

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

Monday, October 13, 2014
10:00 A.M.
Room 171, State Capitol
Little Rock, Arkansas

Senator Joyce Elliott, the Vice Chair of the Senate Interim Committee on Education, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

MEMBERS OF THE SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE: Senator Joyce Elliott, Vice Chair; Senator Alan Clark; Senator Bruce Holland; and Senator Uvalde Lindsey.

MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE: Representative Ann Clemmer, Vice Chair; Representative Charles L. Armstrong; Representative Les Carnine; Representative Bruce Cozart; Representative Robert Dale; Representative Charlotte Vining Douglas; Representative Jon Eubanks; Representative Debra Hobbs; Representative Karen Hopper; Representative Sheilla Lampkin; and Representative Mark Lowery.

NON-VOTING MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE: Representative Randy Alexander; Representative Stephen Meeks; Representative Reginald Murdock; and Representative Chris Richey.

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE: Senator Linda Chesterfield; Senator Jonathan Dismang; Senator Jeremy Hutchinson; Senator Missy Irvin; Senator David Johnson; Senator Michael Lamoureux; Senator Larry Teague; Representative John Baine; Representative Scott Baltz; Representative Nate Bell; Representative Andy Davis; Representative John Hutchison; Representative Joe Jett; Representative Kelley Linck; Representative Mark McElroy; Representative Josh Miller; Representative Micah Neal; Representative John Payton; Representative John Walker; Representative Tommy Wren; and Representative Marshall Wright.

Morning Session

Minutes:

Without objection, the minutes of August 12, 2014, September 8, 2014, September 9, 2014, and September 25, 2014, were approved as written.

Exhibits:

Exhibit C1 – 08/12/14 Minutes
Exhibit C2 – 09/08/14 Minutes
Exhibit C3 – 09/09/14 Minutes
Exhibit C4 – 09/25/14 Minutes

Remarks by the Vice Chair

Senator Elliott announced that October is National Principals Month, and, in honor of all principals in the state, she presented House and Senate citations to:

Mr. Mark Rash, Assistant Principal, Benton School District, Arkansas Association of Elementary School Principals (AAESP), President

Dr. Steven Wise, Assistant Principal, Little Rock School District, Arkansas Association of Middle Level Administrators (AAMLA), President-Elect, and 2013 AAMLA Assistant Principal of the Year

Ms. Donna Clark, Principal, Midland School District, Arkansas Association of Secondary School Principals (AASSP), President

Mr. Mark Rash was recognized, and, on behalf of all principals, expressed appreciation for the honor.

Senator Elliott thanked the recipients for their work and their contribution to education.

Discussion of Interim Study Proposal (ISP) 2013-001 by Senator David Johnson, REQUESTING THE ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TO CONDUCT AN INTERIM STUDY TO DETERMINE EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES TO ENSURE THAT ALL ARKANSAS STUDENTS ARE READING AT GRADE LEVEL BY THE END OF THE THIRD GRADE BY 2020.

Presenters and Synopses:

The Honorable David Johnson, State Senator, District 32, was recognized. Senator Johnson stated that while Arkansas's education policy is very strong, it continues to lag behind the country on high school graduation, remediation, and college graduation rates. He indicated that much of that shortcoming has roots in early childhood education. He said the key milestone in a child's development is third grade, a point in time when a child should transition from learning to read to reading to learn. He said if a child successfully makes that transition, the child's chance for success in school increases significantly. Senator Johnson said the trick for policymakers is to focus on how to best prepare that child to make the transition. He said this study is about promoting that policy. Senator Johnson introduced speakers who contributed to the proposal.

Ms. Angela Duran, Director, Arkansas Campaign for Grade Level Reading, was recognized, and discussed why the focus of early childhood education is on third grade.

Ms. Jamie Gates, Senior Vice President, Conway Chamber/Conway Development Corp., was recognized, and provided a business perspective on the importance of pre-K programs that prepare children to succeed in school.

Ms. Sylvia Moore, Principal, Marvell-Elaine Elementary School, was recognized, and discussed how summer and afterschool programs can help increase the number of students reading on grade level.

