

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

Tuesday, May 6, 2014
10:00 A.M.
Arkadelphia High School
401 High School Road
Arkadelphia, Arkansas

Dr. Donnie Whitten, Superintendent, Arkadelphia School District, welcomed members of the House and Senate Interim Committees on Education and other legislators to Arkadelphia High School at 10:00 a.m. Dr. Whitten introduced two Clark County legislators, Senator Larry Teague and Representative Richard Womack, and noted that former State Representative Johnnie Roebuck was in attendance.

MEMBERS OF THE SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE: Senator Johnny Key, Chair; Senator Joyce Elliott, Vice Chair; and Senator Alan Clark.

MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE: Representative Charles L. Armstrong; Representative Bruce Cozart; Representative Gary Deffenbaugh; Representative Charlotte Vining Douglas; Representative Debra Hobbs; Representative Karen Hopper; Representative Sheilla Lampkin; Representative Homer Lenderman; and Representative Brent Talley.

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

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE: Senator Linda Chesterfield; Senator Jane English; Senator Larry Teague; Senator Eddie Joe Williams; Representative Charlene Fite; Representative Kelley Linck; Representative Stephanie Malone; Representative Mark McElroy; Representative Micah Neal; Representative Betty Overbey; Representative Mary Slinkard; and Representative Richard Womack.

Dr. Whitten introduced individuals important to the process of making the school successful, including:

Dr. Jeff Root, School Board President
Mr. David Maxwell, Principal
Ms. Cheryl Merk, Assistant Principal, New Tech Director
Dr. Virginia Anderson, Director, Federal Programs & Administrative Services
Ms. Jeanette Turner, Director, Curriculum & Instruction
Mr. Bud McMillion, Teacher, Department of Career & Technical Education

Following a brief presentation in the Arkadelphia High School Little Theater, the meeting recessed for tours of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Works programs – *New Tech Network [NTN]*, *Project Lead The Way [PLTW]*, and *Environmental and Spatial Technology [East]*.

Senator Johnny Key, the Chair of the Senate Interim Committee on Education, called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

The joint meeting was live streamed over the Internet courtesy of *Connect Arkansas*.

Prior to presentations scheduled on the agenda, a brief discussion took place on:

- implementation and funding of NTN,
- use of the ECHO software management system,
- NTN and the Common Core State Standards, and
- the Arkadelphia Promise.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- system for tracking students through college, and
- how NTN has affected math and geometry scores.

Presentations Regarding STEM Works

Presenters:

Mr. Artee Williams, Chair, Governor's Workforce Cabinet, was recognized. Mr. Williams presented a historical perspective of the STEM Works initiative in Arkansas, and updated the Committees on funding, program developments, and projections for the future.

Dr. Kristin Cuilla, Director, New School Development-New Tech Network, was recognized. Dr. Cuilla discussed connectivity, pertinent to the development of fearless, connected students who have the skills needed to thrive throughout their lives.

Mr. Tim Johnston, Program Coordinator, Arkansas Department of Career Education - Project Lead the Way, was recognized. Mr. Johnston said it was an exciting time to be in education. He said STEM is everywhere. He said students are learning without realizing they are learning. He discussed programs that have been funded and districts that are piloting the programs. He stated that 7,382 Arkansas students were enrolled in PLTW programs this past year.

Mr. Matt Dozier, President/CEO, EAST Initiative-EAST Core, was recognized. Mr. Dozier discussed collaborative learning environments that EAST programs provide for students. He said that what sets EAST and EAST Core apart from other programs is that EAST Core focuses on content. He noted the projects that students take on tend to be immediately relevant, immediately local, and immediately real. He stated that currently there are 208 EAST programs in Arkansas, and that there would be an announcement this week of 14 new ones. He commented that there is a place for all programs in preparing students because one size does not fit all. He said EAST and EAST Core provide common sense solutions and a commitment to engage educators with students.

Mr. Shane Broadway, Director, Arkansas Department of Higher Education-UTeach, was recognized. Mr. Broadway discussed the education part of the STEM Works initiative. He said three institutions have implemented UTeach programs: the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville (UofA), the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR), and the University of Central Arkansas (UCA). He said 179 students have enrolled to date. Mr. Broadway also discussed the Arkadelphia Promise and the Preparatory Academy.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- participation by the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB) in UTeach, and
- demographics of the participants in UTeach.

Handouts:

Arkansas Department of Career Education (ACE) and Project Lead the Way
Arkansas and New Tech Network and STEM
Arkansas STEM Works
Digital Learning @ New Tech Network
EAST Core Information

UTeach Arkansas

Presentation of Arkansas Digital Learning Study

Presenter:

Dr. Ed Franklin, Chair, Quality Digital Learning Study Committee, was recognized. Dr. Franklin noted this report concerning Arkansas's capacity to provide high-speed connectivity for K-12 schools is the result of a year-long study required by Act 1280 of 2013. Dr. Franklin walked the Committees through the report. He discussed the member list and others who facilitated the report, the research needed to put the study together, connections, where schools get bandwidth, and capacity needed. He said four strategies were looked at: 1) maintain status quo, 2) use public resources, 3) use private resources, and 4) use shared public/private resources and infrastructure. He reviewed the eight findings and the six recommendations. He talked about the anticipated benefits, primarily in three areas: cost, capacity, and content. In his conclusion, he commented that, while network unification using Arkansas Research Education Optical Network (ARE-ON) is not allowed, it was advised in the report that the Arkansas General Assembly removes statutory barriers to this approach.

Contributors to the Discussion:

Mr. Cody Decker, Assistant Commissioner, Research and Technology, Arkansas Department of Education

Ms. Susan Harriman, Director, Policy and Special Projects, Arkansas Department of Education

Mr. Jordan Johnson, Spokesperson, Arkansas Broadband Coalition for Kids

Mr. Len Pitcock, Chair, Arkansas Cable Telecommunications Association

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- ◆ rationale for exclusion of ARE-ON,
- ◆ willingness of school districts to pay for access to Broadband,
- ◆ complexity of school districts' needs regarding Broadband,
- ◆ clarification of the E-Rate funding program,
- ◆ meeting demands of technology in terms of adequacy in school districts that don't have resources,
- ◆ statewide fiber optic lines,
- ◆ cost comparison of connectivity provided by the state vs. by private industry,
- ◆ assessing cost for a school district,
- ◆ making decisions using archaic information about technology for funding models,
- ◆ geographic impediments to connectivity in certain areas of Arkansas,
- ◆ schools that are deficient in Bandwidth,
- ◆ areas of Arkansas where ARE-ON is available,
- ◆ areas of Arkansas where private provider connectivity is available,
- ◆ concerns about accuracy of data, lack of costs, and conflict with state law in the report, and
- ◆ competition between government and private industry.

Handout:

Quality Digital Learning Study

Next Scheduled Meetings:

Monday, May 12, 2014, at 10:00 p.m. in Room 171 of the State Capitol in Little Rock

Tuesday, May 13, 2014, at 9:00 a.m. in Room 171 of the State Capitol in Little Rock

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.