

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

**Monday, November 2, 2015**  
**1:30 P.M.**  
**Committee Room A, MAC Building**  
**Little Rock, Arkansas**

Senator Jane English, the Chair of the Senate Interim Committee on Education, called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

**MEMBERS OF THE SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE:** Senator Jane English, Chair; Senator Uvalde Lindsey, Vice Chair; Senator Eddie Cheatham; Senator Alan Clark; and Senator Blake Johnson.

**MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE:** Representative Bruce Cozart, Chair; Representative Sheilla Lampkin, Vice Chair; Representative Charles L. Armstrong; Representative Nate Bell; Representative Charlotte Vining Douglas; Representative Jon Eubanks; Representative Bill Gossage; Representative Michael John Gray; Representative Grant Hodges; Representative Greg Leding; Representative Mark Lowery; Representative Mark McElroy; Representative Reginald Murdock; Representative James Ratliff; and Representative John W. Walker.

**OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE:** Senator Cecile Bledsoe; Senator Joyce Elliott; Representative Karilyn Brown; Representative David Fielding; Representative Charlene Fite; Representative Justin Gonzales; Representative Jack Ladyman; Representative Stephen Magie; Representative Ron McNair; Representative Stephen Meeks; Representative Laurie Rushing; Representative Sue Scott; Representative Brent Talley; and Representative Marshall Wright.

Minutes:

Without objection, the minutes of October 5, 2015 and October 6, 2015, were approved as written.

Exhibits:

Exhibit C1 – 10/05/2015 Minutes

Exhibit C2 – 10/06/2015 Minutes

Reports from Members Who Attended Recent Meetings Concerning Public or Higher Education

Senator English reported on a Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) meeting that took place on October 29 and 30, 2015, in Jacksonville, Florida. She noted a topic of the meeting was credentialing, and moving towards a seamless system from kindergarten through career that results in an educated and skilled workforce. She said, as time moves on, larger conversations will take place on this issue and about policies that may need to be changed in order to put together a seamless system that benefits everybody, and moves the State of Arkansas forward.

**The Honorable Bruce Cozart**, State Representative, District 24, and Vice Chair of the Education Committees, was recognized. Representative Cozart commented that the SREB meeting in Jacksonville, Florida was a great meeting. He stressed the importance of getting everyone on the same page regarding this issue, getting something started, and following through. He placed emphasis on getting kids educated. He said a trained, job-ready workforce will attract companies to Arkansas.

**The Honorable Bill Gossage**, State Representative, District 82, was recognized. Representative Gossage briefly reported on a SREB meeting on the Computer Science Initiative that took place at the Governor's Mansion in Little Rock. He said a report would be given to the Committees next summer.

**The Honorable Brent Talley**, State Representative, District 3, was recognized. Representative Talley welcomed Ms. Staci Shupe's American government class from the University of Arkansas Community College at Hope to the meeting. He noted the class was comprised of concurrent credit students, online students, and traditional students.

**The Honorable Nate Bell**, State Representative, District 20, was recognized. Representative Bell said he recently attended the Foundation for Excellence in Education's 2015 National Summit on Education Reform in Denver, hosted by Dr. Condoleezza Rice. He commented on interesting breakout sessions on small schools, the quality of results coming out of small schools, and data backing up those results. He said he looked forward to bringing a report to the Committees at some future date.

#### Discussion of Closing the Gap 2020: A Master Plan for Arkansas Higher Education

##### Presenter:

**Dr. Brett Powell**, Director, Arkansas Department of Higher Education, was recognized. Dr. Powell stated that *Closing the Gap 2020, A Master Plan for Higher Education in Arkansas*, was presented to the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board on October 30, 2015, and was approved. He clarified that the role of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) in the plan is to provide direction and give guidance that can help make changes and provide opportunities for institutions to improve on educational attainment in Arkansas. Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, Dr. Powell discussed the planning framework, the approach to developing the master plan, and the work going forward. He commented that the planning framework is all about educational outcomes of student success and students achieving the outcomes they desire. He noted the obvious outcome of higher education is a certificate or degree; but, beyond that, education leads to employment. He discussed institutional funding and financial aid funding and how it fits into the process. Dr. Powell's presentation included details on additional relevant issues, including attainment gaps, college enrollments, remediation rates, demographics, the Governor's priorities, objectives, supporting goals, planning efforts, institutional funding, and state financial aid programs.

