

MEETING SUMMARY

**JOINT MEETING
OF THE
HOUSE AND SENATE COMMITTEES ON EDUCATION**

**Thursday, March 7, 2013
3:00 P.M.
Room 171, State Capitol
Little Rock, Arkansas**

Senator Johnny Key, the Chair of the Senate Committee on Education, called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

MEMBERS OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE: Senator Johnny Key, Chair; Senator Joyce Elliott, Vice Chair; Senator Eddie Cheatham; Senator Alan Clark; Senator Jim Hendren; and Senator Uvalde Lindsey.

MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE: Representative James McLean, Chair; Representative Ann Clemmer, Vice Chair; Representative Charles Armstrong; Representative Mark Biviano; Representative Les Carnine; Representative Bruce Cozart; Representative Gary Deffenbaugh; Representative Jody Dickinson; Representative Charlotte Douglas; Representative Debra Hobbs; Representative Karen Hopper; Representative Sheilla Lampkin; Representative Homer Lenderman; Representative James Ratliff; and Representative Brent Talley.

Senator Key announced that the purpose of this joint meeting was to address issues that are part of the Adequacy Report, including the range for the inflationary adjustment of 1.8% to 2.5%, allowing language so that a separate determination can be made on the amount to be applied to the categorical funding following a study and findings regarding categorical fund balances, and, in the National School Lunch Act (NSLA) portion of the Report, providing an opportunity to come back and review NSLA funding and the programs to which it is being applied throughout the state. A copy of the Adequacy Report was provided to members.

Update on Issues Regarding National School Lunch Act (NSLA) Categorical Funding

Presenters & Synopses:

Ms. Nell Smith, Administrator, Policy Analysis and Research Section, Bureau of Legislative Research, was recognized. Ms. Smith gave a PowerPoint presentation, *NSLA Funding, Background and History*. She said NSLA funding is state money that is provided to school districts to help address the needs of students in poverty. She noted that in discussions on NSLA funding, the funding being discussed is not about a lunch program. She clarified that the state program is called NSLA funding because the amount of money districts receive is based on the percentage of students who qualify for free and reduced price lunch. She detailed NSLA Funding Levels, Districts by NSLA %, NSLA Funding and Spending, and O&P Recommendations.

Dr. Brent Benda, Senior Research Specialist, Policy Analysis and Research Section, Bureau of Legislative Research, was recognized. Dr. Benda gave a PowerPoint presentation, *The Relationship Between NSLA Funding and Expenditures, and Measures of Student Performance*. He noted that information had been gathered on NSLA funding, on student performance, and on other factors that may

influence student achievement for the study. He provided a Brief Orientation to Study Methods, Examples of Extraneous Factors Related to Achievement, Survey Research, and Data Analyses, saying that the statistical analyses of NSLA percentage and student achievement are based on the 239 school districts that existed in 2011. Dr. Benda went on to discuss performance levels and relationship factors illustrated by charts and graphs. He concluded that the effect of NSLA funding is statistically difficult to measure because of the way monies are being distributed.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- ways to interpret data regarding NSLA funds to better inform,
- redirecting funding to better achieve recommendations,
- stipulations for use of NSLA funds,
- inverse correlation between NSLA funding and student achievement, and
- thin distribution of NSLA funds making it difficult to determine impact.

Dr. Gary Ritter, Endowed Chair in Education Policy, University of Arkansas, was recognized. Dr. Ritter gave a PowerPoint presentation, *Arkansas' Categorical Poverty Funding System (NSLA)*. He discussed:

1. Arkansas poverty funding system
2. How do other states distribute poverty funding?
3. Achievement for poor and non-poor students
4. Have the additional resources at the "cliffs" improved outcomes for kids?
5. How do AR districts use NSLA Funding?
6. Out Policy Recommendations

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- providing an approach that has some foundation of fact,
- availability of funding models for successful programs,
- relationship of funding and student achievement,
- comparison of dollars spent per child in economically advantaged school districts vs. dollars spent in poorer districts,
- what's working in well-to-do districts, based on funds spent, to account for higher achievement,
- providing children in districts with a low socioeconomic status (SES) with the same programs that provide enrichment to children in districts with a high SES,
- controlling for a district's enrollment or size in determining funding amounts,
- ways to address needs of summer learning loss,
- the challenge to teachers presented by Teach For America and the Arkansas Teacher Corps (ATC), and
- controls employed in research methodology and data collection.

Dr. Tom Kimbrell, Commissioner, Arkansas Department of Education, was recognized. Dr. Kimbrell commented on NSLA funding and its effect on student achievement. He said he appreciated this issue being brought forth from discussions on Adequacy. He said with federal cuts coming in Title 1, those districts having the greatest levels of poverty will need to have the greatest infusion of dollars. He said it would be difficult to get a handle on uses and the effectiveness of NSLA funding until promising projected uses pan out.

Contributor to the Discussion:

Dr. Richard Abernathy, Executive Director, Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators (AAEA), was recognized, and commended the Committees on taking on this study. He made remarks about engaging communities to expect high achievement from their children. He discussed increased flexibility, and transferring NSLA funds to other categories, and also cautioned about mandating funds, programs, or expenditures, because it may eliminate a district's ability to spend its federal dollars on those programs. He said career and technical education also needs to be reviewed.

PowerPoint Presentations:

NSLA Funding, Background and History

OEP, Arkansas' Categorical Poverty Funding System

The Relationship Between NSLA Funding and Expenditures, and Measures of Student Performance

Handouts:

A Report on Legislative Hearings for the 2012 Interim Study on Educational Adequacy, Volume I

NSLA Funding, Background and History (*hard copy of PowerPoint presentation*)

OEP Policy Brief, Arkansas' Categorical Poverty Funding System

OEP Policy Brief, Vol. 10, Issue 4, March 2013

The Relationship Between NSLA Funding and Expenditures, and Measures of Student Performance
(*hard copy of PowerPoint presentation*)

The Relationship Between NSLA Funding and Expenditures, and Measures of Student Performance
Report

Senator Key thanked the presenters and the members for their attendance.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 4:52 p.m.

Approved: 06/10/13