

1 State of Arkansas  
2 84th General Assembly  
3 Second Extraordinary Session, 2003  
4

Call Item 4

# A Bill

SENATE BILL 69

5 By: Senator Steele  
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## For An Act To Be Entitled

9 AN ACT TO CREATE A COMMITTEE ON OPPORTUNITY,  
10 EQUITY, AND FAIRNESS WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF  
11 EDUCATION; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.  
12

## Subtitle

13 AN ACT TO CREATE A COMMITTEE ON  
14 OPPORTUNITY, EQUITY, AND FAIRNESS WITHIN  
15 THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.  
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19 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:  
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21 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 25, Chapter 6, Subchapter 1 is amended  
22 to add an additional section to read as follows:

23 25-6-107. Committee on Opportunity, Equity, and Fairness.

24 (a) As used in this section:

25 (1) "Clearinghouse" means an office that:

26 (A) Mediates between the State Board of Education or the  
27 Department of Education and school districts concerning opportunity, equity,  
28 and fairness in the public schools; and

29 (B) In matters concerning opportunity, equity, and  
30 fairness in public schools, ensures that:

31 (i) All proper procedures and protocols are followed  
32 in handling the mediation;

33 (ii) Information related to the mediation is  
34 disseminated efficiently and effectively to all parties; and

35 (iii) All parties clearly and fully understand the  
36 process, the law, and their rights under the law; and



1           (2) "Minority school" means a school in which sixty percent  
 2 (60%) or more of the average daily membership are minority students as  
 3 defined in § 1-2-503.

4           (b) There is created the Committee on Opportunity, Equity, and  
 5 Fairness in Education to be housed within the department.

6           (c) The committee shall:

7           (1) Ensure that decisions by the state board and the department  
 8 include a concern for impacts on minority populations;

9           (2) Serve as an advocate for minority schools, students,  
 10 parents, and communities;

11           (3) Review grant-making, rule-making, and enforcement actions to  
 12 ensure that state board and department decisions are made without bias  
 13 towards race, socioeconomic class, gender, geography, or religion;

14           (4) Serve as a clearinghouse for grievances, conflicts, and  
 15 disputes between the state board or the department and school districts and  
 16 between local school districts and parents or students if the local grievance  
 17 procedure did not resolve an issue on opportunity, equity, and fairness  
 18 issues;

19           (5) Ensure that each school district in the state has a well-  
 20 publicized local grievance procedure for opportunity, equity, and fairness  
 21 complaints between parents or students and the school or school district;

22           (6) Review teacher hiring practices statewide to ensure good-  
 23 faith efforts of schools statewide to hire teachers from the same demographic  
 24 groups as their students; and

25           (7) Review the development and maintenance by the state board  
 26 and the department of programs to recruit and retain minority teachers.

27           (d) The state board and the department shall cooperate with the  
 28 committee in carrying out the purposes of this section.

29           (e) The committee shall be composed of the following members:

30           (1) Three (3) members appointed by the Governor, with no more  
 31 than one (1) member residing in the same congressional district and with at  
 32 least one (1) member being a parent or guardian of a child currently enrolled  
 33 in an Arkansas public school;

34           (2) Three (3) members appointed by the Speaker of the House of  
 35 Representatives, with no more than one (1) member residing in the same  
 36 congressional district and with at least one (1) member being a parent or

1 guardian of a child currently enrolled in an Arkansas public school;

2 (3) Three (3) members appointed by the President Pro Tempore of  
3 the Senate, with no more than one (1) member residing in the same  
4 congressional district and with at least one (1) member being a parent or  
5 guardian of a child currently enrolled in an Arkansas public school; and

6 (4) A nonvoting member representing the office of the Attorney  
7 General.

8 (f) The Director of the Department of Education shall call the first  
9 meeting of the committee no more than sixty (60) days after the effective  
10 date of this section.

11 (g) At the first meeting, the members shall elect a chair who shall  
12 serve a one-year term.

13 (h) A majority of the members of the committee shall constitute a  
14 quorum to transact the business of the committee.

15 (i)(1) The committee shall meet at least semi-annually in the offices  
16 of the department or at such other locations as the committee shall  
17 determine.

18 (2) The department shall provide staff and office space for the  
19 committee.

20 (j) Each member of the committee may receive expense reimbursement and  
21 stipends in accordance with § 25-16-902.

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