

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

Wednesday, December 17, 2014
1:00 P.M.
Room 171, State Capitol
Little Rock, Arkansas

Senator Joyce Elliott, the Vice Chair of the Senate Interim Committee on Education, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

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

MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE: Representative Ann Clemmer, Vice Chair; Representative Charles L. Armstrong; Representative Mark Biviano; Representative Bruce Cozart; Representative Robert Dale; Representative Jody Dickinson; Representative Charlotte Vining Douglas; Representative Jon Eubanks; Representative Debra Hobbs; Representative Karen Hopper; Representative James Lowery; and Representative James Ratliff.

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

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE: Senator Jane English; Senator Gary Stubblefield; Representative Denny Altes; Representative Bob Ballinger; Representative Scott Baltz; Representative Charlene Fite; Representative Bill Gossage; Representative Douglas House; Representative John Hutchison; Representative George McGill; Representative Warwick Sabin; Representative Sue Scott; and Representative John Walker.

MEMBERS-ELECT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE: Senator-Elect Linda Collins-Smith; Senator-Elect Blake Johnson; Representative-Elect Mary Bentley; Representative-Elect Karilyn Brown; Representative-Elect Lance Eads; Representative-Elect Justin Gonzales; Representative-Elect Michael John Gray; Representative-Elect Kenneth Henderson; Representative-Elect Grant Hodges; Representative-Elect Julie Mayberry; and Representative-Elect Mathew Pitsch.

Minutes:

Without objection, the minutes of November 17, 2014, were approved as written.

Exhibit:

Exhibit C – 11/17/14 Minutes

Senator Elliott presented Mr. Ron Harder, retiring from the Arkansas School Boards Association (ASBA), with a Senate citation for helping to shape education policy in Arkansas. She wished him a long, happy, and fulfilling retirement.

The Honorable Ann Clemmer, State Representative, District 23, and Vice Chair of the House Interim Committee on Education, was recognized, and presented Mr. Harder with a House citation.

Mr. Ron Harder, Policy Service & Advocacy Director, ASBA, was recognized. Mr. Harder thanked members for the citations and said it had been an honor for him to work with the Education Committees.

Senator Elliott noted that this would be Representative Ann Clemmer's final meeting as Vice Chair of the House Interim Committee on Education, and recognized her for her service.

Representative Clemmer said it had been a great honor working to meet the challenge of providing the very best education to the state's children.

Senator Elliott stated that this would also be her last meeting as a member of the Senate Interim Committee on Education. She said it had been a privilege serving as Chair during the previous weeks.

Senator Elliott and Representative Clemmer recognized outgoing members of the House and Senate Education Committees in attendance.

Senator Elliott recognized Members-Elect of the General Assembly in attendance.

Update on Arkansas Advanced Initiative for Math and Science (AAIMS)

Presenter:

Dr. Ken James, President, Arkansas Advanced Initiative for Math and Science, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, was recognized. Dr. James briefly discussed the background of the Arkansas Advanced Initiative for Math and Science (AAIMS), and mentioned the \$13.2 million start-up grant received from ExxonMobil in 2007. He said the initiative started out with one (1) cohort and now has six (6). He said Cohort 6 was started in the fall of 2014 and is in forty-six (46) schools across the state, representing about 17.4% of schools. He named the eight (8) schools in Cohort 6: Bryant, ESTEM Charter, Farmington, Fountain Lake, Lighthouse Charter, Pine Bluff, Rogers Arts Academy, and Lee County. He noted that this is the first time and the first cohort in which a charter school has been in the program. He said schools in the new cohort have the option of participating in one or all of three areas: math, science, and English. He said schools or school districts are asked to make a three-year commitment when coming on board. Dr. James, utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, discussed charts showing data results from the previous year for the first five (5) cohorts. He stated the AAIMS program works and has paid great dividends to the State of Arkansas.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- effect of integrating Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) in AP classes at the high school level,
- data supporting integrated science at the high school level,
- using raw data for ranking comparisons,
- funding streams for professional development (PD) used by AAIMS, and
- breakdown of subject areas in which awards are presented.

Handouts:

AAIMS Background and Executive Summary, Memo
AAIMS AP Training and Incentive Program PowerPoint

Discussion of Issues Related to the Common Core State Standards Initiative

Presenter:

Ms. Jane Robbins, Attorney and Senior Fellow, American Principles Project, Washington, DC, was recognized. Ms. Robbins presented testimony concerning the erosion of the privacy of the information regarding Arkansas students and their families in the public education system. She urged the Arkansas legislature to institute strong safeguards to blunt attempts by both the federal government and private interests to access and share students' private information. Ms. Robbins discussed the impact of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and its data collection practices pertinent to this issue.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- ≈ rights of parents to access collected data,
- ≈ ease with which data can be accessed,
- ≈ whether or not data should be collected,
- ≈ problem of digital learning data,
- ≈ legislation to protect personal identifiable information,
- ≈ accountability for data collection in K-12 education,
- ≈ Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974,
- ≈ how FERPA shares information,
- ≈ recommendations for the collection of information on families as well as students,
- ≈ going before the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of an institution of higher education for approval to use data for research projects,
- ≈ list of unique student identifiers,
- ≈ maintaining privacy through the collection of less data,
- ≈ linking federal aid to college rankings,
- ≈ justification for sending anything other than aggregated data to the state level, and
- ≈ requirements for extraordinary data collection and data disclosure by the U.S. Department of Education.