##### Issues Included in the Discussion:

- benefit of reallocating funds to start up a program,
- availability of data that measures the results of eliminating the achievement gap for minorities across the educational system in Arkansas,
- funding sources for replicating innovative ideas across the state,
- changing policy and setting a new direction at the ADHE,
- double paying for concurrent credit,
- appropriate and adequate expenditure of funds for concurrent credit balancing out with a degree of equity,
- readiness of ninth grade students for enrollment in college concurrent credit courses,
- changing the funding model for college concurrent credit,
- communicating with underserved students to help them get back into the pipeline,
- underserved students missing a key experience by taking concurrent credit courses in high school and not on a college campus,
- assessing readiness for student enrollment in concurrent credit courses in high school,
- impact of college attendance without earning a degree on earnings potential over a lifetime,
- grants helping to address current Career Technical Education (CTE) programs in underserved areas, and
- current status of Upward Bound programs.

PowerPoint Presentation:

Closing the Gap 2020: A Master Plan for Higher Education in Arkansas

Handouts:

Closing the Gap 2020: A Master Plan for Higher Education in Arkansas, Handout

Closing the Gap 2020: A Master Plan for Higher Education in Arkansas, PowerPoint

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

Presenters – Part I:

**Dr. Mary Gunter**, Chair, School Leadership Coordinating Council, was recognized, and stated this is the sixth 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: the first team would discuss the School Leadership Coordinating Council, and Mr. David Cook, former Arkansas State Representative and author of the legislation, and his team, would talk about the work of the Arkansas Leadership Academy (ALA). Dr. Gunter revisited the purposes of the School Leadership Coordinating Council. Dr. Gunter announced that, following today's presentation, Mr. Cook would take over as chair of the council. She said she would remain on the council as a representative of the Arkansas Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development.

**Mr. Mike Mertens**, Assistant Executive Director, Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators, was recognized. Mr. Mertens discussed progress made over the past year in the Arkansas School Superintendent Mentoring Program, currently in its fourth year of operation. He noted that, typically, about twenty-five (25) new superintendents enter the program each year.

**Ms. Ivy Pfeffer**, Assistant Commissioner, Human Resources, Educator Effectiveness and Licensure, Arkansas Department of Education, was recognized. Ms. Pfeffer discussed how the principal evaluation system has evolved into the Leader Excellence and Development System (LEADS). She stated that school leadership is an important component in the support and retention of effective teachers. She said that, in order for school leaders to be effective, they need support and development from their supervisors, which is what the LEADS system is designed to provide. She said LEADS is currently in its second year of implementation, and current work centers on implementation support. She went on to discuss the next steps to be taken to further implementation efforts.

**Dr. Tony Prothro**, Executive Director, Arkansas School Boards Association, was recognized, and discussed superintendent evaluation. Dr. Prothro stated one of the main goals of leadership research has been to align the Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS) and LEADS with teachers and principals in a comparative evaluation system. He said another major goal has been to help school districts as they continue to move strategic planning forward in Arkansas. Dr. Prothro said a review of other state superintendent evaluation systems has been conducted, components to be included within the Arkansas system have been determined, goals have been set, and a timeline has been developed. He said fourteen (14) pilot schools started the program in January, 2015, and a determination was made on what worked and what did not work in the process. He said board members and superintendents were brought back to the table to revise system components and resources. He added that the program will be taking new pilot schools in January, 2016. Dr. Prothro stated the goal for the end of 2016 is to have schools in the State of Arkansas trained in superintendent evaluation.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- source of financing for the program,
- putting students at the center of the leadership program,
- recommendations for empowering the building-level principal and staff,
- concern over racial make-up of the School Leadership Coordinating Council and content of presentation,
- value of training superintendents; training for the position of Commissioner and for the superintendent of the Little Rock School District (LRSD),
- training superintendents to understand fund balances,

- recommended level at which to maintain fund balances, and
- improving evaluations by getting feedback from a larger group of stakeholders.