Ms. Jerri Derlikowski, Director, Education Policy and Finance, Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families, was recognized, and highlighted a few key recommendations for moving Arkansas forward so all children can read on grade level.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- cost of using and method of paying for the *CDF(Children's Defense Fund) Freedom Schools* program in the summertime,
- research on benefits of pre-K for children, and
- the Arkansas Campaign for Grade Level Reading and its plans to coordinate with other programs.

Senator Elliott made the comment that Arkansas used to be a "rock star" in the pre-K arena because of the state's use of high-quality national standards, but that now it has been surpassed. She thanked Senator Johnson and the other presenters for their work which is important to the state.

Exhibit:

Exhibit D – ISP 2013-001

Handouts:

GLR Interim Study Presentation, Testimony
GLR Interim Study Report
GLR ISP Legislator Handout

Discussion of Issues Related to Broadband Access for School Districts

Presenters and Synopses:

Ms. Lydia Dobyns, President, New Tech Network, was recognized. Ms. Dobyns described the New Tech Network as a national, non-profit, school development organization. She discussed the national climate for school innovation. She explained how the debate has changed over the past eighteen years from a focus on the value of technology in education and the value of the Internet to a focus of having ubiquitous access for all students. She described collaborating with businesses communities, local school districts, teachers, and parents to develop new ways of having classroom instruction resemble the workplace. She said students learn from projects that have the following characteristics: (1) relevant and tied to the community; and (2) use the tools that employers would expect them to know how to use to be a good employee.

Senator Elliott welcomed students from Arkadelphia and from eStem, and thanked them for coming to today's meeting.

Dr. Matt McClure, Coordinator, Lead 21 Program, Arkansas Tech Center, Arkansas Tech University, was recognized. Dr. McClure discussed a situation pertinent to the technology and Broadband issue that he encountered while serving as Superintendent of the Cross County School District. He also commented on a well-attended recent shareholders' meeting of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), noting that a key finding from the gathering was that Broadband is an issue of access, adequacy, and equity. He concluded with a discussion of potential conflicts with eRate and the procurement process that could cause funding problems in the future. Dr. McClure stated that amending Act 1050 and opening up the Arkansas Research Education Optical Network (ARE-ON) would create opportunities for school districts across the state.

Mr. Cory Biggs, Director of Public Affairs, Arkansas Education Association (AEA), was recognized. Mr. Biggs reported the concern the AEA hears from its members around the state is that Broadband is an issue about school funding. He stated that the Broadband issue is ultimately about what is best for taxpayers' dollars and the role of legislators as stewards of those dollars. He said there are three education technology systems utilizing taxpayers' dollars: 1) Arkansas Public School Computer Network (APSCN), 2) ARE-ON, and 3) private contracts with providers. Mr. Biggs commented that this issue is about everyone working together; but also looking out for the most efficient use of taxpayers' dollars, opening up ARE-ON, and getting the benefit of eRate dollars. He concluded by saying that this is an Adequacy issue.

Ms. Candace Williams, Assistant Executive Director, Rural Community Alliance, was recognized. Ms. Williams commented on the importance and benefits of high-speed internet access to school districts in rural communities.

Mr. Chad Williamson, Noble Impact Instructor, eStem High Public Charter School, was recognized. Mr. Williamson expressed his surprise at the lack of Adequacy and equity across the state for students to access wireless.

Mr. Jordan Young, Student, Noble Impact Program, eStem High Pubic Charter School, was recognized. Mr. Young said that, having lived in a metropolitan area with adequate Broadband, he was shocked that rural areas do not have the same access.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- school districts taking advantage of eRate to pay for Broadband,
- timeline for eRate applications to meet the deadline,
- rates charged by ARE-ON compared to those charged by the Arkansas Department of Information Systems (DIS), and
- calling a Special Session to change legislation to allow ARE-ON to participate.

