

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

Monday, February 6, 2012
1:30 P.M.
Room 171, State Capitol
Little Rock, Arkansas

Senator Jimmy Jeffress, the Chair of the Senate Interim Committee on Education, called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

MEMBERS OF THE SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE: Senator Jimmy Jeffress, Chair; Senator Mary Anne Salmon, Vice Chair; Senator Joyce Elliott; and Senator Johnny Key.

MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE: Representative Eddie Cheatham, Chair; Representative Johnnie Roebuck, Vice Chair; Representative Duncan Baird; Representative Jerry Brown; Representative Les Carnine; Representative Ann Clemmer; Representative Robert Dale; Representative Jody Dickinson; Representative Jane English; Representative Debra Hobbs; Representative Karen Hopper; Representative Donna Hutchinson; Representative Bobby Pierce; and Representative Tommy Wren.

NON-VOTING MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE: Representative John Catlett; Representative Gary Deffenbaugh; Representative Jeremy Gillam; Representative Justin Harris; Representative Andrea Lea; Representative Homer Lenderman; and Representative Kelley Linck.

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE: Senator Cecile Bledsoe; Senator Randy Laverty; Representative Tommy Lee Baker; Representative Nate Bell; Representative David Branscum; Representative John Burris; Representative David Fielding; Representative Hudson Hallum; Representative Sheilla Lampkin; Representative Buddy Lovell; Representative Andy Mayberry; Representative Betty Overbey; Representative Mike Patterson; Representative David "Bubba" Powers; Representative James Ratliff; Representative Nate Steel; and Representative Jeff Wardlaw.

Without objection, the minutes of December 6, 2011, January 9, 2012, January 10, 2012, and January 10, 2012 Joint Meeting with Children and Youth Committees, were approved as written.

Senator Jeffress noted the presence at the meeting of two former members of the Arkansas House of Representatives, **Mr. Robert J. White** and **Mr. Bill Abernathy**. He also recognized **Dr. Donald R. Bobbitt**, President, University of Arkansas System, and requested that Dr. Bobbitt come forward and address the Committees.

Dr. Donald R. Bobbitt, President, University of Arkansas System, was recognized. Dr. Bobbitt thanked the Committees for the opportunity to speak and for the good work being done by legislators. After noting the positive policy environment towards education in Arkansas, Dr. Bobbitt discussed the challenge given higher education to double the number of degreed Arkansans. Citing unemployment figures for the past recession that showed individuals with higher educational attainment were less likely to become unemployed, Dr. Bobbitt discussed the importance of all components of the state's educational system working in concert to achieve the goal of enhanced postsecondary education levels.

Senator Jeffress thanked Dr. Bobbitt for his comments, and said the Committees look forward to working with him during his tenure as president.

Senator Jeffress mentioned the publication, *How to Go to College in Seven EASY Steps*, by Renaldo Hemphill, Ph.D. He requested that Dr. Hemphill stand and be recognized, and thanked him for the copies he brought for the members.

Reports from Members Who Attended Recent Meetings of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) and the Education Commission of the States (ECS)

The Honorable Joyce Elliott, State Senator, District 33, was recognized, and presented a report from the SREB meeting that took place in early December 2011. Senator Elliott said she attended the meeting along with Senator Jimmy Jeffress, Senator Mary Anne Salmon, and Representative Eddie Cheatham. After reviewing the background of SREB, she reported that the two major topics of discussion at the meeting were: 1) college/workforce readiness, and 2) an effective state outcomes-based funding policy when it comes to postsecondary education. Senator Elliott commented that a great deal of discussion took place about college/workforce readiness and the importance of secondary and postsecondary education working together. Senator Elliott discussed some of the major findings regarding college/workforce readiness that came out of the meeting:

- = Recognize the immediate need for a statewide policy, without unnecessarily waiting for the implementation of the Common Core State Standards Initiative (Common Core),
- = Take a look at the steps that are necessary to create this readiness agenda,
- = Assertion of the difference between readiness and admissions standards,
- = Keep parents, students, and educators informed about the reality of readiness,
- = Need for college readiness standards to focus on reading, writing, and math-related skills,
- = Need for college readiness standards to go beyond just course-taking,
- = Specify to what postsecondary credentials and programs readiness standards should apply,
- = Need for an 11th grade assessment of students' readiness in reading, writing, and math skills, and
- = Use the 12th grade as a transitional year to address students' shortcomings.

