

MINUTES
HIGHER EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE
HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Wednesday, December 7, 2011
10:00 A.M.
Room 171, State Capitol
Little Rock, Arkansas

Representative Tommy Wren, the Chair of the Higher Education Subcommittee of the House Interim Committee on Education, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

MEMBERS OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE: Representative Tommy Wren, Chair; Representative Randy Stewart, Vice-Chair; Representative Duncan Baird; Representative Eddie Cheatham, ex officio; and Representative Jody Dickinson.

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE: Representative Tommy Lee Baker; Representative Les Carnine; Representative John Catlett; Representative Robert Dale; Representative Billy Gaskill; Representative Donna Hutchinson; Representative Sheilla Lampkin; Representative Homer Lenderman; Representative Buddy Lovell; Representative James McLean; Representative Betty Overbey; Representative Mike Patterson; Representative James Ratliff; Representative Garry Smith; Representative Tim Summers; and Representative Tommy Thompson.

Without objection, the minutes of October 28, 2011, were approved as written.

Discussion of Incorporation of Foreign Language into the Common Core Standards

Dr. Laura Bednar, Assistant Commissioner for Learning Services, Arkansas Department of Education, was recognized. Dr. Bednar gave a PowerPoint presentation, *An Informational Update on Foreign Language in Arkansas Public Schools*, which Committee members were able to follow on a handout. Referring to the Standards for Accreditation, Ark. Code Ann. 6-15-213 and 6-15-214, Dr. Bednar noted that the standards are very specific as to the teaching requirements for foreign language in classrooms in grades K-4 and grades 5-8, and require that 2 units of the same language be taught in grades 9-12. In grades 9-12, many school districts are going above the 2-unit requirement. She provided reasons why a foreign language is not currently a Smart Core requirement for graduation. She related that in grades K-8, there is an emphasis on foreign language experiences and/or foreign language acquisition; and certain foreign languages, including Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Latin, and Spanish, have curriculum frameworks. She made the point that many colleges and universities require more than just 2 units of a foreign language for certain scholarships. Dr. Bednar furnished links to information on Web sites, including that of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) which contains proposed draft frameworks for aligning the National Standards for Learning Languages with the Common Core State Standards (Common Core), and that of a recent blog on *edweek* about that document. Dr. Bednar said that Mr. Gene Wilhoit, Executive Director, Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), issued a statement, which is not an endorsement by CCSSO's Board of Directors, but a statement of support for efforts to ensure that world languages do support college and career readiness, which is also the main goal of Common Core. She said that specific information relative to courses and

frameworks is available by typing “curriculum/foreign language” into the search engine on the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) Web site, ArkansasEd.org .

Dr. Bednar explained that the ADE, the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE), and partnering organizations, including ACTFL, are working together in the move to Common Core. She commented that one of the companion statements being heard is on the relevance of foreign language instruction to developing college- and career-ready students, and that the current foreign language standards revision is certain to mirror the same structure and process of Common Core. She stated that numerous instructional resources are becoming available to schools and to teachers of foreign languages to prepare students for future jobs in a competitive global society. Dr. Bednar concluded that while there has been no official movement to change anything with foreign language in regard to its alignment with Common Core, the alignment of proposed frameworks is beginning to be reviewed.

Following the report, a discussion ensued. Topics included:

- o providing incentives, including a larger amount of the lottery scholarship going to students having a foreign language,
- o credit given to Hispanic students who learn English as a second language,
- o focus of Common Core,
- o proficiency-based learning as a controlling factor vs. “seat time” requirements,
- o evidence that foreign language skills give students a higher probability for proficiency,
- o looking at grade levels and a timeline for including foreign language in Common Core,
- o *all* data on foreign language completion to be provided by Mr. James Boardman, Assistant Commissioner, ADE, Division of Research and Technology, and
- o states participating in the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) consortium have asked to collectively discuss foreign language and where it fits into Common Core.

Representative Wren thanked Dr. Bednar for the report and discussion.

