

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

Monday, July 13, 2015
1:30 P.M.
Committee Room A, MAC Building
Little Rock, Arkansas

Representative Bruce Cozart, the Chair of the House Interim Committee on Education, called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

MEMBERS OF THE SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE: Senator Eddie Cheatham; Senator Alan Clark; Senator Bobby Pierce; and Senator Eddie Joe Williams.

MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE: Representative Bruce Cozart, Chair; Representative Sheilla Lampkin, Vice Chair; Representative Charles L. Armstrong; Representative Scott Baltz; Representative Nate Bell; Representative Gary Deffenbaugh; Representative Charlotte Vining Douglas; Representative Jon Eubanks; Representative Bill Gossage; Representative Michael John Gray; Representative Justin Harris; Representative Grant Hodges; Representative Greg Leding; Representative Mark Lowery; Representative Mark McElroy; Representative James Ratliff; and Representative John Walker.

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE: Senator Jonathan Dismang; Senator Joyce Elliott; Senator Scott Flippo; Senator Jeremy Hutchinson; Representative Charles Blake; Representative David Branscum; Representative Karilyn Brown; Representative Jim Dotson; Representative Kenneth Ferguson; Representative Joe Jett; Representative Kelley Linck; Representative Betty Overbey; Representative James Sorvillo; Representative Nelda Speaks; Representative James Sturch; Representative Dwight Tosh; Representative Clarke Tucker; and Representative DeAnn Vaught.

Minutes:

Without objection, the minutes of the June 8, 2015, and June 15, 2015 meetings were approved as written.

Exhibits:

Exhibit C1 – 06/08/15 Minutes

Exhibit C2 – 06/15/15 Minutes

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

The Honorable Bill Gossage, State Representative, District 82, was recognized. Representative Gossage congratulated Governor Asa Hutchinson on his selection as chair of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) at the organization's annual meeting in Naples, Florida. He said it was a great honor for the Governor as well as for Arkansas.

The Honorable Charles L. Armstrong, State Representative, District 30, was recognized. Representative Armstrong thanked Senator Joyce Elliott for recently serving as chair of the Legislative Advisory Council of SREB. He stated SREB's programs can greatly benefit Arkansas.

The Honorable Grant Hodges, State Representative, District 96, was recognized. Representative Hodges agreed that the SREB conference had been a valuable experience.

Representative Cozart said the SREB meeting was a great conference and Arkansas was well represented. He also mentioned he had returned from a very good meeting of education chairs in Park City, Utah, where he learned from a report that Arkansas was a leader in teacher preparation.

Update on the Activities of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education

Presenter:

Dr. Brett Powell, Director, Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE), was recognized. Dr. Powell discussed changes made in the department as a result of both a 1% funding reduction and a reduction in reimbursements from lottery proceeds. He stated the two combined reductions required adjustments to enable the department to provide adequate and accurate information with less funding. He said the department restructured and formed a research and technology division mainly to analyze and report results from higher education activities to interested constituencies. Dr. Powell discussed the first three projects in which increased efforts around research and a better understanding of data are being utilized.

- 1) **Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship Program** - analyze the program five years into its existence to determine the program's effectiveness, where roughly \$500 million used for scholarship funding over that five years has gone, and what return there has been for those dollars.
- 2) **Remedial Programs** - determine what is and what is not working in remedial programs by utilizing three years of accumulated data, and making recommendations about the most effective way to move forward regarding remediation.
- 3) **Level of Student Loan Debt** - determine the level of student loan debt in the state and nationally, and whether it rests with students who have completed degrees or with those who have left without completing a credential; and assessing if anything can be gleaned from that data that would be helpful in recommending policies going forward.

Dr. Powell next spoke about items that came out of the past legislative session, specifically, implementing guidelines developed for regional workforce grants (Act 1131); unplanned pregnancies and orientation materials (Act 943); and tuition and fee reporting (Act 700). He additionally updated activities concerning performance funding, financial aid, and concurrent credit. He said the ADHE website is undergoing an update which will be released sometime in August. He said the outcome of that will be a reporting repository for easier access to reports regularly produced by ADHE; and an improved policy document to make policies for institutions easier to find. Dr. Powell stated that beyond the mentioned activities, ADHE is working on policies and projects around several areas that will, at some point, be built into an updated master plan for higher education work.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- * institutions lowering tuition and fees,
- * changes in credentialing for CTE (career and technical education) as it relates to concurrent credit,
- * institutions lowering out-of-state tuition, and
- * criteria for schools facing remediation considerations.

