

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

ADEQUACY

Tuesday, July 23, 2013
9:00 A.M.
Room A, MAC Building
Little Rock, Arkansas

Senator Johnny Key, the Chair of the Senate Interim Committee on Education, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. He announced that discussion would continue on the Common Core State Standards Initiative (Common Core) in today's meeting.

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

MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE: Representative James McLean, Chair; Representative Ann Clemmer, Vice Chair; Representative Charles Armstrong; Representative Mark Biviano; Representative Les Carnine; Representative John Catlett; Representative Gary Deffenbaugh; Representative Charlotte Vining Douglas; Representative Jon Eubanks; Representative Debra Hobbs; Representative Karen Hopper; Representative Sheilla Lampkin; Representative Homer Lenderman; Representative Mark Lowery; and Representative Brent Talley.

NON-VOTING MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE: Representative Randy Alexander; Representative Harold Copenhaver; Representative Jim Dotson; and Representative Stephen Meeks.

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE: Senator Linda Chesterfield; Senator Jonathan Dismang; Senator Jane English; Senator Jeremy Hutchinson; Senator Missy Irvin; Senator Bobby Pierce; Senator David Sanders; Senator Larry Teague; Senator Eddie Joe Williams; Representative Nate Bell; Representative David Branscum; Representative John Burris; Representative Joe Farrer; Representative Charlene Fite; Representative John Hutchison; Representative Andrea Lea; Representative Kelley Linck; Representative Walls McCrary; Representative Mark McElroy; Representative David Meeks; Representative Josh Miller; Representative Micah Neal; Representative Jim Nickels; Representative Betty Overbey; Representative James Ratliff; Representative Sue Scott; Representative Tommy Thompson; Representative John Walker; and Representative Henry "Hank" Wilkins.

Morning Session

Senator Key, at a member's request, deviated from the agenda and read a previously distributed letter from former Governor Huckabee to legislators in Oklahoma. The letter, dated June 3, 2013, encouraged Oklahoma legislators to resist any attempt to delay implementation of the improved Common Core standards adopted by the Oklahoma State Board of Education in 2010.

Senator Key commented that many members had been getting emails from constituents asking for votes against the Common Core standards. He said members are aware of this fact, but reminded those in the audience that under the state constitution, the General Assembly and the Education Committees have no authority at this time to vote for or against this issue. He stated that these hearings are for informational purposes only, so that members

can gain input for any action that may come later during session, and, constitutionally, at a point when a vote may be taken.

Handout:

Former Governor Mike Huckabee Letter, dated June 3, 2013

Continuation of Testimony Concerning the Implementation of Common Core in Arkansas

Remarks by the Arkansas Department of Education

Presenter and Synopsis:

Dr. Tom Kimbrell, Commissioner, Arkansas Department of Education, was recognized. Dr. Kimbrell said he appreciated the opportunity to share the work that the state and its educators have been doing to implement Common Core. He said that Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) staff members and others, who have expertise in this endeavor, are present to make a comparison between existing state standards and the Common Core standards, and to discuss expectations, goals, and the progress being made.

Contributors to the Discussion (in order of testimony):

Dr. Megan Witonski, Assistant Commissioner of Learning Services, Arkansas Department of Education

Ms. Brenda Gullett, Chair, Arkansas State Board of Education

Dr. David Rainey, Superintendent, Dumas School District

Mr. Thomas Coy, Mathematics Content Lead, Division of Learning Services, Arkansas Department of Education

Ms. Dana Breitweiser, English Language Arts Assessment Specialist, Division of Learning Services, Arkansas Department of Education

