

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

ADEQUACY

Tuesday, May 31, 2016

1:00 P.M.

Room 171, State Capitol

Little Rock, Arkansas

Representative Bruce Cozart, the Chair of the House Interim Committee on Education, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

MEMBERS OF THE SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE: Senator Jane English, Chair; Senator Eddie Cheatham; Senator Blake Johnson; and Senator Eddie Joe Williams.

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 Charlotte Vining Douglas; Representative Jon Eubanks; Representative Jeremy Gillam; Representative Bill Gossage; Representative Michael John Gray; Representative Grant Hodges; Representative Mark Lowery; Representative Mark McElroy; Representative Reginald Murdock; and Representative James Ratliff.

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE: Senator Jonathan Dismang; Senator Joyce Elliott; Senator Jimmy Hickey; Senator Missy Irvin; Representative David L. Branscum; Representative Jana Della Rosa; Representative Jim Dotson; Representative Kenneth B. Ferguson; Representative Charlene Fite; Representative Vivian Flowers; Representative Joe Jett; Representative Kelley Linck; Representative Stephen Meeks; Representative Betty Overbey; Representative Sue Scott; Representative James Sorvillo; and Representative Dwight Tosh.

Minutes:

Without objection, the minutes of April 12, 2016 were approved as written.

Exhibit:

Exhibit C – 04/12/16 Minutes

Update on the Implementation of Arkansas Code Annotated 6-41-601 Et Seq. Regarding Dyslexia and Related Disorders

Presenters:

The Honorable Joyce Elliott, State Senator, District 31, was recognized. Senator Elliott stated that in 2011 she started the process of getting a bill passed to respond to issues concerning dyslexia. She went on to present a brief historical review of steps taken between 2011 and 2013 leading up to passage of the legislation: SB33 was passed as Act 1294 of the Regular Session of 2013. She commented that a major focus was to get it right, to have delivery services for kids, and training for teachers and others to deliver those services without additional cost. She discussed what is actually in SB33 of 2013, including the definition of dyslexia; the right of a child to have response to intervention services in the school when the child is deemed to have markers of dyslexia; and instructions on who can be an interventionist. She noted that she had requested Ms. Nell Smith of the Bureau of Legislative Research (BLR) to conduct a survey of school districts on their dyslexia screening/identification and intervention programs in order to find out what has been put in place as a result of the legislation.

Ms. Nell Smith, Administrator, Policy Analysis and Research Section, Bureau of Legislative Research, was recognized. Ms. Smith said the BLR received responses to an online questionnaire from all 234 school districts and 19 of 22 open-enrollment charter schools. She stated the questionnaire allowed BLR to collect specific, quantitative data from the districts on the number of students identified with dyslexia and the number of students receiving dyslexia services in their districts, as well as qualitative data on districts' dyslexia programs. Ms. Smith discussed the questions and the responses to the dyslexia survey.

Senator Elliott stated that the bill was passed in 2013; but, nothing happened in SY13-14, giving school districts time to get prepared. She said programs started in SY14-15; but, not in a lot of places. She commented that things are not happening as they should right now; however, uptake on numbers has been encouraging. She stated there is still work to be done; and the message she wants school districts to get is that this is something that is not optional. She encouraged legislators to understand the impact of the legislation on their local school districts. Senator Elliott said the survey will be conducted again next year.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- population and location of students in Arkansas having dyslexia,
- extending the screening for markers for various issues to the 4th grade,
- success of the Barton Reading & Spelling System, an intervention program for students,
- necessity for programs to meet the Orton-Gillingham approach, another intervention program,
- verification that training meets the requirements of the bill and the needs of students,
- assignment of responsibility for enforcing fidelity to the law,
- limitation on use of federal funds, and
- collecting data on schools using the models, and carryover during the summer.

Handout:

District and School Survey Responses Regarding Dyslexia, Bureau Brief

Discussion of Issues Related to School District Resource Allocation

Presenter:

Ms. Nell Smith, Administrator, Policy Analysis and Research Section, Bureau of Legislative Research, was recognized. Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, together with a 106-page document, Ms. Smith discussed the *Resource Allocation Report*, a statutorily required report on foundation funding, the main source of state funding that school districts and charter schools receive. She said the essence of the *Report* is to compare the foundation funding that districts receive with how it is being spent. She stated that foundation funding provides more than \$3 billion in state and local funding for school districts and charter schools, about 57% of all the funding that districts and charters receive. Ms. Smith initially reviewed the context for the report, including the Matrix, the funding model used to provide state aid to school districts. Ms. Smith pointed out that the Matrix was never designed or intended to be a spending model. She said the purpose of the *Report* is to compare the legislative intent, *i.e.*, the Matrix, with districts' actual practice (staffing patterns and expenditures). Ms. Smith included a discussion of methodology, timeframe, components of the Matrix, and components of the *Report*. Ms. Smith then walked legislators through data in the *Report*.

Contributor to the Discussion:

Mr. Isaac Linam, Staff Attorney, Bureau of Legislative Research

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- review of FY14-15 expenditures in order to make recommendations for FY18-19,
- opinions about the Matrix,
- utilizing the Matrix as a guide having any influence on performance,

- using state guidelines to make necessary shifts of resources among categories,
- availability of data on libraries,
- moving transportation from the Matrix to categorical funding,
- following up on information given in reports with additional study to enhance the legislative decision-making process,
- data on what's driving the excess cost of substitute teachers,
- survey questions pertinent to the use of service coops on anything other than technology coordinator, and
- whether Odden & Picus made a recommendation for a change in Matrix funding for schools below or above 500.

Following a discussion on foundation funding for libraries and librarians, Representative Cozart announced that discussion of the extensive *Report* would conclude. He said any additional questions pertinent to the *Report* could be emailed to Ms. Smith.

PowerPoint Presentation:

Resource Allocation Report

Handouts:

Adequacy Study Statutory Responsibilities

FY15-FY17 Matrix

The Resource Allocation of Foundation Funding for Arkansas School Districts and Open-Enrollment Charter Schools, Research Report

Next Scheduled Meetings:

Wednesday, June 22, 2016, at 10:00 a.m. in Room 171, State Capitol, Little Rock

Monday, July 18, 2016 at 1:30 p.m. in Room 171, State Capitol, Little Rock

Tuesday, July 19, 2016 at 9:00 a.m. in Room 171, State Capitol, Little Rock

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 2:42 p.m.

Approved: 06/22/16