Handouts:

Common Core Data Collection Testimony
Data-Mining Your Child, PowerPoint presentation

ADE Clarifications

Dr. Debbie Jones, Assistant Commissioner, Learning Services, Arkansas Department of Education, was recognized. Dr. Jones clarified that the previous presentation was not a discussion of Common Core. She provided materials on Common Core instruction and said no data collection is involved. She said the materials define what children are to learn and to be able to do by the end of the grade level. She discussed the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment. She noted that PARCC is a totally separate entity from the Common Core standards. Dr. Jones said the standards are not controversial; that they are a solid set of vertical standards for teachers to walk in the classroom and be prepared to teach. Dr. Jones next introduced Ms. Hope Allen and Mr. Cody Decker to discuss the student data used to administer PARCC.

Contributors to the Discussion:

Ms. Hope Allen, Special Advisor, Learning Services, Arkansas Department of Education
Mr. Cody Decker, Assistant Commissioner, Research and Technology, Arkansas Department of Education

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- ≡ providing data to state universities for data comparison studies,
- ≡ universities releasing data to private companies for marketing efforts,

- ≡ person responsible for determining if security has been breached at any university in the state,
- ≡ collection of income information,
- ≡ SIS (Statewide Information System) Handbook, published online, has data elements collected from school districts by the state,
- ≡ data shared with vendors,
- ≡ person responsible for making the decision on what data schools can collect and what safeguards are in place at schools,
- ≡ releasing student data, and
- ≡ gathering personal data for the data mining process.

Handouts:

ADE Info Packet Arkansas Teacher Resource Card
ADE Info Packet CCSS ELA and Literacy
ADE Info Packet CCSS Fiscal Management Impact Summary
ADE Info Packet CCSS Math
ADE Info Packet Common Core Sheet
ADE Info Packet PARCC Post Test Data Flow and Process

Discussion of Issues Related to Public School Choice as Established by Act 1227 of 2013

Senator Elliott requested that Mr. Mark Hudson relate an issue pertinent to the Public School Choice Law to the Committees.

Mr. Mark Hudson, Senior Legislative Analyst, Bureau of Legislative Research, was recognized. Mr. Hudson referred to a handout, *Subchapter 19 – Public School Choice Act of 2013*, in the members' packets. He said the document states that this Act will expire on July 1, 2015, which means that during the next General Session the Committees will have to consider whether or not to extend the legislation or to let it expire.

Handout:

Subchapter 19 - Public School Choice Act of 2013

Continued 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, and discussed the request he had made in March 2013 for an interim study that would compare public charter schools and public schools. He said, because of a misunderstanding, the present report covers successful practices of charter schools in Arkansas, and not the requested comparisons. Representative Armstrong stated the interim study will have to continue and include the originally requested information. He turned the floor over to Dr. Gary Ritter.

Contributors to the Discussion:

Dr. Gary Ritter, Faculty Director, Endowed Chair in Education Policy, Office for Education Policy, University of Arkansas-Fayetteville, was recognized. In a PowerPoint presentation, *Successful Practices of Charter Schools*, Dr. Ritter discussed research and findings on: I. Arkansas Charter School Landscape, II. How are charter schools unique? and III. What do we know about the performance of Arkansas' charter schools?

Dr. Patrick Wolf, Professor and 21st Century Chair in School Choice, University of Arkansas-Fayetteville, was recognized. Dr. Wolf continued the presentation with a discussion of the research on the best practices of public charter schools around the nation.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- content of report not pertinent to original request, and
- size of school as an indicator of performance.

Handouts:

Exhibit G - ISP 2013-002

OEP Successful Practices of Arkansas Charter Schools, Draft Report

OEP Successful Practices of Charter Schools Preliminary Findings, PowerPoint

Continued Discussion of Interim Study Proposal (ISP) 2013-139 by Representative Alexander, TO ESTABLISH THE PARENTAL CHOICE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM.

Presenter:

The Honorable Randy Alexander, State Representative, District 88, was recognized. Representative Alexander continued a PowerPoint presentation started at the October 13, 2014 meeting. He shared additional information on the School Choice Act of 2013, including basic criteria, data tracking, impact to date, and recommendations for next steps.

Contributor to the Discussion:

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

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- affect on a student with an Individualized Education Program (IEP),
- impact on racial diversity in school districts,
- data collected on school choice website and ability to analyze trends,
- affect on federal funding for students in 504 plans
- affect of “educational credit cards” on school choice, and
- failing schools, students, and school choice.

Handouts:

ADE Public School Choice Data Tracking Survey

Exhibit H – ISP 2013-139

School Choice Report PowerPoint

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 3:42 p.m.

Approved: 06/08/2015