

MEETING SUMMARY

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

**Monday, September 8, 2014
10:00 A.M.
Room 171, State Capitol
Little Rock, Arkansas**

Representative James McLean, the Chair of the House Interim Committee on Education, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

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

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 Robert Dale; Representative Gary Deffenbaugh; Representative Charlotte Vining Douglas; Representative Jon Eubanks; Representative Debra Hobbs; Representative Karen Hopper; Representative Sheilla Lampkin; Representative Mark Lowery; Representative Stephen Meeks; 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; Representative Justin Harris; Representative Andy Mayberry; Representative Reginald Murdock; and Representative Jeff Wardlaw.

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE: Senator Linda Chesterfield; Senator Jonathan Dismang; Senator Jane English; Senator Jimmy Hickey; Senator Eddie Joe Williams; Representative Scott Baltz; Representative Nate Bell; Representative Jeremy Gillam; Representative Bill Gossage; Representative Douglas House; Representative John Hutchison; Representative Kelley Linck; Representative Mark McElroy; Representative David Meeks; Representative Josh Miller; Representative Micah Neal; Representative Betty Overbey; Representative Sue Scott; and Representative Butch Wilkins.

Reports from Members Who Attended Recent Meetings Concerning Public or Higher Education

The Honorable Joyce Elliott, State Senator, District 31, and Vice Chair of the Senate Committee on Education, was recognized, and reported on the Legislative Summit of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) held August 19-22, 2014 in Minneapolis, MN. Senator Elliott commented on hearing a discussion on education from Sir Ken Robinson, an English author, speaker, and international advisor on education in the arts. She noted education sessions included the future of higher education and the implications for states and students, data privacy and waivers, and the arts in education and in the workforce and what that could mean to economic development. Senator Elliott stated that Arkansas has been chosen by Americans for the Arts to join a three-year pilot program to strengthen advocacy of arts education. She said that as a part of the program the Arkansas team will get a \$10,000 direct grant each year. Senator Elliott said she also attended a meeting of a small study group that has begun looking at international education and what can be learned from high-performing countries.

The Honorable Charles L. Armstrong, State Representative, District 30, was recognized. Representative Armstrong reported on the 2014 Annual Conference of The Council of State Governments (CSG) held in Anchorage, Alaska in August. He stated the discussions at education meetings centered on workforce education and training programs at two- and four-year colleges and institutions.

The Honorable Nate Bell, State Representative, District 20, was recognized. Representative Bell echoed Representative Armstrong's comments, and encouraged Committee members to review the Tennessee Promise program which, starting in 2015, will offer Tennessee high school graduates two years of tuition-free education at a community or technical college.

Minutes:

Without objection, the minutes of August 11, 2014, were approved as written.

Exhibit:

Exhibit C – 08/11/14 Minutes

Representative McLean stated that Broadband is becoming an important issue which will be intensely discussed in the coming months and years. He added that the viewpoints of those who are on the ground and who understand what Broadband can bring to the table in a typical Arkansas school are important. He commented that the next presentation concerning the challenges and opportunities of a small school when it comes to implementing Broadband would be instructive.

Discussion of Broadband Implementation in a Small School District

Presenter:

Ms. Julie Johnson, Technology Coordinator, Cave City School District, was recognized. Ms. Johnson described Cave City School District as a small, rural district in northeastern Arkansas, which has a current enrollment of 1,275 students and a free and reduced rate of around 72%. She discussed the difficult process she had to go through to get additional bandwidth for the district following the introduction of the Bandwidth for Educational Enhancement (BEE) Initiative by the Department of Information Services (DIS) in 2010. She said, at that time, DIS was only able to increase the district's bandwidth from two (2) to four (4) T1 fiber optic lines, less than in most households. She stated follow-up requests for increased bandwidth were denied because of lack of access in the area; and, by 2012, the district had reached the point at which new devices would not connect to the network and teachers and students could not access the Internet. Ms. Johnson stated without the necessary bandwidth, the district would not be able to participate in online testing or utilize other online resources. She related that in July 2013, contracts for 100mg circuits at both campuses were signed; but said that's when the real nightmare began. She said in November 2013 the elementary and middle schools were successfully connected, but not the high school. Ms. Johnson went on to discuss additional difficulty with implementation; but said that in mid-January, the high school was successfully connected -- six months after contracts had been signed and ten and a half months after the provider had agreed to make the connection. Ms. Johnson described having continuing difficulties with the service provider, but also described the successful educational usages enabled by increased bandwidth. In conclusion, she commented that finally the students in Cave City have access to the same wealth of information as many of the other students in Arkansas. She said the process wasn't easy and wasn't without a fight. She urged legislators to find a way to make sufficient bandwidth possible for all students, no matter what their socio-economic status or their geographical location.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- ◆ devices and software available to students and teachers,
- ◆ teachers' points of view on increased technology,
- ◆ setting up wireless technology to connect the campuses,
- ◆ availability of a cable provider in the area,
- ◆ completing homework assignments without having internet connections at home,
- ◆ qualifying providers for E-rate, and
- ◆ necessity for balanced consideration as problems arise.

