MEMBERS PRESENT:
Marjorie B. Branch       Marilyn McConachie       Vincent J. Serritella
Ronald J. Gidwitz       Connie Rogers           Beverly Turkal
*Judith A. Gold          Richard Sandsmark

Respicio Vazquez, State Superintendent of Education

MEMBERS ABSENT:
None

Roll Call
The meeting was called to order at 10:35 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 *Ms. Gold would be participating in the meeting via telephone.

Approval of Minutes
Ms. Branch moved that the State Board of Education hereby approves the minutes for the meetings held on January 16-17, the Special meeting on January 30, and the emergency meeting on February 1, 2002.

Mr. Sandsmark seconded the motion, and it was passed by a unanimous voice vote.

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

James Hess, an attorney representing the Rockford School District, spoke to the Board regarding the YouthBuild Charter School application. Mr. Hess stated that he would be confining his remarks to the financial soundness of the Rockford YouthBuild Charter School application. He noted that the original application was submitted on June 16, 2001, and it provided for 100% of the per capita tuition rate at the time which was $7471.00. He said that the application also stated that the special education expenses would be provided by the applicants, and he commented that the application assumed there would be an 85% attendance rate. He reported that between June 16 and the public hearing there were many discussions held with the applicants.
Mr. Hess stated that the applicants submitted a revised proposal after the hearing that had a variable rate, which was anywhere from 88-95%. He noted that the application also provided that the assumption on the attendance rate would be 90% and there was a proviso that if this was not accepted and recommended to the school district board, that it would be withdrawn. He indicated that the application was not accepted by the committee and was withdrawn. He said that if the State Board looks at the application and the revised proposal, it will better understand the financial condition of both parties.

The Chairman informed Mr. Hess that the State Board had decided to consider this matter at a later date because the Board wanted to take the time to carefully review all of the material regarding the application and the hearing. He asked Superintendent Vazquez to have staff work with Mr. Hess to make sure that the Rockford School District’s point of view is succinctly represented to the Board at its upcoming Special Board meeting on this issue.

Donna Baiocchi, Executive Director of ED-RED, spoke to the Board regarding the renewed search for a State Superintendent of Education. She explained that she was speaking on behalf of 116 school districts. She indicated that everyone was aware of the recent history of the State Superintendent’s position and the controversy, concern, and confusion that it has caused. She urged the Board to stay on track regarding the search for the State Superintendent and adhere to their search timeline.

Ms. Baiocchi told the Board that the State Superintendent should be a superior educator, and she commented that effective education is as much an art as it is a science. She noted that the new State Superintendent should thoroughly understand that improved teaching and learning is not as simple as a mathematical progression, especially when you relate to each student as an individual, each with his or her own package of strengths, weaknesses, and learning characteristics. She said that the thrust of the State Board’s efforts so far has been to find a State Superintendent who practices a business model for educational governance.

Ms. Baiocchi commented that there is no question that the State Superintendent must be accountable for results and must create a culture in the Agency that is equally accountable. She also said that she fully agrees that student progress must be measured on a continuing basis, and she favors leadership that sets priorities and funds them accordingly. She noted that the goal of schools is not to continually increase shareholder value, and the scoreboard for schools can not be reduced to a balance sheet or a cash flow statement.
Ms. Baiocchi stated that adopting a business system for the schools may not be the wisest choice. She commented that the next State Superintendent should be first and foremost an experienced and talented educator, and understand the intelligent application of proven accountability and assessment systems to an educational environment. She said the State Board needs a focused and consistent educator with a vision that is guided by an equal vision of fiscal responsibility. She commented that she was concerned that unless the State Board significantly depoliticizes the Agency, the General Assembly will act to reduce or eliminate the State Board’s autonomy.

Ms. Baiocchi said that the effort of recent years to appease concerns of the business community have shifted school governance away from what should be its primary focus – improved teaching and learning. She asked the Board to make the State Superintendent’s contract coterminous with the term of the Governor, and then step back and let him or her do the job. She thanked the Board for the opportunity to address them.

Laura Arterburn, representing the Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT), spoke to the Board regarding the State Board of Education staffing issues. She indicated that she was concerned about the State Board’s productivity because of the changes that have gone on at the Agency in such a relatively short time. She commented that people work better when they are feeling confident, which makes them feel more relaxed and even happy in their work effort. She asked the Board to put their reorganization efforts on hold, especially until the budget matter is settled.

Ms. Arterburn commented that to reorganize before the budget is addressed would be going back to the old notion that the State Board does something for two or three months and then changes it. She commented that the schools in the State of Illinois would view the State Board with greater confidence if the reorganization was delayed. She also asked the Board to get input regarding the reorganization directly from the people involved with the changes – the staff and the unions.

Kerry Knodle, Executive Director of Comprehensive Solutions, Inc., spoke to the Board regarding the YouthBuild Rockford Charter School application. He indicated that his corporation is the sponsor and developer of this proposed Charter School. He reported that the State Board is being asked to consider a decision that is critical to hundreds of young people in Rockford – the approval of Rockford’s first charter school. He explained that this application, which is the second application that they have submitted to District 205 in the last two and one-half years, is the result of a need that is critical in the community. He commented that the need is an educational environment that provides a combination of drop-out recovery, solid academic preparation, vocational training, workforce preparation, and support services (see Addendum II).
Mr. Knodle extended his appreciation to the Rockford School District and the State Board staff for the work that has been done regarding this application. He stated that if this application is approved, his corporation will operate a high-quality school that will achieve its intended results. He indicated that they will work in earnest to craft a contract that will be equitable to all parties involved, and he urged the Board to make a timely decision on this issue. Mr. Knodle thanked the Board for their consideration.