Receipt and Discussion of the Annual Report of the School Leadership Coordinating Council

Presenters and Synopses:

Dr. Mary Gunter, Chair, School Leadership Coordinating Council, was recognized, and stated this is the fifth annual report made to the Committees since 2009. In a PowerPoint presentation, she reiterated the two focuses of Act 222 of 2009: to strengthen Arkansas educational leadership development and to provide school support. She said the report would be presented in two parts: she would talk about the School Leadership Coordinating Council, while Mr. David Cook, former Arkansas State Representative and author of this legislation, would talk about the work of the Leadership Academy. Dr. Gunter revisited the purposes of the Leadership Coordinating Council.

Mr. Mike Mertens, Assistant Executive Director, Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators, was recognized. Mr. Mertens continued the PowerPoint presentation and discussed progress made over the past year in the Arkansas School Superintendent Mentoring Program.

Ms. Ivy Pfeffer, Assistant Commissioner, Human Resources, Educator Effectiveness and Licensure, Arkansas Department of Education was recognized. Ms. Pfeffer, utilizing the PowerPoint presentation, presented a history of the Leader Excellence and Development System (LEADS), and gave an update on the principal evaluation system and the superintendent evaluation system.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- * optional teacher component to the superintendent survey,
- * phasing in the pilots and looking at data that is gathered to decide what is to be included in the superintendent evaluation system,
- * growth component in the principal and superintendent models,
- * building systems around the 2008 Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards, and looking at revisions to the standards that are up for adoption for 2014,
- * looking at student outcomes in the evaluation standards,
- * voluntary training of school board members who evaluate the superintendents, and
- * the Council working to provide models for evaluation.

PowerPoint Presentation:

A Report to the Arkansas Joint Education Committee, Act 222

Handout:

A Report to the Arkansas Joint Education Committee, Act 222

Senator Elliott announced that there would be a deviation from the agenda, and the Committees would next take up Item H.

Report on the Activities of the Arkansas Task Force for the Prevention Through Education of Child Sexual Abuse

Presenters and Synopses:

The Honorable John Baine, State Representative, District 7, was recognized. Representative Baine provided an introduction and turned the floor over to Ms. Stacy Thompson to present the report.

Ms. Stacy Thompson, Executive Director, Children’s Advocacy Centers of Arkansas (CACA), and Chair, Arkansas Task Force for the Prevention Through Education of Child Sexual Abuse, was recognized. She stated this Task Force was established by Arkansas Act 1298 of 2013 for the purposes of making recommendations for the implementation of child sexual abuse prevention programs in Arkansas public schools, grades K-5, and to study Erin’s Law. She explained that Erin’s Law is a non-profit organization named for its founder, Erin Merry, a child sexual abuse survivor, an author, and an activist. She said the mission of the organization, Erin’s Law, is to require age-appropriate sexual abuse prevention in all public schools. She said this Task Force was directed to provide recommendations about evidence-based instructional programs for grades K-5; recommendations for the instruction to school personnel regarding the warning signs of abuse and their responsibility to report to the appropriate authorities; recommendations for instruction to school personnel, as well as caregivers, about the warning signs and the available community resources upon a disclosure of abuse; and, finally, recommendations for the emotional and educational needs of victims of abuse. Ms. Thompson said the Task Force responded with ten (10) recommendations to these directives. She discussed the findings and recommendations of the Task Force outlined in the comprehensive, detailed Report.

Contributors to the Discussion:

Dr. Karen J. Farst, Arkansas Children’s Hospital, and member of the Arkansas Task Force for the Prevention Through Education of Child Sexual Abuse

Ms. Sherri Jo McLemore, Director, State Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention Board, and member of the Arkansas Task Force for the Prevention Through Education of Child Sexual Abuse

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- programs currently in schools,
- parental involvement and the ability to opt out,
- parents as part of the problem, and
- attempts at implementing best practices and reasons for any lack of success.

Exhibit:

Exhibit H – Act 1298

Handout:

Arkansas Act 1298 of 2013, Report from the Arkansas Task Force for the Prevention Through Education of Child Sexual Abuse

Recess:

Senator Elliott announced that the meeting would recess until 1:00 p.m.

Afternoon Session

Senator Elliott called the meeting back to order at 1:00 p.m. She announced that the Committees would first take up the second part of Item F.

