

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

ADEQUACY

Tuesday, October 6, 2015
9:00 A.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 9:00 a.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 Scott Baltz; Representative Nate Bell; Representative Gary Deffenbaugh; Representative Charlotte Vining Douglas; Representative Jon Eubanks; Representative Jeremy Gillam; Representative Bill Gossage; Representative Greg Leding; Representative Mark Lowery; Representative Mark McElroy; Representative James Ratliff; and Representative Warwick Sabin.

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE: Senator Jonathan Dismang; Representative Charles Blake; Representative David L Branscum; Representative Les Eaves; Representative Joe Farrer; Representative Kenneth B. Ferguson; Representative Ken Henderson; Representative David Hillman; and Representative Stephen Meeks.

Remarks by the Chairs

Senator English commented on the worthwhile visit legislators made to Cabot School District on October 5. She stated all were impressed with the district's focus on high expectations. She reiterated the importance of the goal for all students to graduate high school and to get good jobs. Senator English said the Committees would visit more school districts around the state in the future.

The Honorable Bruce Cozart, State Representative, District 24, and Chair of the House Interim Committee on Education, was recognized. Representative Cozart stated he was very impressed with Cabot School District and the good example it is setting in utilizing its resources.

Representative Cozart welcomed **Ms. Kathryn Walden**, Legislative Analyst II, Legislative Fiscal Services Division, Bureau of Legislative Research, the new fiscal analyst for the Education Committees.

Discussion of Issues Related to Student Growth and Declining Enrollment Funding

Presenter:

Mr. Richard Wilson, Assistant Director, Research Services, Bureau of Legislative Research, was recognized. Mr. Wilson stated that two years ago reports on student growth and declining enrollment funding were combined into a single report because of the likeness in funding for school districts seeing changes in enrollment. He said this year there are two separate reports. Mr. Wilson presented *Review of Declining Enrollment Funding and Expenditures*, a Bureau of Legislative Research (BLR) Research Report. He said the purpose of the report is to explain how this type of funding is distributed and how districts spend the money they receive, requirements for which are established in statute. After furnishing a brief background, Mr. Wilson walked the Committees through the report, discussing charts and graphs illustrating statewide changes in enrollments, declining enrollment funding and expenditures, districts eligible for growth and declining funding, and declining enrollment in charter schools.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- incentives or penalties for a school district to reduce expenditures,
- effect of a fluctuating economy on a district's enrollment, and
- school districts' budgeting process.

Handouts:

Adequacy Study Statutory Responsibilities
Review of Declining Enrollment Funding and Expenditures, Research Report

Presenter:

Ms. Adrienne Williams, Legislative Analyst, Policy Analysis and Research Section, Bureau of Legislative Research, was recognized. Ms. Williams presented *Review of Student Growth Funding and Expenditures*, a BLR Research Report. She said the report is part of a statutorily required review of expenditures from student growth funding to ensure an adequate education for all students. She stated the purpose of this report is to explain 1) how student growth funding is distributed to districts and charter schools, and 2) how districts and charter schools spend the money they receive. Ms. Williams provided a history of student growth funding, then explained and discussed charts and graphs illustrating student growth funding, and student growth funding expenditures and fund balances for public school districts and for open enrollment charter schools.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- effect of increased student enrollment on foundation funding,
- funding doubling up for the same student,
- facilities construction as part of growth funding, and
- threshold of student growth that triggers adjustments to personnel.

Handout:

Review of Student Growth Funding and Expenditures, Research Report

Discussion of English Language Learners (ELL) Categorical Funding

Presenter:

Dr. Mandy Gillip, Legislative Analyst, Policy Analysis and Research Section, Bureau of Legislative Research, was recognized. Dr. Gillip acknowledged the team from the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) that furnished information for the report. She said English Language Learners (ELL) Categorical Funding is for students who are not fully proficient in the English language. She said it uses current year enrollment count for funding, expenditures, fund balances and other revenue and funding sources, as well as for program enrollment numbers. She noted that in FY2014-15 there were 37,300 ELL students in the state's public school districts and

an additional 248 ELL students in open enrollment charter schools. She provided data showing an increase in the growth of ELL enrollment by roughly 85 percent since 2006, which is in line with the overall adult Spanish-speaking population in Arkansas. She said that about 85 percent of ELL students in Arkansas are native Spanish speaking or are influenced by Spanish spoken in the home. Dr. Gillip presented an overview of the history of ELL funding, and walked the Committees through the BLR Research Report, *English Language Learners (ELL), State Categorical Funding Review*, detailing charts and graphs. Dr. Gillip's presentation included a discussion of teacher requirements and endorsements, home language surveys, monitoring and documenting student progress, English Language Development Assessment (ELDA) tests, state and federal funding, measuring achievement, participation in state Benchmark exams, and National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores.

Contributors to the Discussion:

Ms. Tricia Kerr, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Program Director, Division of Learning Services, Arkansas Department of Education

Ms. Nell Smith, Administrator, Policy Analysis and Research Section, Bureau of Legislative Research

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- achievement of Arkansas's ELL vs. non-ELL students on NAEP tables,
- comparison in the achievement of Arkansas's ELL vs. non-ELL students with results from other states,
- clarification of table on page 6 regarding FY2014-15 Total ELL Categorical Fund Expenditures, and
- reconciling the four-year plan with penalties levied on schools not meeting Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAO) targets, a district's Arkansas Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (ACSIP), and Title III funding.

Handout:

English Language Learners (ELL) State Categorical Funding Review, Research Report

Other Business

The Honorable Nate Bell, State Representative, District 20, was recognized. Representative Bell stated that he had the BLR staff prepare a report on usage of debt service millage and the percentages that were actually being expended for debt service. He said he has received the report for 2014, and that the BLR staff now has numbers to update the report for 2015. He requested that reports from both years be distributed to the Committees and be placed on the website with Adequacy information.

Next Scheduled Meetings:

Monday, November 2, 2015, at 1:30 p.m. in Committee Room A, MAC Building, Little Rock

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

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Approved: 11/02/15