

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

ADEQUACY

Tuesday, May 13, 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 Alan Clark; Senator Jim Hendren; Senator Uvalde Lindsey; and Senator Jason Rapert.

MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE: Representative James McLean, Chair; Representative Charles L. Armstrong; Representative Les Carnine; Representative John Catlett; Representative Bruce Cozart; Representative Robert Dale; Representative Jody Dickinson; Representative Charlotte Vining Douglas; Representative Karen Hopper; and Representative Homer Lenderman.

NON-VOTING MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE:

Representative Harold Copenhagen; Representative Stephen Meeks; Representative Reginald Murdock; and Representative Chris Richey.

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE: Senator Linda Chesterfield; Senator Jonathan Dismang; Senator Jane English; Representative Duncan Baird; Representative Scott Baltz; Representative David Branscum; Representative Jeremy Gillam; Representative Walls McCrary; Representative Mark McElroy; Representative Micah Neal; Representative Jim Nickels; Representative Betty Overbey; Representative Mary Lou Slinkard; and Representative Tommy Thompson.

Morning Session

Review of Arkansas Department of Education Rule Referred to the Committees by the Administrative Rules and Regulations Subcommittee of the Arkansas Legislative Council Concerning Policies Governing Programs for Educator Licensure Offered by Institutions of Higher Education in Arkansas

Presenter & Synopsis:

Ms. Cheryl Reinhart, Attorney, Professional Licensure Standards Board, Arkansas Department of Education, was recognized. Ms. Reinhart commented that this has been a policy for 30 years pursuant to the statutory obligation of the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) to approve teacher education programs; however, it is the first time it has been promulgated as a rule. She noted that there have been numerous changes in policies over this 30 year time period, including the name change from National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) to Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). She stated these policy changes are incorporated within these rules. She said these changes were spearheaded by **Dr. Mike Lucas**, Teacher Educator Program Advisor, Office of Educator Licensure, ADE, and have been needed for many years.

Contributors to the Discussion:

Dr. Diana Pounder, Dean of Education, College of Education, University of Central Arkansas (UCA)

Ms. Karli Saracini, Coordinator of Educator Licensure, Office of Educator Licensure, Arkansas Department of Education

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- current trends in field or clinical experience for an internship,
- evidence that an extended internship makes a better teacher,
- future of the mentoring program,
- evidence that a higher Grade Point Average (GPA) makes a more successful teacher,
- ability to work a part-time job outside of an internship,
- proficiency in oral communications and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA),
- accommodating teachers with physical limitations and those for whom English is a second language in the rules,
- process for demonstrating appropriate disposition,
- students in the pipeline of a unit that loses accreditation,
- number of hours required for internships,
- using the GPA as a measure of a high-quality teacher-candidate,
- putting rules in place and also making the profession attractive for high-quality teachers,
- minimum requirements for educators who prepare teachers,
- correlating the minimum cut score on the ACT with the basic skills assessment (Praxis Core) score,
- lack of internships in schools under academic distress or administrative takeover,
- placement of teachers in priority schools,
- increase in standards and expectations of teachers and increase in teacher salaries, and
- weeding candidates out of a teacher education program.

Senator Johnny Key said that, hearing no objection, the next step would be to set up meetings between interested Committee members and the ADE to address questions and concerns that have been raised.

Exhibit:

Exhibit C – ADE Policies Governing Programs for Educator Licensure Offered by Institutions of Higher Education in Arkansas

Continued Discussion of Written Testimony Submitted by Various Organizations Regarding their Concerns about the State's Current System of Funding for Public Education

Presenter & Synopsis:

Mr. Richard Hutchinson, former Director of Government Relations, Arkansas Education Association, was recognized. Mr. Hutchinson stated the written testimony of the Arkansas Education Association (AEA) covers a number of issues related to Adequacy over which schools and the state can exert some control and have some impact. He said the written testimony also raises other issues critical to Adequacy and quality of education that may not come directly under the purview of the Education Committees, but may be included as recommendations in the Adequacy Report for review by other committees or elements of state government. He stated the issues that should be looked at include poverty, language development, literacy development, self-confidence, health and housing, and economic and cultural divisions in society. He discussed the wise spending of NSLA (National School Lunch Act) money, the quality of employees and educators in schools, and the need for rigorous educator preparation programs.

