everyone better understand the requirements that will be put upon them by the federal government. She noted that after being apprised of the rationale that was used to arrive at the five goals she now has a better understanding of the Plan.

Ms. Baiocchi stated that ED-RED cannot take a position at this time in regard to supporting this document because of the measures. She explained that ED-RED’s membership is diverse and there is some discussion that still needs to be held. She disagreed with the belief that schools that receive little outside state or federal money may not be concerned with compliance. She stated that these schools do not get a lot of money from the state, but what they do get is important to them and is vital to their operation.
Ms. Baiocchi commented that federal dollars in the area of special education form a large percentage of these schools operating budgets compared to other dollars that the districts may get. She noted that the special education funding formula has been omitted in the Plan. She explained that ED-RED believes that special education funding in Illinois needs to be revised to conform to IDEA requirements and she offered ED-RED’s assistance in any way possible to affect that change.

An audio tape of the meeting is available through the State Board office in Springfield (217/782-9560).

**NBPTS Donations**

The Chairman added an agenda item, National Board Professional Teaching Standards Certification (NBPTS) donations.

Chairman Gidwitz acknowledged the receipt of checks from the following organizations.

- Illinois Business Roundtable - $200,000
- Illinois Federation of Teachers - $25,000
- Illinois Education Association - $25,000

The Chairman indicated that this money would be used to support the efforts of Teachers to pursue NBPTS certification. He thanked the organizations for their generous donations.

**Special Education Improvement Plan**

The Chairman called for Agenda Item D., Action Items, Illinois Special Education Improvement Plan.

Chairman Gidwitz called for a motion to authorize the submission of the Plan to United States Department of Education.

**Motion**

Mr. Sandsmark moved that the State Board of Education hereby authorizes the submission of the Continuous Improvement Plan for Special Education to the United States Department of Education.

Mrs. McConachie seconded the motion.
Vote on Motion

The Chairman called for a roll call vote on the motion. The motion passed with the following votes recorded.

Ms. Branch - yes    Mrs. Rogers - yes    Mrs. Turkal - yes
Mr. Gidwitz - yes   Mr. Sandsmark - yes
Mrs. McConachie - yes    Mr. Serritella - yes

Standards

The Chairman called for Agenda Item D., Actions Items, Standards and Panel Recommendations.

Superintendent Wish asked the Board to defer action on the Middle-Level Certificate proposal for one month, pending discussion with the Regional Superintendents and with other partner and stakeholder groups.

Motion

Mrs. McConachie moved that the Illinois State Board of Education hereby adopts the certificate changes and standards proposed for the director of special education and school services personnel which includes the positions of school counselor, school psychologist, school nurse, and school social worker, and authorizes staff to proceed with implementation.

Mrs. Rogers seconded the motion.

Vote on Motion

The Chairman called for a roll call vote on the motion. The motion passed with the following votes recorded.

Ms. Branch - yes    Mrs. Rogers - yes    Mrs. Turkal - yes
Mr. Gidwitz - yes   Mr. Sandsmark - yes
Mrs. McConachie - yes    Mr. Serritella - yes

Educator Supply & Demand Report

The Chairman called for Agenda Item D., Action Items, Educator Supply and Demand Report.

Chairman Gidwitz called for a motion to approve submission of the Educator Supply and Demand Report.

Motion

Mr. Serritella moved that the Illinois State Board of Education hereby accepts the 2001 Educator Supply and Demand Report, and authorizes its transmittal to the Governor, General Assembly, and institutions of higher education.

Mrs. McConachie seconded the motion.
Vote on Motion
The Chairman called for a roll call vote on the motion. The motion passed with the following votes recorded.

Ms. Branch - yes  Mrs. Rogers - yes  Mrs. Turkal - yes
Mr. Gidwitz - yes  Mr. Sandsmark - yes
Mrs. McConachie - yes  Mr. Serritella - yes

Cumulative Waiver Report
The Chairman called for Agenda Item D., Action Items, Cumulative Waiver Report.
Chairman Gidwitz called for a motion to authorize the submission of the 2002 Cumulative Waiver Report.