With regard to the issue of outcomes-based funding and putting new policies in place, Senator Elliott discussed the important measures of knowing the goals and making decisions based on whether outcomes-based policies will apply to new or existing funding.

Senator Jeffress added that another SREB meeting agenda item that members will be hearing more about was a report by the SREB Middle Grades Commission on the importance of the middle grades.

Senator Jeffress thanked Senator Elliott for the report.

The Honorable Karen Hopper, State Representative, District 81, was recognized, and presented a report from a recent ECS meeting. Representative Hopper discussed the background and purpose of ECS and expressed her appreciation for being afforded the opportunity to attend the meeting along with Senator Gilbert Baker. Utilizing two (2) handouts from ECS, *12 for 2012: Issues to Move Education Forward in 2012* (the first two pages), and *Arkansas Policy Profile*, Representative Hopper discussed the issues covered at the meeting. Referencing the *12 for 2012* document, Representative Hopper stated that it captured the essence of the timely topics discussed at the meeting and noted that the full-length version of the report is available online at the ECS Web site. She commented that the full-length version should be reviewed for Arkansas's footprint on the twelve topics covered, and individually discussed Issue #3 (Blended Learning), Issue #10 (Postsecondary Performance Funding), and Issue #11 (Postsecondary Remedial Education), as particularly timely with regard to Arkansas. Representative Hopper advised that the report should also be used as a guide to research on issues that might be considered for the 2013 General Session. In summarizing the *Arkansas Policy Profile*, one of the state-by-state profiles available to legislators at the conference, Representative Hopper discussed commentary in the Overview relating to *Access to Success*, the Final Report of the Arkansas Task Force on Higher Education Remediation, Retention, and Graduation Rates, and three recommendations for Arkansas:

1. Leveraging funding to improve degree completion rates,
2. Strengthening the alignment between postsecondary and workforce strategies, and
3. Preparing for and providing access to high-demand, high-wage jobs.

Senator Jeffress commented that Arkansas is getting national recognition for being on the cutting edge of performance funding, covered in Item #10 of *12 for 2012*. He remarked that the SREB and the ECS are excellent organizations, and their conferences provide valuable information.

Senator Jeffress thanked Representative Hopper for the report.

A brief discussion followed the reports. Topics included:

- ≈ Reports from conferences are appreciated,
- ≈ Effect of term limits on appointments of delegates to conferences,
- ≈ Research as key to effective public policy,
- ≈ *Access to Success* as a game plan for Arkansas, and
- ≈ Value of ECS working meetings.

Preliminary Discussion of Interim Study Proposal (ISP) 2011-118 by Representative Mayberry, TO ESTABLISH THE COLLEGE AND CAREER COACHES PROGRAM; TO ASSURE ACCESS TO A COLLEGE AND CAREER COACH FOR ALL STUDENTS IN GRADES SEVEN THROUGH TWELVE (7-12).

The Honorable Andy Mayberry, State Representative, District 27, was recognized. Representative Mayberry's discussion included a PowerPoint presentation, *Arkansas Works' Career Coach Program: An Effective College and Career Planning Model*; a bound report, *Joint Education Committee, Arkansas Works – Interim Study Presentation*, was distributed to members. Representative Mayberry explained that in seeing students' need for direction following graduation, he thought it would be invaluable for

them to have classroom instruction about the real world after high school in areas, including finance, credit, mortgage, financing an education, and the perils of getting in debt. He visited with Dr. Tom Kimbrell, Commissioner, Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) about the possibility of having such classes as part of the curriculum. Dr. Kimbrell made him aware of Arkansas Works, a successful pilot program that has been in effect for the past two years, and focuses on twenty-one (21) economically challenged counties in Arkansas. Representative Mayberry said that one of the program's components, the College and Career Coaches Program, has shown astounding results, including a rise in the number of students taking the ACT, a rise in ACT scores, a rise in students going to college, and a lowering of the remediation rate. Representative Mayberry then turned the floor over to individuals involved in the study for testimony.