Discussion of the Activities of SkillsUSA, formerly known as Vocational Industrial Clubs of America (VICA)

Presenters:

Dr. Charisse Childers, Director, Arkansas Department of Career Education, was recognized, and introduced Mr. Chip McAfee to speak about the student organization, SkillsUSA.

Mr. Chip McAfee, Office of Skilled and Technical Sciences, Department of Career Education, was recognized. Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, Mr. McAfee described SkillsUSA as a CTSO, a career and technical student organization, which is under the umbrella of the Department of Career Education. He said it is part of a not-for-profit, national association with over 300,000 members, including students, teachers, educators, and business and industrial partners. He said this past year the organization had approximately 5,000 members in Arkansas. He noted that, founded in 1965 as the Vocational Industrial Clubs of America (VICA), SkillsUSA has prepared over 10.6 million students for the workforce. He stated that SkillsUSA focuses on three (3) things: technical skills, work-based skills, and personal skills. Mr. McAfee discussed three (3) events: Fall Leadership, State Contest, and the National Contest.

Contributors to the Discussion:

Mr. Scott Barone, Engineer, General Motors

Mr. Jonathan Bibb, Director, Arkansas Career and Training Institute (ACTI), Hot Springs

Ms. Natali Carmona-Garcia, High School Student, Silver Medalist - 2015 SkillsUSA Championships, Nail Care Technology Contest

Ms. Dorothy House, Cosmetology Instructor, Metropolitan Career & Technical Center, Little Rock

Ms. Mysti Kirkpatrick, High School Student, Bronze Medalist - 2015 SkillsUSA Championships, Esthetics Contest

Mr. Barone, Ms. Carmona-Garcia, Ms. House, and Ms. Kirkpatrick discussed what SkillsUSA has meant to them as individuals. Mr. Bibb discussed his experience working with students with disabilities, and their involvement with SkillsUSA. He said SkillsUSA helps students develop the skills they need to find jobs and establish careers, and the competitions help showcase their talents.

The Honorable Alan Clark, State Senator, District 13, was recognized. Senator Clark commended Mr. Bibb for the passion he exhibits for educating ACTI students, and praised him for what ACTI's students are able to accomplish.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- programs offered by SkillsUSA,
- attendance by high school students,
- participation in competitions,
- tuition waivers for gold medal winners,
- opportunities for students to work during school hours,
- vo-tech high schools in Arkansas,
- coaching and counseling opportunities for students,
- statistics on job training for the future,
- career-training programs aiding in the retention of high school students, and
- income statistics helping in the counseling process.

Update on the Upgrading of Broadband Capacity for the State's Public School Districts

Presenters:

Dr. Mark Gotcher, Deputy Commissioner, Arkansas Department of Education, was recognized, and introduced the presenters.

Dr. Eric Saunders, Assistant Commissioner, Division of Research and Technology, Arkansas Department of Education, was recognized. He stated the division is working together with the Department of Information Services (DIS) to make sure every district in the state has a minimum of 200 kbit/s per student. He said implementation for this project will take approximately two years.

Contributor to the Discussion:

Mr. Don McDaniel, Director, Enterprise Network Services, Department of Information Services

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- arriving at the 200 kbit/s number per user,
- school districts without any Broadband, and
- legislation and progress in efficiency for school districts and reporting.

Senator Clark joined Representative Cozart to present Senate and House citations to Arkansas educators who were recipients of the 2015 Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching:

Mr. Brian Leonard, Lake Hamilton High School, and
Ms. Amanda Jones, Poyen High School.

Next Scheduled Meetings:

Monday, August 10, 2015, at 1:30 p.m. in Committee Room A, MAC Building, Little Rock
Tuesday, August 11, 2015, at 9:00 a.m. in Committee Room A, MAC Building, Little Rock

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 3:09 p.m.

Approved: 08/10/15