

## MEETING SUMMARY

**JOINT MEETING  
OF THE  
HOUSE AND SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEES ON EDUCATION**

**Tuesday, April 22, 2014  
11:00 A.M.**

**Mary Mae Jones Elementary School  
500 SE 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
Bentonville, Arkansas**

Senator Johnny Key, the Chair of the Senate Interim Committee on Education, called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

**MEMBERS OF THE SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE:** Senator Johnny Key, Chair; Senator Joyce Elliott, Vice Chair; and Senator Jim Hendren.

**MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE:** Representative Charles L. Armstrong; Representative Les Carnine; Representative Charlotte Vining Douglas; and Representative Debra Hobbs.

**NON-VOTING MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE:** Representative Jim Dotson.

**OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE:** Representative Charlene Fite; and Representative Sue Scott.

Welcome and Overview

Senator Key welcomed Committee members to the Mary Mae Jones Elementary School. The members watched “The Leader in Me” video, followed by classroom visits.

Handouts:

Mary Mae Jones Elementary, Documents  
Mary Mae Jones Jaguars, Vol. 3, Issue 8, April 2014  
Mary Mae Jones Elementary, Leadership Day Agenda  
Mary Mae Jones Elementary, Vision Statement, “The Leader in Me”  
Mrs. Mary Mae Jones, Vita

Presentation Regarding School Report Cards Developed by the Office for Education Policy

Presenter:

**Dr. Gary Ritter**, Director, Office for Education Policy, University of Arkansas, was recognized, and stated that the Office for Education Policy (OEP) provides data and education research to policy makers. He presented the 2013 Arkansas Report Card and reviewed the following topics: Benchmark Exam, Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) Exam, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Math Performance, NAEP Reading Performance, End-of-Course (EOC) Exam, and Graduation Rates. He noted that enrollment in Arkansas schools has changed since 2004-2005 when school districts were consolidated. The number of districts decreased from over 300 to well under 300. As the districts decreased, the number of students per district increased. Dr. Ritter reported that Arkansas schools serve approximately 485,000 students. Demographically, schools are seeing an increasing number of low-income students. In 2004-2005, over 50 percent of students were eligible for free or reduced lunches, and, as of this past year,

61 percent were eligible. Racial demographics have not changed significantly over the years; compared to other states, Arkansas is not diverse--two out of three students are white. Benchmark, EOC, Norm Referenced Test, and NAEP test scores are used to measure statewide performance prior to graduation rates. The Benchmark Math and Literacy test scores showed significant increases in performance between 2004-05 and 2011-12. High school students are measured by the Arkansas EOC Exam given in Algebra, Geometry, Grade 11 Literacy, and Biology. Despite fluctuations over the years, the NAEP reading test scores for 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students have steadily increased; however, test scores still remain below the national average. Arkansas's graduation rates are higher than the national average – the overall graduation rate is 84 percent. The southwestern region of the state has the highest graduation rates even though it consists of the highest minority group population in Arkansas.

PowerPoint Presentation:  
OEP School Report Card

Handout:  
2013 Arkansas Report Card  
OEP School Report Card, Handout

The Mary Mae Jones Elementary Fourth Grade Choir gave a choral presentation to the Committees.

Overview of the Arts Education Program at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art

Presenter:

**Mr. Zev Slurzberg**, School Programs Manager, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, was recognized. Mr. Slurzberg explained that teaching from works of art can activate students' prior knowledge, allow students to become emotionally connected to history, increase understanding of self in relation to the world, and exercise language arts skills. Data shows students from rural and high poverty schools benefit from visiting an art museum more so than other students. Mr. Slurzberg said that the Crystal Bridges Museum has programs and tours for students, professional development Saturday sessions for teachers, and other professional development for faculty creatively based on the needs of the school or district.

Senator Key requested information on the number of school districts that have attended the programs at Crystal Bridges Museum and the distance traveled.

PowerPoint Presentation:  
School and Teacher Programs, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art

Handout:  
School and Teacher Programs, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art

Next Scheduled Meeting:  
Tuesday, May 6, 2014, at 10:00 a.m. at Arkadelphia High School, Arkadelphia, Arkansas

Adjournment:  
The meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.