

MINUTES

HOUSE AND SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEES ON EDUCATION

Tuesday, September 29, 2020

9:00 A.M.

Room A, MAC

Little Rock, Arkansas

MEMBERS OF THE SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE: *Senators:* Jane English, Chair; Joyce Elliott, Vice Chair; Linda Chesterfield, Lance Eads, James Sturch and Mark Johnson

MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE: *Representatives:* Bruce Cozart, Chair; Fred Allen, Rick Beck, Frances Cavanaugh, Gary Deffenbaugh, Jana Della Rosa, Jim Dotson, Brian Evans, Jon Eubanks, Denise Garner, Mark Lowery, Fredrick Love, Tippi McCullough, Stephen Meeks, Richard McGrew and DeAnn Vaught

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE: *Senators:* Bob Ballinger, Breanne Davis, Scott Flippo, Kim Hammer and Mathew Pitsch. *Representatives:* Bruce Coleman, Cameron Cooper, Marsh Davis, Denise Jones Ennett, Kenneth Ferguson, Megan Godfrey, David Hillman, Lee Johnson, Johnny Rye, Jamie Scott, Keith Slape and Dan Sullivan

Representative Bruce Cozart called the meeting to order.

Representative Cozart, provided a short summary on the inflation estimates that was presented before the committee on August 11, 2020 by Richard Wilson. The inflation estimates are provided by Moody's Analytics and HIS Markit. Both subscription services advised that the Federal Reserve Open Market Committee (OMC) had set a target core inflation rate at 2% over the next few years, into and including 2025. The CPI-U estimates provided at the time suggest an annualized inflation rate of 2.0% to 2.2% could be expected over the biannual period beginning July 1, 2021. After reviewing updated inflation estimates, these two economic data subscription services continue to provide the OMC base target of 2%, but have slightly increased the CPI-U range possibilities up to approximately 2.5%; the increased upper end of the range is expected during the second year of the biennium. Representative Cozart reviewed the outline for the Proposed Timeline for APA Study Recommendations (*see Handouts B1 & B2*)

Discussion of Adequacy Study Updates

Mr. Justin Silverstein, Co-CEO, APA Consulting, Augenblick, Palaich and Associates, was recognized. Mr. Silverstein presentation included results from the District Resource Use and Practices Survey. The survey was administered to all district superintendents and charter system directors in July, 2020. There were 181 responses, which included 72% from districts and 48% from charter systems. The responses generally are representative of the state as a whole. The study team disaggregated responses to the survey or available data by size, need (FRL percentage), wealth (assessed value/ADM) and /or locale (urban/Suburban vs. rural). (*see Handout C*)

He reviewed charts which provided some descriptive data of the quintiles, including average size, need, or wealth, percentage of districts and percentage of students.

Discussion of Best Use of Poverty Funds: Research

Dr. Mike Fermanich, Senior Associate, APA Consulting, Augenblick, Palaich and Associates, was recognized. Dr. Fermanich presentation covered the effects of poverty on learning and effective interventions from three perspectives: (1) community; (2) school; and (3) student. The research included examining the broader research-based strategies for serving poverty students and the specific research-based programs/curricula. (*see Handout D1*)

Community Level:

- Effects of Poverty on Learning at the Community Level

Student Level:

- The Effects of Poverty on Learning at the Student Level

School Level:

- Effects of Poverty on Learning at the School Level

Strategies and Adjustments for Improvement:

- Improvement Depends on Multiple Strategies and Adjustments

Addressing Community Effects:

- Addressing Community Effects
- Four Key Components of Community Schools

Addressing School-Wide Effects:

- Research into the characteristics of effective schools, including “beating the odds” schools, dates back to the 1970s. Certain characteristics continue to be featured in the literature
- Research-Supported Strategies and Programs – research found strategies, or school features, effective in improving student outcomes, especially among at-risk, low income students

Discussion on Best Use of Poverty Funds: ESA Fund Use and Survey Results

Ms. Michaela Tonking, Associate, APA Consulting, Augenblick, Palaich and Associates, was recognized. Ms. Tonking addressed the background on Enhanced Student Achievement (ESA) funding for low-income students in Arkansas, district survey responses regarding effective uses of ESA funds, and examination of current district use of ESA funds. (*see Handout E1*)

Examination of Current District Use of ESA Funds:

- Using district expenditure data and coding provided by the Bureau of Legislature Research (BLR), the study team examined 19-20 district ESA fund expenditures by allowable use category
- Examined the areas where districts used most of their ESA Funds statewide, and then examined the differences between expenditures by wealth, FRL, and locale

Discussion of Professional Development and Extra Duty Time

Ms. Amanda Brown, Senior Associate, APA Consulting, Augenblick, Palaich and Associates, was recognized. She highlighted key findings from a literature review of components of effective professional development, review of professional development funding history in Arkansas, analysis of current district professional development funding and expenditures, and a review of current PD and extra duty time practices in Arkansas districts as reported in the district survey. (*see Handout F1*)

- Research identified a series of necessary elements for an effective professional development
- State first PD funding in 2001-05, based on recommendations of the 2003 adequacy study. Funding allowing districts to implement an effective professional development program
- Arkansas currently provides \$40.25 per student for professional development through a separate categorical fund with \$27.40 per student being directly provided to districts, and remainder being used to fund the state’s online PD system and professional learning communities (PLC) pilot program
- All districts and charter-system administrators, respondents were asked about their current professional development and extra duty time practices

Discussion of Student Mental Health

Ms. Jennifer Piscatelli, Associate, APA Consulting, Augenblick, Palaich and Associates, was recognized. Ms. Piscatelli discussed highlights from a previous presentation on student mental health services, and district survey results on how districts and charter systems currently address student mental health needs. (*see Handout G1*)

Previous Presentation on Student Mental Health Services

- April 8, 2020 presentation to the committee provided information on the need for mental health support, current staffing level for student support personnel nationally, and examined best practices, including national approaches and staffing recommendations, and examples how other states provide mental health services
- A review of Arkansas’ funding matrix – provides 2.5 counselor/nurse positions per 500 students, and;

EXHIBIT C1

- Arkansas Standards for School Accreditation; requiring a maximum district student/guidance counselor ratio of 450:1
- According to 2017-18 data, the average counselor staffing ratio in Arkansas 385:1, lower than average for the study comparison SREB states and Massachusetts, at 401:1

District Survey Responses on Student Mental Health Services

- The study examined responses for variation based upon district size, need or locale and provided tables showing the most and least commonly identified mental health strategies utilized by districts and charter networks.

Discussion of Educational Opportunities

Ms. Amanda Brown, Senior Associate, APA Consulting, Augenblick, Palaich and Associates, was recognized. Ms. Brown presented additional descriptive data analysis regarding education opportunities and classroom experience in districts around the state. The district/charter system survey results regarding before/after school availability, any changes districts or charter system would like to make regarding CTE and other educational opportunities, and any challenges they face doing so. (*see Handout H1*)

- District Survey Responses:
 - Extended learning time
 - CTE offerings
 - ✓ Increase certifications
 - ✓ Offer additional courses in current industry areas
 - ✓ Increase participation
 - ✓ Offer courses in other industry areas
 - ✓ Provide CTE opportunities in earlier grades
 - ✓ Have additional CTE courses at secondary career centers
 - ✓ Access additional CTE courses through remote instruction
 - ✓ Have additional CTE courses at postsecondary campuses

Next Scheduled Meetings:

Tuesday, October 5, 2020 at 1:30 p.m. in MAC A.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 11:19 a.m.