Ms. Brandy Britton, Student, Lincoln School District

Ms. Nancy Papachek, Teacher, Bryant School District

Mr. Jerry Strasner, Principal, Ouachita River School District

Ms. Kathy Powers, Teacher, Conway School District

Mr. Jace Motley, Student, Conway School District

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- efforts that the ADE has made over the past three years to publicize Common Core,
- connection between Common Core and remediation rates down the road,
- “students as a perfect mirror of our society;” involving schools *and* communities,
- changing terms such as “the achievement gap” in conversation, and recognizing the “stereotype threat” which limits the success of students,
- availability of an “evaluation” of the differences between existing state standards and those of Common Core,
- addressing classroom needs of students with a history of non-achievement,
- involvement of individuals in higher education in the process,
- flexibility in implementation of Common Core,
- standardizing the progression of learning,
- dispelling myths about Common Core,
- availability of data on Arkansans who have some kind of skills certification,
- including skills identification, recommending teaching strategies, and developing assessments in the Common Core standards,
- leaving the approach to standards to the classroom teacher, the school, and the school district,
- working through the transitional plan,
- the root of controversy about Common Core, and available solutions,
- a state “owning” its set of standards,
- potential for creating impediments for some entities,
- motivating principals and superintendents,

- state's authority to modify standards or to pull out of the consortium,
- overcoming limitations of technology,
- Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) testing and Common Core,
- grant opportunities,
- poverty rate of Dumas School District,
- assuaging parental fears regarding Common Core,
- need for written legal waivers for the state,
- ongoing communications to teachers, principals, school districts, parents, and communities,
- logistics of getting the PARCC assessment in place,
- responsibility of local districts for retention/promotion policies,
- ability for teachers to teach or continuing to teach to the test,
- involvement of the federal government in states' systems of education,
- moving forward with Common Core as the best approach for the state, and
- using an industry-certified approach to Common Core in some schools.

PowerPoint Presentation:
Mathematics Comparison

Handouts:

Mathematics Comparison

A Comparison of Reading Standards in the Arkansas ELA Curriculum Frameworks to Reading Standards in the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects

At 12:00 Noon, Senator Key announced that the meeting would recess for lunch and would reconvene at 1:00 p.m.

Afternoon Session

Senator Key reconvened the meeting at 1:00 p.m.

Senator Key announced that there would be a deviation from the agenda so that Dr. James Milgram, originally scheduled to speak on Monday, could make his presentation at this time.

Overview of Concerns Regarding the Mathematics Component of Common Core

Presenter and Synopsis:

Dr. James Milgram, Emeritus Professor of Mathematics, Stanford University, Stanford, California (*via call-in*), was recognized. Dr. Milgram discussed things he found disturbing with Common Core: lack of suitable research for the writing of key topics, expensive and highly non-standard testing, and math standards that fall far short of what is needed by students for more advanced work. He emphasized that Common Core is using children for a huge and risky experiment. Dr. Milgram discussed examples of Common Core tests currently being prepared.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- using Common Core to bring current Arkansas standards up to par, or splitting the standards between Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) and technical tracks,
- finding a true international standard for guiding Common Core,
- research vs. experimentation on which to base standards,
- applying standards based on strong international research results to Arkansas and the rest of the United States,

- preparation for handling the standards, and
- importance of students understanding the concept and meaning of “place value” in mathematics.

Handout:

Testimony About Issues-With-Core Math Standards, Revised

Remarks by the Southern Regional Education Board

Presenter and Synopsis:

Mr. Dave Spence, President, Southern Regional Education Board, Atlanta, Georgia, was recognized. Mr. Spence stated that the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) supports implementation of the Common Core State Standards in all states. He clarified that the SREB believes public education is a state and local matter and responsibility. Mr. Spence said the SREB supports Common Core because, 1) a common threshold is supportable, and badly needed for the economic and social betterment and success of all states, and 2) the Common Core State Standards are very good standards, especially in literacy, and in a ground-breaking way, in disciplinary-based literacy. He noted that higher education has a critical role in making the Common Core standards work. Mr. Spence said that SREB supports assessments for two reasons: 1) A standard isn't a standard until it's assessed and a level of performance to meet expectations is determined, and 2) states need an objective measurement to the extent which standards are being met over time by students, and to the extent that states are able to compare with other states. Mr. Spence commented that Common Core aligns with the SREB's agenda for college readiness; and mentioned that Arkansas is one of fourteen states joining with the SREB in a consortium to develop 12th grade college readiness courses around the Common Core standards for students who aren't quite there yet at the end of their junior year.

