

MEETING SUMMARY
EARLY CHILDHOOD SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE
HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Monday, November 26, 2012
1:30 P.M.
Room 171, State Capitol
Little Rock, Arkansas

Representative Debra Hobbs, the Chair of the Early Childhood Subcommittee of the House Interim Committee on Education, called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

MEMBERS OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE: Representative Debra Hobbs, Chair; Representative James McLean, Vice Chair; Representative Ann Clemmer; and Representative Tim Summers.

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE: Senator Joyce Elliott; Representative Les Carmine; Representative Jon Eubanks; Representative David Fielding; Representative Billy Gaskill; Representative Clark Hall; Representative Justin Harris; Representative Homer Lenderman; Representative Uvalde Lindsey; Representative Fredrick Love; Representative Buddy Lovell; Representative Loy Mauch; Representative Tracy Pennartz; Representative Randy Stewart; Representative Butch Wilkins; Representative Jon Woods; Representative Tommy Wren; and Representative Marshall Wright.

MEMBERS-ELECT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE: Representative-Elect Charles Armstrong; Representative-Elect Charlotte Douglas; and Representative-Elect Micah Neal.

Minutes:

Without objection, the minutes of January 9, 2012, were approved as written.

Exhibit:

Exhibit C – 01/09/12 Minutes

Continued Discussion of Interim Study Proposal (ISP) 2011-030 by Representative Mauch, TO AMEND THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MINIMUM AGE FOR ENROLLMENT IN PUBLIC SCHOOL KINDERGRTEN

Presenter & Synopsis:

The Honorable Loy Mauch, State Representative, District 26, was recognized. Representative Mauch stated his issue with the requirement that a child must be five years old as of August 1 in order to start kindergarten, and said it was his aim to add flexibility to the start date.

Contributors to the Discussion (in order of testimony):

Ms. Tonya Russell, Director, Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education, Arkansas Department of Human Services

Ms. Mary Kathryn Stein, Public School Program Coordinator, Division of Learning Services, Arkansas Department of Education

Mr. Mark Hudson, Senior Legislative Analyst, Bureau of Legislative Research

Ms. Cheryl Reinhart, Staff Attorney, Legal Division, Bureau of Legislative Research

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- flexibility of start date for kindergarten in standards,
- acceleration policy for gifted children,
- need for standards to be codified,
- appealing a start date,
- placement committee as part of the identification process in a school district,
- clarification between gifted and talented and non-gifted and talented in regulations,
- interpretation of statutory minimum age requirement, and
- statewide testing of children to assess readiness to enter kindergarten.

Exhibits:

Exhibit D1 – Interim Study Proposal (ISP) 2011-030

Exhibit D2 – State Statutes Concerning Early Admission to Kindergarten

Exhibit D3 – Kindergarten Early Admission Standards Policy

Exhibit D4 – Public School Funding Formulas

Exhibit D5 – Draft House Bill, AN ACT TO ALLOW EARLY ADMISSION TO KINDERGARTEN FOR EXTRAORDINARY CHILDREN WHO DO NOT MEET THE MINIMUM AGE REQUIREMENT; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Overview of the Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) Program

Presenter and Synopsis:

Ms. Tonya Russell, Director, Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education, Arkansas Department of Human Services, was recognized. Ms. Russell discussed brain development, history, funding, children served, the ABC delivery model, program information, teacher qualifications, child assessment, and the recognition received by Arkansas for its pre-K programs.

Contributor to the Discussion:

Mr. Breck Hopkins, Chief Counsel, Arkansas Department of Human Services

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- educational and licensure requirements for ABC teachers,
- staff qualifications,
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funding,
- effect of loss of funding on the program,
- funding formula,
- changing the funding formula to a voucher system,
- addressing conflicts in processes,
- use of “faith-based” on the application,
- designated interpreter of the rules, and
- providing a legal definition of a *sectarian* program.

PowerPoint Presentation:

Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) Update

Exhibits:

Exhibit E1 – Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) Program Statute

Exhibit E2 – Rules Governing the Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) Program
Exhibit E3 – Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) Fast Facts

Handout:

Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) Update (*hard copy of PowerPoint presentation*)

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 2:53 p.m.

Approved: 06/10/13