Motion
Mrs. Turkal moved that the Illinois State Board of Education hereby authorizes the submission of the 2002 Cumulative Waiver Report which addresses:

- A recommendation to allow the use of certain legal school holidays as commemorative holidays, provided appropriate instruction is presented;

- A discussion of the difficulty districts face in administering the Prairie State Achievement Exam and providing a full school day for all students, and a summary of the type of amendments that could be proposed to address these difficulties;

- A recommendations to change the due dates for the Cumulative Waiver Report and spring Waiver report to November 1 and March 1 respectively; and

- A discussion of the Board’s Physical Education Policy on Waivers.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Branch.

Vote on Motion
The Chairman called for a roll call vote on the motion. The motion passed with the following votes recorded.

Ms. Branch - yes  Mrs. Rogers - yes  Mrs. Turkal - yes
Mr. Gidwitz - yes  Mr. Sandsmark - yes
Mrs. McConachie - yes  Mr. Serritella - yes
Rules.

The Chairman called for Agenda Item D., Action Items, Rules, Part 140 (Calculation of Excess Cost under Section 18-3 of the School Code).

Motion

Mrs. Rogers moved that the State Board of Education hereby authorizes solicitation of public comment on the proposed amendments to the rules for Calculation of Excess Cost under Section 18-3 of the School Code (23 Illinois Administrative Code 140), including publication of the proposed amendments in the *Illinois Register*.

Mrs. McConachie seconded the motion.

Vote on Motion

The Chairman called for a roll call vote on the motion. The motion passed with the following votes recorded.

Ms. Branch - yes     Mrs. Rogers - yes     Mrs. Turkal - yes
Mr. Gidwitz - yes    Mr. Sandsmark - yes
Mrs. McConachie - yes Mr. Serritella – yes

Supt. Search Firm Contract

Chairman Gidwitz called for a motion to approve the Search Firm Contract.

Motion

Mrs. Rogers moved that the Illinois State Board of Education hereby approves the award of a contract to Proact Search, Inc. for an amount not to exceed $56,493 to secure search services for the next State Superintendent of Education. Further the Board authorizes the Chairman, Ronald J. Gidwitz, to execute said contract.

Mrs. McConachie seconded the motion.

Vote on Motion

The Chairman called for a roll call vote on the motion. The motion passed with the following votes recorded.

Ms. Branch - yes     Mrs. Rogers - yes     Mrs. Turkal - yes
Mr. Gidwitz - yes    Mr. Sandsmark - yes
Mrs. McConachie - yes Mr. Serritella – yes

Chairman

The Chairman called for Agenda Item E., Announcements and Reports, Chairman. There was nothing further to report.
The Chairman called for Agenda Item E., Announcements and Reports, Superintendent. Superintendent Wish commented that he had enjoyed his first meeting and appreciated the observations of individual Board members with respect to the matters that come before them in the Board meetings.

Mrs. Rogers stated that the Board’s Search Committee would begin the process of compiling the results from the state-wide constituents meetings and start the development of defining a profile which would be presented to the Board at the February meeting. Mrs. McConachie stated that additional updates regarding the search process would also be communicated to the public. She also reported that the focus group meetings are still being held around the state regarding the superintendent search.

Ms. McConachie reported that the Strategic Planning Committee would be meeting soon to discuss changes in the Board Bylaws relative to the Board’s oversight of policy action, contract action, and personnel issues. She also stated that the Committee looked forward to working with the new director of the Agency’s Planning and Performance department regarding strategic planning issues.

Mrs. McConachie reported that she would be serving on the NASBE Future of High Schools Study Committee and would be attending a meeting of this group in the next couple of days. She also indicated that this Committee would be meeting three times during the year and producing a report in the fall. She commented that Mrs. Turkal would be serving on the NASBE Governmental Affairs Committee, Dr. Steiner would be serving on the NASBE Study group on the Changing Face of American’s School, and Ms. Branch would be serving on the NASBE Low Performing Schools Study Group.

Mrs. McConachie commented that she would be speaking on the subject of the NASBE e-Learning report at the American Software Manufacturers meeting in Washington, DC next week. She noted that the NASBE report was having considerable currency around the country. She explained that this report is being used at the university level, school level, and other places to help advance the development of policy around e-Learning issues.
The Chairman called for Agenda Item G., Announcements and Reports, Members. There was nothing further to report.

Other Business
The Chairman called for Agenda Item F., Other Business. There was nothing further to report.

An audio tape of the meeting is available through the State Board office in Springfield (217/782-9560).

Adjournment
The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Connie Rogers, Secretary

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Ronald J. Gidwitz, Chairman