Senator Jeffress, noting that ISP 2011-118 had previously been adopted, requested that testimony before the Joint House and Senate Interim Committees on Education be limited to a few minutes, with in-depth testimony to be presented before the K-12, Vocational-Technical Institutions Subcommittee of the House Interim Committee on Education.

Senator Jeffress recognized Representative Wren to make a motion.

The Honorable Tommy Wren, State Representative, District 71, made a motion to refer Interim Study Proposal (ISP) 2011-118 to the K-12, Vocational-Technical Institutions Subcommittee of the House Interim Committee on Education. The motion was seconded by Senator Mary Anne Salmon. Without objection, the motion to refer the ISP was carried.

Mr. William L. "Bill" Walker, Jr., Director, Arkansas Department of Career Education, was recognized, and moderated the roster of speakers. Mr. Walker reminded members that Arkansas Works is an initiative of Governor Mike Beebe's Workforce Cabinet, and is carried out in partnership with the Arkansas Department of Career Education, the Arkansas Department of Career Services, the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, the ADE, and the Arkansas Economic Development Commission, and has private partners such as the Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges and the Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce. He said the project has been funded with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) dollars for two years and is in its final year of funding. Mr. Walker stated the Arkansas Works' College and Career Coaches Program has made a huge difference for many young students in Arkansas. He noted that representatives of many two-year colleges participating in the program were attending the meeting to show support.

Ms. Sonja Wright-McMurray, Associate Director for Arkansas Works, Arkansas Department of Career Education, was recognized. Ms. Wright-McMurray, utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, discussed the accomplishments of the College and Career Coaches Program, including: 1) the 18.63% increase in the college-going rate from Fall, 2009 to Fall, 2010, a larger increase than the state average of 4.8%, 2) the increase in participants' ACT scores, and 3) the decrease in the remediation rate.

Mr. Shane Broadway, Interim Director, Arkansas Department of Higher Education, was recognized, and expressed support for the program which has proven to be a great success in the short time it has been around and a worthwhile investment. He said career coaches are letting students know that the opportunity to go to college is available to them.

Ms. Lindsey Graham, North Arkansas College, Arkansas Works Career Coach, was recognized. Ms. Graham shared several individual stories, and said that students in grades 7-12 who participate in the

program are given a chance for success that they might not otherwise have received, parental obstacles are addressed, and the results are rewarding.

Mr. Robert Poole, Superintendent, Prescott School District, was recognized. Mr. Poole shared that Prescott has an approximately 75% Free & Reduced Price Lunch student population, and lot of the students haven't known about options that might be available to them. He said the College and Career Coaches Program, which started out on a part-time basis in the school district, took the district to a whole new level. He said that because of its success, parents and students prompted the school board to hire, with the help of National School Lunch Act (NSLA) funds, a full-time career coach. The career coach makes home visits with juniors and seniors and their parents, shows them options, and helps them make plans. Mr. Poole shared some of the results of having a full-time career coach in place:

- ✓ Arkansas Transition Services, helping students to achieve positive post-school outcomes, went from 8 students to 20 students
- ✓ Overall ACT scores increased from 17.5 to 19.1
- ✓ ACT scores of seniors went from 18.9 to 22.2
- ✓ Number of students who took the ACT in 2010 was 119; graduates who will have taken the ACT in 2012 is 158

Mr. Poole stated that the data shows this is a viable program, even if it only helps one or two students. He commented that the district will continue the program for as long as possible.