Contributor to the Discussion:

Mr. Cory Biggs, Director of Public Affairs, Arkansas Education Association

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- balancing funding for professional development (PD) and PD requirements,
- needing a uniform approach towards expanding planning time and improving collaboration,
- source of funding for PD programs,
- current research on segregation in Little Rock's public schools,
- having other committees address issues of Adequacy that impact schools in their areas,
- continued discussion of the need for an increase in Broadband capacity with various stakeholders.

Handouts:

AEA Adequacy Testimony Revised
AEA Adequacy Testimony Summary – May 13, 2014

Ms. Nell Smith, Administrator, Policy Analysis and Research, Bureau of Legislative Research, was recognized, and reviewed the Committees' meeting schedule leading up to the finalization of the Adequacy Report.

Presenter & Synopsis:

Dr. Richard Abernathy, Executive Director, Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators (AAEA), was recognized. Dr. Abernathy reviewed the progress that has been made since the *Lake View* decision, including math gains in the 4th and 8th grades, a steady decline in college remediation rates, and students continuing to make strides in AP/concurrent credit classes. He said, despite recent progress, concerns with Adequacy remain. In his presentation, Dr. Abernathy discussed those concerns, including the eroding adequacy of school funding, reduction of facility and PD funds, health insurance, bandwidth, remediation, categorical funds, teacher salaries, pre-K funding, and unfunded mandates.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- ◆ running the state and public school employees' health insurance plans as one unit to achieve parity,
- ◆ identifying things that are no longer valuable to education and that can be discontinued,
- ◆ importance of leadership in developing systems for successful PD programs,
- ◆ accessing collected taxes to provide an adequate opportunity to public school students in all schools: traditional, conversion charter, and open-enrollment charter,
- ◆ use of buildings in place that are no longer utilized or under-utilized by school districts,
- ◆ effect of the use of under-utilized buildings by charter schools on the morale of a community,
- ◆ economies of scale involved in supporting additional schools and meeting Adequacy,
- ◆ maintaining successful PD programs with cuts in funding,
- ◆ status of \$123 million grant from the Department of Commerce, part of which was for broadband connection for schools,
- ◆ safe rooms in elementary schools,
- ◆ consideration of wireless technologies, and
- ◆ teachers using flex days for PD.

PowerPoint Presentation:

AAEA Adequacy Presentation

Handout:

AAEA Summary of Adequacy Testimony

Presenter & Synopsis:

Mr. Scott Smith, Executive Director, Arkansas Public School Resource Center, was recognized. Mr. Smith covered three issues in the Arkansas Public School Resource Center (APSRC) testimony: 1) Broadband, 2) facilities assistance for open-enrollment charter schools, and 3) lack of access to a high number of quality math, science, and special education teachers in rural Arkansas. Mr. Smith said there is neither adequacy nor equity in the statewide service pattern for public schools in regard to Broadband capacity or the cost of Broadband services to schools. He said this point is supported by several studies. He referred Committee members to the bandwidth survey conducted by the ADE in 2013, a map produced by the Arkansas Science and Technology Authority (ASTA) which points out the discrepancies and deficiencies of services and capacity in this area, the report by the Quality Digital Learning Study Committee, and a survey of school administrators conducted by the AAEA. He discussed the Digital Learning Act (Act 1280 of 2013), and Act 1150 of 2011, which blocked the K-12 population from having access to ARE-ON.

Mr. John Ahlen, Director of Technology, Arkansas Public School Resource Center, and Member, Quality Digital Learning Study Committee, was recognized, and continued the testimony. Mr. Ahlen discussed three things that are important for Broadband: availability, affordability, and utility.