Contributor to the Discussion:

Mr. Gene Bottoms, Senior Vice President, Southern Regional Education Board, Atlanta, Georgia

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- ◆ rationale for Georgia's withdrawal from PARCC,
- ◆ college readiness standards and preparing students for success in non-math based programs, and
- ◆ a proliferation of modifications over time resulting in a breakdown of the standards.

Remarks by the Thomas B. Fordham Institute

Presenter and Synopsis:

Mr. Michael J. Petrilli, Executive Vice President, Thomas B. Fordham Institute, Washington, D.C., was recognized. Mr. Petrilli described the Fordham Institute as a right-of-center education policy think tank. He said the Institute promotes education reforms of all stripes; but, it focuses especially on expanding critical choice in education as well as on standards-based reform. Mr. Petrilli urged Arkansans to stay the course with Common Core; and made the case that Common Core actually represents a great victory for conservatives. Mr. Petrilli responded to three major complaints previously made about Common Core: 1) that the standards themselves are flawed, 2) that the standards are creatures of the federal government, and 3) that the standards open the door to inappropriate intrusions into children's privacy. Following his rebuttals, Mr. Petrilli delivered six strong, conservative reasons why the Fordham Institute is bullish on Common Core, including those concerning fiscal responsibility, accountability, school choice, competitiveness, innovation, and traditional education values.

Issue Included in the Discussion:

- percents required for informational texts vs. literary texts.

Handout:

Testimony from the Thomas B. Fordham Institute

Senator Key announced that there would be a deviation from the agenda, and the next speaker would be Dr. Gary Ritter.

Remarks by the Office for Education Policy, University of Arkansas

Presenter and Synopsis:

Dr. Gary Ritter, Director, Office for Education Policy, University of Arkansas, was recognized. Dr. Ritter gave a PowerPoint presentation about Common Core. He clarified that Common Core is a set of standards, and not curriculum. He said it is a continuation of state standards that currently exist, and is an improvement in the right direction, without being a big shift. Dr. Ritter provided comparative examples between the Curriculum Frameworks and Common Core. He discussed positive aspects: potentially improved rigor, cross-state information, computer-based exams, and teachers and schools well on the way to adoption of the standards. He reviewed potential concerns: not as rigorous as advertised, concern with placing one body in charge of many state standards, and numerous implementation challenges. Dr. Ritter finally discussed things that shouldn't be worried about; that the Common Core standards 1) represent excessive regulation and over-reach by centralized group, 2) will lead to breaches of data privacy, 3) are being adopted without any track record of proven success, 4) will lead to lots of standardized testing that is hurting our kids, and 5) with the standards, our teachers will have to force our students to abandon traditional algorithms and engage in "fuzzy math."

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- ∴ expectations of gains on the ACT and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP),
- ∴ purpose to be served by PARCC,
- ∴ states developing own tests,
- ∴ feedback from teachers,
- ∴ professional development key to continued implementation,
- ∴ concern about where "fuzzy math" is coming from,
- ∴ setting standards and the reality of the academic state of students,
- ∴ paying attention both to growth and year-end scores,
- ∴ thinking ahead about student achievement, and
- ∴ using regional measures.

PowerPoint Presentation:

Common Core: What should we like and dislike? And what don't we need to worry about...

Handout:

Common Core: What should we like and dislike? And what don't we need to worry about..., notes

Remarks by the Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators

Presenter and Synopsis:

Dr. Richard Abernathy, Executive Director, Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators, was recognized. Dr. Abernathy said that several curriculum experts would present testimony today on the subject of Common Core. Topics covered included: Bryant School District's experience over a three-year period with its comprehensive analysis, evaluation, and implementation of the Common Core standards; upholding and advancing high standards for a diverse student population; and aligning a student's educational journey from kindergarten through Grade 12. Dr. Abernathy concluded by saying that, although the transition to Common Core will be difficult, it is the direction in which we need to go.