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

YouthBuild
Rockford Charter School
Chairman Gidwitz indicated that the Board had decided to delay final action on this agenda item because additional information is needed. He indicated that March 15 is the deadline for taking action on this issue, and a special Board meeting will be arranged via conference call to discuss this agenda item.

Rules
Chairman Gidwitz called for motions to approve Rules -- Part 26, 27, 29; Rules – Reading Improvement Program (23 Illinois Administrative Code 260); Rules – New Part 23; and Rule Amendments to Part 252.

Motion
Mr. Serritella moved that the State Board of Education hereby adopts the proposed rulemaking for:

Standards for Certification in Early Childhood Education and in Elementary Education (23 Illinois Administrative Code 26);

Standards for Certification in Specific Teaching Fields (23 Illinois Administrative Code 27); and

Standards for Administrative Certification (23 Illinois Administrative Code 29).

Further, the Board authorizes the State Superintendent of Education to make such technical or nonsubstantive changes as the State Superintendent may deem necessary in response to suggestions or objections of the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules.

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. McConachie - yes  Mr. Serritella - yes
Mr. Gidwitz - yes  Mrs. Rogers - yes  Dr. Steiner - yes
Ms. Gold - yes  Mr. Sandmark - yes  Mrs. Turkal – yes

Motion

Dr. Steiner moved that the State Board of Education hereby adopts the proposed rulemaking for:

Reading Improvement Program (23 Illinois Administrative Code 260).

Further, the Board authorizes the State Superintendent of Education to make such technical or nonsubstantive changes as the State Superintendent may deem necessary in response to suggestions or objections of the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules.

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. McConachie - yes  Mr. Serritella - yes
Mr. Gidwitz - yes  Mrs. Rogers - yes  Dr. Steiner - yes
Ms. Gold - yes  Mr. Sandmark - yes  Mrs. Turkal – yes

Motion

Mrs. Turkal moved that the State Board of Education hereby authorizes solicitation of public comment on the proposed rulemaking for:


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. McConachie - yes  Mr. Serritella - yes
Mr. Gidwitz - yes  Mrs. Rogers - yes  Dr. Steiner - yes
Ms. Gold – not present for vote  Mr. Sandmark - yes  Mrs. Turkal - yes
Motion

Mr. Sandsmark moved that the State Board of Education hereby authorizes solicitation of public comments on the proposed rulemaking for:

Driver Education (23 Illinois Administrative Code 252), 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. McConachie - yes  Mr. Serritella - yes
Mr. Gidwitz - yes  Mrs. Rogers - yes  Dr. Steiner - yes
Ms. Gold - yes  Mr. Sandsmark - yes  Mrs. Turkal - yes

Chairman

The Chairman called for Agenda Item E., Announcements and Reports, Chairman. Chairman Gidwitz extended his thanks for everyone’s time and attention to the issues of the past month, and especially thanked Superintendent Vazquez and staff for working tirelessly on the reorganization. He also thanked the Superintendent for his willingness to serve as State Superintendent of Education and he indicated that he was looking forward to working with him.

Supt.

The Chairman called for Agenda Item E., Announcements and Reports, Superintendent. Superintendent Vazquez reported that State Board staff would be participating in the High Priority Schools Conference on February 27-28 in Itasca. He commented that this conference would provide a great opportunity for dialogue with key partners and Academic Early Warning List districts on how we can improve the academic situations in those local school districts. He also said that this conference would give us a chance to spark some new ideas and partnerships in improvement.

Superintendent Vazquez thanked the staff who put the Board packet together, and he also thanked the Agency’s employees for their patience during the reorganization effort. He stated that it was a very difficult time for everyone, and he said that he had tried to keep staff and the unions apprised of the changes. He also commented that he would welcome alternative ideas from the unions regarding the reorganization plan.

Mrs. McConachie also expressed her appreciation to the staff and commended them for doing quality work under difficult conditions. She indicated that the Agency Core Leaders have gone to great lengths to make the transition easier and to keep the business of the Board proceeding in a dignified and effective fashion.
Committees

The Chairman called for Agenda Item G., Announcements and Reports, Committees.

Mrs. Rogers stated that the Board Operations Committee is currently in the process of trying to set up meetings with the six area regions regarding the middle school recertification issue. She noted the next meeting of the Operations Committee would be held on Thursday, February 28.

Mrs. Turkal stated that staff members Peter Leonis and Randy Burge had both given very succinct legislative reports at yesterday’s meeting. She noted that the legislative scene would be very busy in the next couple of weeks.

Ms. McConachie reported that the Chairman had given the Strategic Planning Committee a new assignment regarding revising the Board Bylaws. She commented that the Committee would be reporting back to the Board about this assignment at next month’s meeting.

Mrs. McConachie reported that on March 8-9 she would be attending the NASBE Future of High Schools Study Committee meeting in Washington, DC, and Mrs. Turkal would be attending the NASBE Legislative Conference also in Washington, DC on March 7-8.

Members

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

______________________________________
Ronald J. Gidwitz, Chairman