Mr. Walker spoke about private sector partnerships, and said that the Walton Family Foundation has provided career coaches to three school districts in Pulaski county and, with \$1.5 million, has funded 15 coaches in Northwest Arkansas.

Mr. Cory Anderson, Vice President, Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, was recognized. Mr. Anderson shared with the Committees that the late Governor Rockefeller looked for innovative ways to bring economic advancement to Arkansas and had a history of investing in education. The Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation thought the idea of hooking students up with one person whose focus would be to help them make the connection between college and career would make a good investment, and last year it made a \$300,000 investment in the College and Career Coaches Program. The Foundation also invested in career coaches in the community, such as the Boys & Girls Club and the Joseph Pfeifer Kiwanis Camp, because students don't spend all of their time in school. Mr. Anderson said that connecting what's happening in the community with what's happening in school can only produce a good outcome. Mr. Anderson closed by saying the Foundation is proud to be a part of the program.

In closing remarks, Mr. Walker emphasized that every kid in Arkansas should have access to a career coach. He said it will take the collective efforts of the Administration and the General Assembly to help figure out how to move this from a pilot program to one that is permanently funded. He stated this is a good program for the future of students and for the future of Arkansas.

Representative Mayberry thanked the Committees and said he looked forward to continuing the study.

Following the presentation, a discussion ensued that included the topics:

- Relationship of College and Career Coaches Program to that of the federal TRIO Programs,
- Intensive, educational services benefitting both rural and urban students,

- Counseling students for *all* options,
- Promoting *all* options, including National Merit Scholarships,
- Integration of program with school staff counselors, and
- Spending of surplus money in state funds to fund program.

Senator Jeffress thanked Representative Mayberry and the speakers.

Senator Jeffress requested Mr. Bill Walker to come forward and introduce Mr. Rod Duckworth.

Mr. William L. "Bill" Walker, Jr., Director, Arkansas Department of Career Education, was recognized. Mr. Walker congratulated Mr. Rod Duckworth, Associate Director for Career and Technical Education, Arkansas Department of Career Education, on his appointment as the Chancellor-Designate of Career and Adult Education for the State of Florida. He commented that the State of Arkansas valued Mr. Duckworth in the position which he had held since 2007.

Mr. Rod Duckworth, Chancellor-Designate of Career and Adult Education, Florida Department of Education, was recognized. Mr. Duckworth thanked the legislature for continued support to career and technical education, and for efforts to make students successful.

Preliminary Discussion of Interim Study Proposal (ISP) 2011-195 by Representative D. Hutchinson, REQUESTING THAT THE INTERIM HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION CONDUCT A STUDY OF OPTIONS AVAILABLE OR NEEDED FOR OFFERING CORE SUBJECTS IN SINGLE-SEX CLASSROOM SETTINGS AT PUBLIC JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS.

Representative Donna Hutchinson, State Representative, District 98, was recognized. Representative Hutchinson said that research from the SREB, the ECS, the Council of State Governments (CSG), and the ADE indicates that boys are dropping out of schools and colleges at a faster rate than girls. She noted that the majority of law school graduates are women. Representative Hutchinson said there has been a lot of discussion on this issue and something needs to be done. Many educators are trying a different approach to education to alleviate the problem, and the solution may be same sex classes in public schools for math, history, science, and English. This interim study is looking into finding a solution for the problem. She said that because she is term-limited, another legislator will have to take up responsibility for the bill in 2013.

Senator Jeffress said this is a direct filing and doesn't have to be adopted, since Representative Hutchinson is a member of the House Interim Committee on Education.

Senator Jeffress thanked Representative Hutchinson.

Senator Jeffress announced that the next joint meeting of the Senate Interim Committee on Education and the House Interim Committee on Education would be at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, February 7, 2012, in Room 171 of the State Capitol in Little Rock. The meeting would be reserved for issues on adequacy.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.