Contributors to the Discussion (in order of testimony):

Dr. Deborah Bruick, Assistant Superintendent, Bryant School District

Ms. Sandra Johnson, Gifted Specialist, Ozarks Unlimited Resource (OUR) Educational Service Cooperative,

Harrison, AR

Ms. Debbie Miller, Director of Instructional Services, Conway School District
Dr. Tom Kimbrell, Commissioner, Arkansas Department of Education

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- Smart Core vs. Common Core,
- need for alignment for schools in school improvement,
- national data on curriculum in Advanced Placement (AP),
- anecdotal evidence to support teacher information and understanding,
- progress being made in cost and access to Broadband,
- advantages of “online,”
- subject matter included in Common Core, and
- helping students in poor school districts.

Remarks by the Arkansas Education Association

Presenter and Synopsis:

Mr. E. C. Walker, Interim Executive Director, Arkansas Education Association, was recognized. Mr. Walker stated that the two main reasons why the Arkansas Education Association (AEA) supports Common Core are that the standards: 1) are an alignment of standards, assessments, and curriculum, and 2) enable students in an increasingly mobile nation to compete nationally and globally. The point was made in the written testimony of the AEA that, “the successful implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), through appropriate curriculum development and appropriate assessments, is crucial to driving the reform efforts in the direction of creating what all of us want: A Great Public School for Every Student. Finally, after more than 30 years, we are presented with an opportunity to put in place the alignment that is necessary to successful education outcomes.”

Contributor to the Discussion:

Ms. Brenda Robinson, President, Arkansas Education Association, was recognized. Ms. Robinson stated that the AEA believes the inclusion of classroom teachers in every school district in the planning and implementation of the Common Core standards is absolutely necessary. She said the AEA also believes that Common Core has the potential to provide teachers with manageable curriculum goals, and the freedom to exercise professional development in their planning and instruction to promote student success.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- motivating students from all backgrounds to want to learn,
- participation of higher education in teacher training for Common Core, and
- teacher freedom in the classroom; teaching to the test.

Exhibit:

Exhibit C5 – Testimony from the Arkansas Education Association

Senator Key announced that Item C6 on the agenda, Remarks by the Arkansas Rural Education Association, would not be presented at this meeting.

Remarks by the Arkansas School Boards Association

Presenter and Synopsis:

Mr. Ron Harder, Policy Service & Advocacy Director, Arkansas School Boards Association, was recognized. Mr. Harder stated that the Arkansas School Boards Association (ASBA) supports Common Core as part of a long-term solution to improve public education. He said the catalyst for Common Core was No Child Left Behind

(NCLB), which based Title 1 funding on achievement, on proficiency, and on each state's individual standards. He said that NCLB's fatal flaw was that every state had its own standards and set its own cut scores, and there was no comparability between states. Mr. Harder explained that the need for national standards, whereby each state is measured in the same way, has been part of the outgrowth. He added that the mobility of the population across states is another major reason to support the standards. He noted that the best advantage of Common Core is that with lessened volume, it gives teachers more time to instill students with a depth of knowledge. Mr. Harder also touched upon the teaching of standards and not curriculum, testing, and accountability. He commented that, separate and apart from Common Core, continuing to expand Early Childhood Education is an excellent investment in student preparation.

Remarks by the Arkansas State Teachers Association

Presenter and Synopsis:

Dr. Michele Ballentine-Linch, Executive Director, Arkansas State Teachers Association, was recognized. Dr. Ballentine-Linch stated that the Arkansas State Teachers Association (ASTA) supports effective implementation of Common Core. She said that ASTA is member-driven, and has polled members on the merits of Common Core. She said the data shows that members appear to be moving in the direction of supporting consistent standards. Dr. Ballentine-Linch said members also support local control and flexibility. She advised that real classroom teachers must be heard in establishing best practices; and that teachers must be afforded the preparation and professional development time needed to properly implement the new guidelines. She said that teachers appreciate standards that require more collaborative and engaging instruction, and that speak to higher levels of learning and critical thinking.