Initial Discussion of Interim Study Proposal (ISP) 2013-002 by Representative Charles Armstrong, REQUESTING THE INTERIM HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION TO CONDUCT A STUDY OF THE BEST PRACTICES FROM PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS IN THE STATE AND IN THE NATION THAT MAY BE IMPLEMENTED IN ARKANSAS SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY OF THE STATE'S SYSTEM OF PUBLIC EDUCATION AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS.

Presenter:

The Honorable Charles Armstrong, State Representative, District 30, was recognized. Representative Armstrong made remarks preliminary to a discussion by a group of presenters. He said this study was requested in 2013 for the purpose of putting all schools on the same level. Representative Armstrong expressed his hopes that the study will improve the system and encourage more parental involvement.

Contributors to the Discussion:

Dr. Gary Ritter, Director, Office for Education Policy (OEP), University of Arkansas, was recognized. In a PowerPoint presentation, Dr. Ritter discussed components of a proposed "Best Practices" study plan prepared in response to the ISP study request. Dr. Ritter explained the two (2) components of the plan would entail a National "Best Practices" Literature Review and an Arkansas Specific Study. He also presented a projected study timeline. He stated that if the OEP conducts the actual study, additional/different items as proposed by the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) and the State Board of Education (SBE) would be welcome and be folded into the study to fully and thoroughly answer questions that have been proposed.

Mr. Adnan Ekin, Superintendent, LISA Academy, was recognized. Mr. Ekin presented an overview of LISA Academy, and introduced speakers on best practices in several areas, including parental involvement, commitment to education and to engaging parents, academic preparation for college and future careers, and STEM festivals.

Speakers from LISA Academy in order of presentation:

- Ms. Behtany Ratermann**, Elementary Principal/Gifted and Talented Coordinator
- Ms. Melody Jones**, Parent
- Ms. Denise Crace**, Department Head, 2nd Grade Teacher
- Ms. Jacqueline Guy-Okonji**, Student
- Mr. Yahya Suid**, Student
- Mr. Serkan Demirel**, Physics Teacher and STEM Coach

Ms. Regina Scroggins, Principal, Brunson New Vision Charter School, Warren School District, was recognized, and gave an overview of how best practices fits into the district's strategic design.

Additional speaker from Warren School District:

- Ms. Jade Huitt**, School Counselor

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- finding lessons for best practices that work for rural subgroups of students,
- methods of collecting information for best practices,
- observing leadership skills and teacher effectiveness, and
- ability to tease out definitive statistical evidence.

Relevant Action:

Representative Armstrong was recognized, and made a motion that ISP 2013-002 be adopted for study. The motion was seconded.

Pursuant to the motion by Representative Armstrong, and without objection, the motion was carried.

Exhibit:

Exhibit E – ISP2013-002

PowerPoint Presentations and Handouts:

ISP 2013-002 LISA Academy PowerPoint

ISP 2013-002 OEP PowerPoint

ISP 2013-002 Warren School District PowerPoint and Strategic Design

Discussion of the Report Required by Act 414 of 2013, TO PROTECT THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS BY ENSURING ADEQUATE AND APPROPRIATE HEALTH CARE WORKERS ON SITE TO ATTEND TO STUDENTS' NEEDS.

The Honorable Andy Mayberry, State Representative, District 27, was recognized, and made opening comments about the importance of students having healthy days in school in order to learn.