Receipt and Discussion of the Annual Report of the School Leadership Coordinating Council (*continued from the morning session*)

Presenters and Synopses:

Mr. David Cook, Director, Arkansas Leadership Academy, was recognized. Mr. Cook led off a PowerPoint presentation about the Arkansas Leadership Academy. His discussion included statewide partnerships, regional offices, performance areas, the system of programs and institutes, and working with the Student Voice initiative.

Ms. Belinda Akin, School Support Leader, Arkansas Leadership Academy, was recognized. Ms. Akin continued the PowerPoint presentation, talking about the School Support Program (SSP) and what has been done to best impact school districts.

Ms. Jennifer Medeiros, Research Specialist, Arkansas Leadership Academy, was recognized, and delivered information about student achievement data, including comparisons of baseline and current scores in literacy and in math. She said there is a lot of work to do, and change is slow, but results to date have been good.

Mr. Cook returned and talked about the 5-year strategic plan that utilizes an hourglass model. He said there are three things that make a good school: (1) good instruction and teachers, (2) good instructional leaders, and (3) good parent and community involvement.

Issue Included in the Discussion:

≈ Pulaski County going about choosing the teacher leaders that are involved in the leadership program.

PowerPoint Presentation:

The Arkansas Leadership Academy, The Leader in Developing Leaders, Act 222

Handout:

The Arkansas Leadership Academy, The Leader in Developing Leaders, Act 222

Senator Elliott announced that the Committees would return to Item G on the agenda.

Discussion of Interim Study Proposal (ISP) 2013-139 by Representative Alexander, TO ESTABLISH THE PARENTAL CHOICE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM.

Presenters and Synopses:

The Honorable Randy Alexander, State Representative, District 88, was recognized. Representative Alexander discussed several points to help the Committees better understand HB 1897, Parental Choice Scholarship, a copy of which was in members' packets.

Dr. Patrick Wolf, Endowed Chair in School Choice, Department of Education Reform, University of Arkansas, was recognized. Dr. Wolf stated he had been doing research on parental school choice across the country for the last fifteen years. He summarized a rich set of research evaluations that he and fellow researchers have assembled that speak to the fundamental questions raised about school choice:

- ◆ Does school choice improve overall student academic performance?
- ◆ What is the impact of school choice on public schools in the shared community?
- ◆ Are parents, particularly uneducated low income parents, capable of making good school choices for their children?
- ◆ How will school choice affect the cost of K-12 education in Arkansas?

Representative Alexander concluded the presentation with a discussion of the three Findings, Basic Criteria, and Impact to Date of Act 1227 – The School Choice Act of 2013. He stated that Act 1227 should be renewed, but some changes are recommended based on the data provided.

Issue Included in the Discussion:

- effect of Act 60 of the Second Extraordinary Session of 2003 on school choice transfers.

PowerPoint Presentation:

School Choice, Interim Study Committee Report

Exhibit:

Exhibit G – ISP 2013-139

Handout:

School Choice, Interim Study Committee Report

Report on the Pea Ridge Manufacturing & Business Academy, a Conversion Charter School Operated by the Pea Ridge School District

Presenter:

Mr. Rick Neal, Superintendent, Pea Ridge School District, was recognized. In a PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Neal discussed the historical development of the Pea Ridge Manufacturing & Business Academy (PRMBA) and the uniqueness of the career and technology-centered public charter school. He said both colleges and businesses actively participate in PRMBA; and students, especially at the junior and senior level, are in charge of their learning. He said what makes PRMBA unique is its success in delivering both a high-quality general education and specific workforce training to its students, enabling them to secure a job immediately after graduation.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- ≡ populations of students involved in the program,
- ≡ providing pathways for college or employment,
- ≡ identifying businesses for use as partners,
- ≡ evaluating the type and number of business participants,
- ≡ availability of official certifications,
- ≡ training of teachers,
- ≡ demographics of the student population, and
- ≡ accommodating participants in the program.

PowerPoint Presentation:

Pea Ridge Manufacturing and Business Academy

Handout:

Pea Ridge Manufacturing and Business Academy

Next Scheduled Meeting:

Tuesday, October 14, 2014, at 9:00 a.m. in Room 171 of the State Capitol in Little Rock

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 2:25 p.m.

Approved: 11/17/14