Issue Included in the Discussion:

- ◆ feedback from teachers.

Exhibit:

Exhibit C8 – Testimony from the Arkansas State Teachers Association

Remarks by the Northwest Arkansas Council

Presenter and Synopsis:

Mr. Kim Davis, Director of Education and Workforce Development, Northwest Arkansas Council, was recognized, and commented on Common Core from an economic development perspective. Mr. Davis stated that for members of the Northwest Arkansas Council, an educated workforce and the ability to recruit talent is vital to the continued growth of the Northwest Arkansas region which had three local companies on the Fortune 500 list this past year, and which will soon be welcoming its 500,000th resident. He discussed data collected from various analyses which proved troubling with regard to educational credentials of the area's residents over the age of 25. He said the numbers were significant, especially when communicating with site selectors who help companies relocate to places that have a talented and educated workforce. He also noted that continued talent recruitment from around the country is an issue due to a perceived lack of a quality educational system for families with K-12 students. Mr. Davis stated that participation in Common Core will have a profound effect on Northwest Arkansas's ability to recruit talent, and that he was confident that Arkansas business, political, and educational leaders could work cooperatively to meet the demands of increased standards for all Arkansans. He said he was confident that increasing standards will lead to better post-secondary preparation and higher post-secondary completion rates. Mr. Davis summarized that participation in and a successful implementation of Common Core will: 1) increase the region's standing with company site selectors looking to relocate in the South or Midwest, 2) expand the success of talent recruitment from other states, 3) provide solid data to push back against the winds of pessimism regarding educational opportunities in Arkansas, 4) signal to the business community that concerns regarding quality of educated and skilled workforce are being addressed by political and educational leaders, and 5) ease the transition of families to Arkansas, specifically Northwest Arkansas.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- ∴ involvement and intent of “big business,” and
- ∴ linkages between educational attainment and economic growth.

Remarks by the Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families

Presenter and Synopsis:

Ms. Jerri Derlikowski, Director of Education, Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families, was recognized, and stated that the Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families supports Common Core. She said the standards are needed to move the state and its students forward. She noted there is one related concern, the gap of opportunity and achievement between both low-income students and students of color. She said more resources are needed for these students, especially when these students are concentrated in a single school. She asked what additional support will be given when more rigorous requirements are in place. She requested that, as part of the Adequacy Study, or a study by the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE), an accurate assessment be made to determine what additional supports and resources are needed to make culturally diverse and low-income students successful with the new standards. The capacity assessment should address, but not be limited to: technology support; instructional materials and equipment; adequate instructional time; strategies for remedial support; and professional development. Ms. Derlikowski also expressed concern for low-income students that do graduate with good grades, but still aren't able to be successful in college or careers because the standards are so low.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- evaluating resources outside the school formula to find ways to make sure children are advantaged,
- defining resources, if not money, and
- funding and performance level.

Exhibits:

Exhibit C10-1 – Testimony from the Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families

Exhibit C10-2 – Percentages of Students Proficient and Advanced for Third Grade Literacy

Remarks by the Walton Family Foundation

Presenter and Synopsis:

Ms. Kathy Smith, Senior Program Officer, Arkansas Education Reform Initiative, Walton Family Foundation, was recognized. Ms. Smith stated that in 2012 the Walton Family Foundation (Foundation) invested more than \$30 million in Arkansas, about half of which was invested in education initiatives. She said the Foundation makes investments in Arkansas around the principles of accountability, transparency, school choice, and incentives with the overall goal of increasing student achievement for all students in Arkansas. She said these investments are focused both in traditional public schools, as well as in public charter schools. Ms. Smith said when Arkansas was considering adopting Common Core, the Foundation did its due diligence to decide whether or not to invest in this effort. She stated that researchers in an in-house study found Common Core to be superior to existing Arkansas standards. She noted that trusted organizations like the Fordham Institute were also looked at for evidence on this issue. She commented that these analyses led the Foundation to support adoption and implementation of Common Core because it aligned with the Foundation's principles of accountability and transparency. She said that, since 2011, the Foundation has invested more than \$2.3 million in this effort.

