

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

**ADEQUACY**

**Tuesday, March 11, 2014**  
**9:00 A.M.**  
**Room 171, State Capitol**  
**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.

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

**MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE:** Representative Charles L. Armstrong; Representative John Catlett; Representative Bruce Cozart; Representative Charlotte Vining Douglas; Representative Jon Eubanks; Representative Debra Hobbs; Representative Karen Hopper; Representative Sheilla Lampkin; Representative Homer Lenderman; and Representative James Ratliff.

**NON-VOTING MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE:** Representative Harold Copenhaver; and Representative David Fielding.

**OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE:** Representative Scott Baltz; Representative Nate Bell; Representative Jeremy Gillam; Representative Bill Gossage; Representative John Hutchison; Representative Mark McElroy; and Representative Betty Overbey.

Discussion of Issues Related to Teacher Salaries

*Presenter & Synopsis:*

**Ms. Nell Smith**, Administrator, Policy Analysis and Research, Bureau of Legislative Research, was recognized. Ms. Smith referred to highlighted items on a handout of Adequacy Study responsibilities, and said that presentations today would be on teacher salary and compensation. She commented that teachers' compensation has long been a chief concern in assessing the adequacy of the state's educational system. She discussed sections of a handout, *Teacher Compensation*, including historical context, legislative actions, minimum salary schedule, retirement, paid leave, and the base salary used to calculate per-student foundation funding. Ms. Smith next reviewed a memorandum, *District and School Survey Questions Related to Teacher Compensation*, which included graphic illustrations of responses to district and school site visit surveys conducted as part of the 2014 Adequacy Study. Ms. Smith discussed data on teacher recruitment and retention, teacher termination, and teacher absences.

*Contributor to the Discussion:*

**Dr. Tom Kimbrell**, Commissioner, Arkansas Department of Education

*Issues Included in the Discussion:*

- level of school officials who provided responses,
- impact of teacher health insurance on recruitment and retention,

- clarification of charts related to teacher termination on page 3 of memo,
- teacher evaluation and performance,
- comparing number of absences of those in education with those in other fields or professions,
- ranking administrators' salaries,
- number of steps that the state requires for years of experience or advanced degrees on salary schedule,
- difficulty of dismissing a teacher,
- increasing the minimum salary structure and seeing how it applies against the Matrix to determine what the Matrix increase needs to be,
- policy regarding personal days for school employees,
- state recommendation or regulation for compensation for unused sick days,
- exclusion of charter schools from the Adequacy Study because of their ability to waive certain state rules,
- putting blame on teachers versus on students for issues related to student performance,
- student growth component in new statewide system for evaluating the performance of teachers,
- certification of evaluators,
- clarification of the meaning of "performance" in the question on teacher termination,
- complaints about the teacher evaluation process as it is currently being implemented,
- principals becoming instructional leaders, and
- measuring student performance in athletics and not in academics.

Handouts:

Adequacy Study Statutory Responsibilities  
District and School Survey Questions Related to Teacher Compensation  
Teacher Compensation, Highlights

Senator Key welcomed a group of visitors from the Arkansas Nurses Association who were attending the Committee meeting.

**Mr. Richard Wilson**, Assistant Director, Research Services, Bureau of Legislative Research, was recognized, and introduced Dr. Mandy Gillip.

Presenter & Synopsis:

**Dr. Mandy Gillip**, Legislative Analyst, Policy Analysis and Research, Bureau of Legislative Research, was recognized. Dr. Gillip reviewed the contents of the *Teacher Salary Report*, which was compiled to provide answers to answer six (6) specific questions:

- 1) How do Arkansas teacher salaries compare with surrounding states and states of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB)?
- 2) How have the average teacher salaries changed in Arkansas compared with surrounding states and states in the SREB from 2011-2012 to 2012-2013?
- 3) How does the cost of living in Arkansas and surrounding states affect the value of Arkansas teacher salaries?
- 4) Has the disparity in teacher salaries within Arkansas increased or decreased in FY2012-13?
- 5) How do teacher salaries in Arkansas compare with the salaries in other professions with similar educational requirements?
- 6) What instructional areas have the largest number of teachers teaching out of area in Arkansas?

Contributors to the Discussion:

**Ms. Sarah Ganahl**, Staff Attorney, Bureau of Legislative Research

**Ms. Nell Smith**, Administrator, Policy Analysis and Research, Bureau of Legislative Research

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- inclusion of fringe benefits in calculations,
- correlation between average teacher salary and minimum teacher salary in chart on page 2,
- the dollar impact for the districts if the state minimum teacher salary was raised,
- the disconnect between the foundation funding Matrix and actual teacher salaries,
- growth funding going into rewarding teachers,
- looking at data disparities among districts,
- impact of local wealth on teacher salaries,
- child as hostage to a zip code,
- addressing unconscionable disparities,
- mechanism in place to help high priority districts with teacher bonuses,
- purpose of report is to determine if adequacy is being achieved,
- inflationary adjustment to the Matrix vs. adjusting teacher salary schedule, and
- managing the distribution of foundation funding.

Senator Key stated the Committees would like to see calculations on adjusting the minimum teacher salary schedule, using a \$31,000 minimum, and what that would do to the Matrix, and a rough estimate of what that would do to disparity concerns.

**The Honorable Debra Hobbs**, State Representative, District 94, was recognized, and requested that the salary ranges of administrators be looked at, as well.

Handout:

Teacher Salary Report

Next Scheduled Meetings:

Tuesday, March 11, 2014, at 1:30 p.m. in Room 171 of the State Capitol in Little Rock, State and Public  
Employee Life and Health Insurance Program Legislative Task Force

Monday, April 14, 2014, at 10:00 a.m. in Room 171 of the State Capitol in Little Rock

Tuesday, April 15, at 9:00 a.m. in Room 171 of the State Capitol in Little Rock

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

*Approved: 04/14/14*