

EXHIBIT B

MINUTES

LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON BEST PRACTICES FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

Meeting

Wednesday, November 4, 2015

The Legislative Task Force on Best Practices for Special Education met on Wednesday, November 4, 2015 at 1:00 p.m., in Room 130 of the State Capitol Building, in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Members in Attendance

The following legislators attended: Senators Uvalde Lindsey; Chair; and Blake Johnson. Representatives Tim Lemons, Vice Chair; and Sheilla Lampkin. Non-legislative members: Mr. Richard Abernathy, Ms. Carla Brainard, Ms. Lisa Haley, Barbara Hunter-Cox, Ms. Renee Johnson, Ms. Sarah Moore, Ms. Bailey Perkins, Ms. Debra Poulin, Ms. Shirley Ann Renix, Dr. Bruce Smith, Ms. Lisa Tisdale-Parker, Ms. Tina Vineyard, Ms. Cindy Marie Weathers, Ms. Angela Winfield and Mr. Samuel Young.

Other legislators attending: Representatives David Fielding, Julie Mayberry, and Dan Sullivan.

Senator Lindsey called the meeting to order.

Consideration to Approve the September 16, and October 7, 2015 Minutes. Without objection, the minutes were approved.

Senator Lindsey stated that Ms. Vicki Holt could no longer serve on the task force, therefore he asked Mr. Rich Abernathy, Executive Director of Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators to serve or recommend someone to fill the vacancy. Mr. Abernathy informed the task force that he would select a superintendent to serve on the task force.

Discussion of Task Force Duties and Responsibilities as Outlined in Act 839 [EXHIBIT C]

Ms. Lisa Haley, Associate Director, Special Education, Division of Learning Services, Arkansas Department of Education (ADE), was recognized and presented a PowerPoint presentation entitled, "Arkansas IDEA Part B Determination/Results-Driven Accountability [Handout 3]. She discussed the Determination and explained how it relates to the goals of the task force. According to Ms. Haley, the Determination is based on a combination of compliance and results. In the past, special education has always been a part of the ADEs accountability system. Some categories discussed included primary monitoring focus, shifting focus-improvement in compliance vs. results, compliance matrix-Part B IDEA indicators, reading assessments elements, math assessments elements, existing data elements, results and compliance overall scoring, results-driven accountability percentage and determination. Ms. Haley noted that two new items were added to the Determination that included the percentage of children with disabilities who dropped out and the percentage of children with disabilities who graduated with a regular high school diploma.

Nationally, Arkansas' outcomes for compliance are much better than what they were 8 years ago. Ms. Haley explained that determinations are based on 50% compliance and 50% results. She reported that a couple of states went from needs assistance to meet requirements. Ms. Haley will investigate data to determine what caused Missouri's shift from out of compliance to meeting the requirements to ascertain what the state did differently and will present the results in August. Moreover, Arkansas' overall results

and compliance and compliance score were 100%; results point of 45.83% and the results-driven accountability percentage and determination of 72.92% was needs assistance. In order to meet the

requirements, states must have a score of 80% or above. Senator Lindsey informed the task force that Ms. Haley's information addresses Item B on the Matrix [Handout 1]. He stated that this information along with sections of the PowerPoint presentation will be incorporated into the report. It was noted that school districts receive funds to engage parents in their child's education.

The main purposes of the IDEA:

- to ensure that children with disabilities have a free appropriate public education and their rights are protected,
- assist states and localities,
- ensure educators and parents have necessary tools; and
- to assess and ensure effectiveness.

Ms. Haley also discussed ADEs evaluation procedures for special education and the services and support that are provided through the Special Education Unit.

Current Practice for Identifying Students for Special Education Services and Programs [Handout 1]

Referencing Handout 2, pages 6-10, comparing students' participation in various assessments, Senator Lindsey expressed that the task force will combine this information into the report with Ms. Haley's information to have a holistic pattern from two separate sources. Staff will update the Matrix before the next meeting date. Senator Lindsey stated that other subjects to be discussed in future meetings include:

- pre-K and head start programs,
- before and after school programs,
- summer school programs,
- school districts with high scores among their special education students; and
- what is meant by exemplary program i.e. good test scores, transition program, teacher ratios, support services, etc.

Ms. Haley will contact the OSEP evaluation team or technical assistance providers to invite them to a future meeting to discuss which states have had the biggest change in specific areas in an effort to perform research based on the their data. If the providers are unable to attend a future meeting, Ms. Haley will request data on states that did make gains and what their perceptions are as to why those gains were made. Ms. Hunter-Cox noted that OSEP may be able to provide feedback on Matrix Items 4, 6, or 8 as well. Senator Lindsey added the task force will seek information from NCSL and SREB for state to state comparisons. He noted that RTI Arkansas data will be incorporated into the report.

Ms. Haley discussed the process of evaluating students for disabilities. Referencing regulation #6—initial evaluations for students for IDEA of ADEs Procedures and Programs Standards Guide, Ms. Haley stated there are general procedures for evaluating students for the IDEA eligibility. She suggested the task force invite a school psychology specialist to discuss specific areas.

Task Force Assignment Updates

Ms. Perkins gave a brief update regarding Arkansas' paraprofessional's salaries and how they compare to other states. Paraprofessional's salaries are determined at the district level. According to Ms. Perkins, Texas and Georgia paraprofessionals' were paid hourly rates ranging from \$8 to \$13 depending on the location. Arkansas is on the lower end of how it pays paraprofessionals. Senator Lindsey mentioned that a special education specialist could assist professionals by serving in an administrative role; scheduling parent interviews and coordinating the calendar for the school district. He noted that this individual would be highly educated and paid more than paraprofessionals.

Ms. Johnson gave an update on streamlining paperwork. She stated that her district has a designee that arranges all of the conferences and does all of the scheduling. During the 2014 annual review period, she completed her own assessment as to how many hours it took to complete 28 student's paperwork. According to Ms. Johnson, between February and April it took a total of 176 hours; 7 hours per student to complete the paperwork. For the 2015 annual review, Ms. Johnson saved 2 hours per student by completing the narrative of the progress that each student had made to plug into the annual review. As a result, it only took 4½ hours per student to complete the annual review. According to Ms. Johnson, teachers in her district are benefiting from the streamlining components she completed noting, that they have been implemented into the training course.

Referencing Item A, F, H on the Matrix, Senator Lindsey informed the task force that these items will be discussed in December. He said that time will be spent discussing the individualized education program (IEP) process. It was noted the task force first report is due February 1, 2016 and the second report is due in September.

Next Meeting Date

The next committee meeting will be **Wednesday, December 9, 2015 at 10:00 am and 1:00 pm (if necessary) in Room 130 of the State Capitol Building.**

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:50 PM.