Presenter:

Ms. Julie Mayberry, Parent, Arkansas Public Schools Health Services Advisory Committee, was recognized. Ms. Mayberry noted that members of the Advisory Committee were in attendance at the meeting, including **Mr. Darin Beckwith**, Superintendent, Fountain Lake School District, who allowed the high school students to put together a video on the importance of school nurses. Ms. Mayberry's presentation opened with a showing of the video to the Committees. Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, she went on to discuss national studies, relevant statutes, health and safety standards, state accreditation standards, the Bureau of Legislative Research (BLR) Adequacy Study, and recommendations concerning school nurses.

Contributor to the Discussion:

Ms. Paula Smith, State School Nurse Consultant, Arkansas Department of Health

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- ≡ teams of nurses in rotation at different sites,
- ≡ assessing, implementing, and evaluating care, and managing emergencies, and
- ≡ revisiting the revenue stream for nurses.

PowerPoint Presentation:

Act 414 of 2013 Report on School Nurses

Exhibit:

Exhibit F – Act 414 of 2013

Handouts:

Act 414 of 2013 Report on School Nurses

Arkansas Public School Health Services Advisory Committee Report

School Nurse Testimony, Jane Browning

Senator Elliott noted visitors to the meeting, and requested that **Ms. Dee Dee Cain**, Clinical Instructor, Department of Early Childhood and Special Education, University of Central Arkansas (UCA), and several UCA students who are preparing to be teachers, stand and be recognized.

Discussion of Issues Related to Minimum Teacher Salaries

Presenter:

Ms. Nell Smith, Administrator, Policy Analysis and Research Section, Bureau of Legislative Research, was recognized. Ms. Smith stated that at the end of the report presented at the June Adequacy Study meeting, which concerned additional costs the districts would incur if the statutory minimum teacher salary schedule was increased, the BLR was asked to provide follow-up information. She said the information pertained to how potential funding could be distributed to districts. She stated the issue was how to provide new funding to districts that would have to spend more money if the salary requirements were increased while at the same time not just enriching those districts whose salary schedules were well above the statutory minimum. Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, Ms. Smith walked the Committees through the report, *Funding to Increase Teacher Salaries: Distribution Method Options*, discussing the current salary schedule and three (3) proposed options. She provided examples of the options, discussing features and variations on funding.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- ≈ those who are included in the “teacher salaries” schedule,
- ≈ relationship of salary to benefits,
- ≈ availability of merit-based programs in the process,
- ≈ effect of an increase in the foundation funding formula on average teacher salary in the Matrix, and
- ≈ meeting the test of adequate and equitable in compensation packages in individual school districts.

PowerPoint Presentation:

Funding to Increase Teacher Salaries: Distribution Method Options

Handouts:

ADE Rules Governing Standards for Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools and School Districts, July 2009

Funding to Increase Teacher Salaries: Distribution Method Options

Teacher Salary Proposals and Staffing Levels

Discussion of the Implementation of Act 1294 of 2013 by the Flippin School District

Presenter:

Mr. Dale Query, Superintendent, Flippin School District, was recognized. Mr. Query presented the background of the district, and said he took his job of helping all students in every school to get an education very seriously. He introduced a discussion of issues concerning dyslexia and intervention with students who show the markers of the condition. He stated that evidence gathered has implications not only for public schools, but for society in general. The contributors, using a PowerPoint presentation, discussed steps and services the district has put in place to meet the needs of children with dyslexia.

Contributors to the Discussion in order of presentation:

Ms. Tracie Luttrell, Principal, Flippin School District

Ms. Amy Gilley, Teacher, 5th Grade Literacy, Flippin School District

Ms. Sherry Rainbolt, Counselor, Flippin School District

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- use of the Susan Barton System,
- length of summer school classes and transportation issues,
- training interventionists to recognize the markers of dyslexia, and
- making revisions to the Dyslexia Resource Guide.

PowerPoint Presentation:

Flippin Public School Implementation of Act 1294 of 2013

Exhibit:

Exhibit H – Act 1294 of 2013

Handout:

Flippin Public School Implementation of Act 1294 of 2013

Next Scheduled Meeting:

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

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 12:45 p.m.

Approved: 10/13/14