Discussion of Presentation to the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) Regarding Incorporation of Foreign Language into Common Core Standards

Dr. David McAlpine, Professor of Spanish and Second Language Education and Coordinator of Graduate Studies in the International and Second Language Studies Department, University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR), and President, American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), was recognized. Dr. McAlpine’s report was accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation, *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012*, and several handouts were distributed to members. Dr. McAlpine noted that he was speaking as the President-elect of ACTFL, and shared some of the work that ACTFL has done, including the crosswalk with Common Core. He said that the home office is in Alexandria, VA, and the office of professional development is in White Plains, NY. He described ACTFL as having a full-time staff of about 30 people in the two offices, and a 15-member Board of Directors. He said ACTFL represents over 12,000 foreign language teachers from pre-K through university level, and provides services for the profession, including professional development and document production. Dr. McAlpine spoke on the historical development of the work at ACTFL. He said that in 1986, ACTFL began creating proficiency guidelines for what users of another language should be doing with that language in terms of *speaking, listening, reading, and writing*. For each skill, the Guidelines identify five (5) major levels of proficiency: Distinguished, Superior, Advanced, Intermediate, and

Novice. The first set of Guidelines was developed for *speaking*. He noted that assessments for speaking include an oral proficiency interview requirement of all teacher candidates. In Arkansas a teacher cannot get a license without first placing Advanced Low in such an interview. The oral interview has made a significant difference in the state's teaching force. In 2001, guidelines were developed for *writing*, and the 2012 edition of the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines also contains those for *listening* and *reading*.

Dr. McAlpine additionally discussed K-16 standards and related data, teaming with The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) in 2002 to write teacher standards, the ACTFL Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA) Manual released in 2008, and ACTFL's membership in the Partnership for the 21st Century (*Arkansas is not a Partnership state*) and its collaboration in the development of a foreign language "map" to show what foreign languages can do for students and citizens. Dr. McAlpine then discussed a draft of the document, *Alignment of the National Standards for Learning Languages with the Common Core State Standards*, which is out for public review until January 15, 2012. He provided reasons why the language profession is ready to implement Common Core at any time and at any level, and said the profession is waiting for an invitation to participate. Showing the final slide, Dr. McAlpine discussed how far the language profession has come. He commented that it is working towards speaking with one united voice by ensuring that every document produced speaks the same language and requires that students and teachers all know the same information.

In the discussion following the report, topics included:

- going through the hoops to align with Common Core,
- placement of foreign language instruction in public schools,
- the invitation to Common Core by the assessment group of the multi-state consortium, and
- current discussion by foreign language professionals on proficiency in language as a "use it or lose it" proposition; continuing utilization outside the classroom setting.

Representative Wren thanked Dr. McAlpine for his presentation.

Review of Data Concerning Students Enrolled in Secondary Foreign Language Courses

Ms. Heather Tackett, Legislative Analyst, Bureau of Legislative Research, was recognized. Ms. Tackett used several PowerPoint slides and handouts to discuss data correlating with the study. She initially discussed Distinct Foreign Language Teachers, Non-Distinct Foreign Language Teachers, and Non-Distinct Student Enrollment, referencing a handout from ADE. Secondly, she discussed students having to fulfill their foreign language requirement through a Distance Learning center because of the declining number of teachers of foreign languages, the demographics of students in K-12, and the foreign language correlation with the lottery scholarship. She referenced a handout from ADHE, and noted degrees from Arkansas public universities requiring foreign language for graduation. Ms. Tackett requested that members advise her of any needs for specific data that they would like to have discussed at the next meeting.

The Honorable Randy Stewart, State Representative, District 23, was recognized. Representative Stewart said that, in order to show the importance of foreign language across the spectrum, the ADE would be asked for all data showing any correlation between foreign language and ACT scores, foreign

language and success in college, and, with regard to the lottery, foreign language completers and scholarship retention.

The Honorable Tommy Thompson, State Representative, District 60, was recognized and said he would also like to see data on the relationship between foreign language and college participants in remediation.

The Honorable Eddie Cheatham, State Representative, District 9, was recognized, and cautioned about accuracy in collecting the data.

Representative Wren announced that the next meeting of the Higher Education Subcommittee of the House Interim Committee on Education would be at 1:30 p.m. on Monday, January 23, 2012, in Room 171 of the State Capitol.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:41 a.m.

Approved: 10/29/12