Issue Included in the Discussion:

- benefits to be gained through the funding of Common Core.

Exhibits:

Exhibit C11-1 - The State of State Standards – and the Common Core – in 2010

Exhibit C11-2 – Fordham's Review of the Common Core State Standards for Math

Exhibit C11-3 – Fordham’s Review of the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History, Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects

Remarks by the Arkansas Public School Resource Center

Presenter and Synopsis:

Mr. Scott Smith, Executive Director, Arkansas Public School Resource Center, was recognized. Mr. Smith spoke in support of the State Board of Education and the ADE’s adoption and implementation of Common Core. Mr. Smith said that Ms. Barbara Hunter Cox would share information from a research study concerning teachers and their interest, or lack of interest, in Common Core in which the Arkansas Public School Resource Center (APSRC) is currently involved. He noted that once the survey has been completed, the report will be made available to the ADE and the Education Committees.

Contributor to the Discussion:

Ms. Barbara Hunter Cox, Director of Teaching and Learning, Arkansas Public School Resource Center, was recognized. She spoke of the work done over two years in ninety (90) school districts across Arkansas focusing on Common Core and its implementation, including measuring educator and teacher involvement and training. She detailed evidence based on the study.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- ∴ availability of data on student achievement, and
- ∴ clarification of “norming”; setting standards for subgroups.

Remarks by the Opportunity To Learn Campaign

Presenter and Synopsis:

Mr. Richard Hutchinson, Co-Chair, Arkansas Opportunity to Learn Campaign, was recognized, and stated that those in the Opportunity to Learn Campaign support Common Core because it makes common sense. He commented that the academic downside of this highly mobile society can be addressed systematically by aligning curriculum across schools and grades. He noted that Common Core standards within each of the subject areas will help with this kind of alignment. He said as part of Common Core and beyond, common resources and strategies must be in place to ensure resources are equitably distributed to all students. He said the Opportunity to Learn Campaign believes it is very important to build partnerships with parents and community leaders, businesses, and others to ensure this quality education. Mr. Hutchinson said that Common Core by itself is no fix to public education; it needs to be implemented along with a number of other things, including opportunities for quality pre-school education for all students, quality summer and afterschool programs, quality teacher preparation and professional development, improvement of career and technical education, and furnishing access to higher education.

Exhibit:

Exhibit 14 – Testimony by the Arkansas Opportunity to Learn Campaign

Remarks by the Arkansas Family Council

Presenter and Synopsis:

Mr. Jerry Cox, President, Arkansas Family Council, was recognized, and discussed indirect effects of the Common Core standards on homeschoolers, and on those students in private schools. Mr. Cox mentioned, as an example, the alignment of the SAT and the ACT tests, and the General Educational Development (GED) Testing service with Common Core. He said the question is not, *will* it affect homeschoolers and private school kids, but, *how much* will it affect them and in what way. He said he didn’t think there was enough data right now to know

how that is going to fall. Mr. Cox noted the apprehension on the part of some groups, including the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA), which has come out against Common Core. He said HSLDA is concerned that the ACT, SAT, and other exams are going to be changed so significantly that a student who goes through a non-Common Core curriculum won't be able to do very well on those tests. Mr. Cox stated all of this is still unfolding. He said that there's even been some talk of scholarships and financial aid being tied to the Common Core curriculum. Mr. Cox said all the talk has been about the curriculum, but the assessments must be looked at equally as hard. Mr. Cox said that this issue needs additional study, and, at this time, the Arkansas Family Council does not have a position on Common Core.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- ◆ homeschool curriculum developers and Common Core,
- ◆ respect for the homeschool curriculum,
- ◆ not allowing homeschoolers to be disadvantaged because of Common Core, and
- ◆ Common Core creating any dilemmas for faith-based communities.