Mr. Smith raised the second topic, facilities assistance for open-enrollment charter schools, which run independently of public school districts. He said there are currently 17 charter schools with approximately 9,561 students. He said these charter schools are not provided with a facility or allowed to receive some form of non-debt facility assistance from the state. He stated that when the 2002 and 2005 *Lake View* rulings are reviewed, there is no distinction made relative to a public school student and the setting that student happens to be in as far as the constitutional obligations of the state to provide an adequate and equitable educational opportunity for that student. Mr. Smith also cited the provision for a “warm, safe and dry” educational environment in the 2002 decision. He said he raised this issue because of the legislature’s concern for all public school students in Arkansas. Mr. Smith said the final point to be made is the lack of access to a high number of quality math, science, and special education teachers in rural Arkansas, and the impact that’s having given the accountability system that’s now in place within the public education environment, especially the impact of math scores and the subpopulations served. Mr. Smith encouraged the legislature to take a look at this issue which is becoming an increasingly dire situation.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- codification of the prohibition against open-enrollment charter schools from participating in the facilities partnership program,
- restrictions, but not prohibitions, on use by public schools of education research networks in other states,
- economies of scale and maintaining schools that are being created,
- charter schools meeting the 350 rule,
- benefits of charter schools to the Little Rock School District and the state,
- moving away from traditional schools and never having a quality middle school option,
- ability of districts to partner with charter schools and implement programs together, and
- long-term impact and legal concerns over a weighted system for enrollment in charter schools.

Handout:

Arkansas Public School Resource Center Supplemental Information

Recess:

The meeting recessed for lunch at 11:45 a.m.

Afternoon Session

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

Continued Discussion of Written Testimony Submitted by Various Organizations Regarding their Concerns about the State's Current System of Funding for Public Education

Presenter & Synopsis:

Mr. Ron Harder, Policy Service & Advocacy Director, Arkansas School Boards Association, was recognized. Mr. Harder discussed the need for a full scale re-examination of both statutes governing education, individual components of the Matrix, and legislation passed since 2003 to reflect the current needs of public education. He mentioned the need to involve the business community in the process and the need for schools to have flexibility similar to that offered in schools of innovation. He brought up issues including Career Education, Accountability, TESS (Teacher Excellence and Support System), Digital Learning Act (Act 1280 of 2013), Culture, Common Core State Standards, Regional High Schools, pre-K, Health Insurance Matrix Determination, and Charter School Facilities.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- ❖ process established for disposing of unused real property by school districts,
- ❖ college and career focus,
- ❖ addressing career education in the definition of Adequacy,
- ❖ making changes in the Matrix to reflect current needs,
- ❖ insufficiency of staff educated to use the technology within schools,
- ❖ lack of a secondary vocational center in North Central Arkansas,
- ❖ concept of regional high schools,
- ❖ incorporating a collaborative environment into teachers' planning time, and
- ❖ balancing the importance of career education and a college degree.

Handout:

ASBA Adequacy Testimony Summary – May 13, 2014

Presenter & Synopsis:

Dr. Michele Linch, Executive Director, Arkansas State Teachers Association (ASTA), was recognized. Dr. Linch discussed results of a poll of ASTA members. She said most issues raised pertained to funding for public schools and discrepancies in terms of Adequacy. She said comments included too much money being spent on athletics and the allocation of excessive funds for administrative positions. She noted that anecdotal comments included excessive spending on large flat-screen televisions for cafeterias, pre-packaged programs, unneeded or extravagant buildings, and ineffective, highly paid consultants. She said the needs identified by ASTA members fell into two categories, school staffing and technology, including Broadband. She commented that research of thriving schools shows strong collaborative teams, professional learning communities, and strong personnel policy committees. She stated ASTA members are forward-thinking professionals who put students first, and support efforts that ensure equitable and adequate allocation of resources. She commented that ASTA looks forward to working with the state in providing insight into the impact of funding issues and decision-making. Two things are clear from feedback from members: serious discrepancies related to issues that impact student learning still exist, and teachers and other educational professionals need to have a stronger voice with regard to Adequacy.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- speaking out on issues concerning Common Core,

- number of members in ASTA and dues paid,
- teachers being well-prepared to implement Common Core,
- teachers as leaders,
- needing more time to create additional curricula.

Other Handouts:

AAFCF Testimony Summary

Links to Documents 051214 and 051314

Next Scheduled Meetings:

Wednesday, May 14, 2014, at 10:00 a.m. in Committee Room A, MAC Building, *State & Public School Life & Health Insurance Program Legislative Task Force*

Wednesday May 28, 2014, at 1:30 p.m. in Room 171 of the State Capitol, Little Rock, *The Senate Interim Committee on Education, and The Senate Interim Committee on Transportation, Technology and Legislative Affairs, The House Interim Committee on Advanced Communications and Information Technology, and The House Interim Committee on Education*

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Approved: 07/14/14