PowerPoint Presentation:

Act 222 Report to the Arkansas Joint Education Committee

Handout:

Act 222 Report to the Arkansas Joint Education Committee, PowerPoint

Presenters – Part II:

**Mr. David Cook**, Director, Arkansas Leadership Academy, was recognized. Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Cook discussed ALA statewide partnerships and office locations. He additionally discussed the theory of change, the logic model, systems change, and ALA experiences, detailing the kickoff for the IMPACT Institute to take place in January, 2016.

**Mr. Blaine Alexander**, School Support Program Leader, Arkansas Leadership Academy, was recognized. Mr. Alexander gave an overview of the School Support Program, a three-year process for the purpose of building leadership and leader capacity in a school. He said the process is grounded in research and proven best practices, and is based on the leadership development system. He discussed the approach and impact of the process. Mr. Alexander also commented on the Organizational Development program, a one-year process which provides support for system-wide improvement through building leadership capacity at all levels. He described a new initiative, the Student Voice Institute, developed for the purpose of creating a collaborative learning culture between teachers and students.

Mr. Cook mentioned the Equitable Access program in which the ALA has partnered with the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) to increase teacher leadership capacity in individual schools.

**Ms. Jennifer Medeiros**, Research and Data Specialist, Arkansas Leadership Academy, was recognized. Ms. Medeiros continued the discussion of the Equitable Access program. She next reported on student achievement data in current School Support Program schools, and on recent presentations, research, and published work.

Mr. Cook said he anticipated working with ForwARd Arkansas as they get into the implementation of their study.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- ◆ source of funding for programs vs. disparity in distribution of benefits,
- ◆ addressing the ABC grading system,
- ◆ data on supported vs. non-supported programs in the state,
- ◆ workload carried by the ALA, and
- ◆ overcoming past deficiencies in education.

PowerPoint Presentation:

Act 222 Arkansas Leadership Academy

Handouts:

Act 222 Arkansas Leadership Academy, PowerPoint  
Arkansas Leadership Academy, Brochure

Discussion of the ForwARd Arkansas Report, **THE STATE OF EDUCATION IN ARKANSAS**

Presenters:

**Ms. Kathy Smith**, Senior Program Officer, Arkansas Education Reform Initiative, The Walton Family Foundation, was recognized. Ms. Smith presented a brief overview of *The State of Education in Arkansas, 2015 Full Report*, reviewing the process, the visions and aspirations, and the plans going forward.

**Mr. Cory Anderson**, Executive Vice President, Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, was recognized. Mr. Anderson presented a summary of recommendations to enable Arkansas to become a leader in 21<sup>st</sup> century preparedness. He included those for Pre-K, support beyond the classroom, teaching and learning, leadership, teacher pipeline, turnaround of schools in academic distress, and systems and policies.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- \* time constraints for working on academic distress,
- \* the ForwARd vision and providing an adequate education,
- \* areas in which to place new money or to reallocate resources,
- \* impact of waivers on academically distressed schools,
- \* providing the same educational opportunities for all students,
- \* taking ownership of the vision and making an investment in the public education system,
- \* engaging the community, and
- \* addressing inequities and disparities in school districts, especially in the Delta region.

PowerPoint Presentation:

Update ForwARd Arkansas

Handouts:

The State of Education in Arkansas, 2015 Full Report  
Update ForwARd Arkansas, PowerPoint

Next Scheduled Meeting:

Tuesday, November 3, 2015, at 9:00 a.m. in Committee Room A, MAC Building, Little Rock

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 4:57 p.m.

*Approved: 12/14/15*