Remarks by the Arkansas Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (AASCD)

Presenter and Synopsis:

Dr. Mary B. Gunter, Executive Director, AASCD, was recognized. Dr. Gunter stated that the Arkansas Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (AASCD) wholeheartedly supports the Common Core standards. She discussed the development of awareness and support for Common Core in Arkansas. She commented on the importance of locally developed standards, and said AASCD was on board, knowing it would be an opportunity to revisit the current curriculum framework, look at what the information was telling us about moving forward with taking our framework and the standards, and going much more in-depth to better prepare for college and career readiness. She said AASCD joined with the ADE and other players interested in moving forward so it would not be a federal agenda, and it would have the authorship of those who would have the responsibility for implementing it.

Issue Included in the Discussion:

- mechanisms in place to ensure curriculum areas tell both sides of the story.

Senator Key announced that Item C17 on the agenda, Remarks by a Public School Teacher, would not be presented.

Remarks by the Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce

Presenter and Synopsis:

Mr. Randy Zook, President and Chief Executive Officer, Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce/Associated Industries of Arkansas, was recognized. Mr. Zook stated that the Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce, comprised of over 1,300 Arkansas businesses employing more than 300,000 Arkansans is in strong support of continued, full-speed implementation of Common Core. He said that Common Core is fundamentally an issue of competitiveness, and the resulting individual, family, community, and state economic progress or lack thereof. He said that comparing Arkansans with Arkansans does not give an accurate picture of student proficiency; that our children and grandchildren are not just competing with talent in Arkansas, but with their contemporaries across the country, and around the world, and we must know how we compare. He said that in the 13 years of K-12, the state spends nearly \$150,000 on each student in Arkansas and what's the return on investment: one in five don't graduate, nearly half of all college-bound students require remediation, and Arkansas is still 49th in the nation in the percentage of people with a four-year degree. He said, though talent is the new driver of economic development, Arkansas is treading water on far too many measures and seems determined not to acknowledge it openly. He continued that while much is made of the short-term cost of implementation of Common Core, the

long-term cost to Arkansas students, businesses, and the economy, should be considered if increased rigor and accountability is stopped or seriously delayed. He said thousands of jobs are going wanting in Arkansas, because there isn't enough of an educated, trained, and drug-free workforce to fill them. On behalf of the Arkansas business community, Mr. Zook asked that students be put first and be given the tools to enable them to compete.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- business communities helping with the establishment of Common Core, and
- resource centers for students in impoverished communities.

Handout:

Testimony from Mr. R. Zook, the Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce

Dr. Tom Kimbrell, Commissioner, Arkansas Department of Education, was recognized, and responded to a query from **The Honorable Alan Clark**, State Senator, District 13, about what assurances could be given to his constituents that their concerns about Common Core are unwarranted.

Public Comment Concerning the Implementation of Common Core in Arkansas

Ms. Denna Slade, Mother and Grandmother, was recognized, and stated she had strong feelings and concerns about Common Core. She said she was present to raise her voice in opposition to the Common Core standards because of the deceptive and coercive methods used to foist them on the people. She said her misgivings center around its writers, funders, and proponents, and their philosophies. Ms. Slade discussed several issues regarding Common Core, including: implementation without state legislative authority; curricula driven by tests and standards, leaving little room for local choice for public, home, and private schools; control by the federal government and private-interest groups; proponents receive financial backing from federal tax money and private business, and stand to receive financial gain from implementation; invasion of privacy with expanded data mining; and loss of parental and civil rights.

Other Handouts Distributed at the Meeting:

El Dorado School District Testimony

Senator Key thanked the legislators and presenters for the discussions over the two days of meetings.

Next Scheduled Meeting:

Monday, August 19, 2013, at 10:00 a.m. in Room 171 of the State Capitol in Little Rock

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

Approved: 08/19/13