

MINUTES

JOINT ADEQUACY EVALUATION OVERSIGHT SUBCOMMITTEE

1:30 P.M.

Monday, May 24, 2010

Room 171, State Capitol

Little Rock, Arkansas

Senator Jimmy Jeffress, the Senate Vice-Chair of the Joint Adequacy Evaluation Oversight Subcommittee, called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

MEMBERS OF THE JOINT ADEQUACY EVALUATION OVERSIGHT SUBCOMMITTEE IN ATTENDANCE: Senator Steve Bryles, Senate Co-Chair; Representative Bill Abernathy, House Co-Chair; Senator Jimmy Jeffress, Senate Vice-Chair; Representative Eddie Cheatham, House Vice-Chair; Senator Shane Broadway; Senator Gene Jeffress; Senator Johnny Key; Representative Les Carnine; Representative David Rainey; and Representative R.D. Saunders.

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE: Representative Tommy Lee Baker; Representative Nancy Blount; Representative Eddie Cooper; Representative David Cook; Representative Robert Dale; Representative Jody Dickinson; Representative Jane English; Representative Billy Gaskill; Representative Rick Green; Representative Clark Hall; Representative Debra Hobbs; Representative Buddy Lovell; Representative Robert Moore; Representative Roy Ragland; Representative R. Gregg Reep; Representative Linda Tyler; and Representative Darrin Williams.

Discussion of Issues Concerning Teacher Salaries and National School Lunch Act (NSLA) Categorical Funding

Mr. Bill Goff, Assistant Commissioner, Fiscal and Administrative Services, Arkansas Department of Education, and **Ms. Patty Martin**, Associate Director, Research & Analysis, Fiscal and Administrative Services, Arkansas Department of Education, were recognized. Mr. Goff, using a handout that had been distributed to the Subcommittee, spoke about teachers' salaries paid with NSLA funds. He said that in 2008-2009, approximately \$122 million out of the \$160 million of NSLA funds that had been distributed were paid out in salaries and benefits. He noted that NSLA is a program-intensive effort and people are main components of those efforts. So, the 76% of total NSLA paid-out funds is reasonable when approximately 80% of a school district's budget pertains to salaries and benefits. Mr. Goff explained that NSLA funds were created by Act 59 of the Second Extraordinary Session of 2003 and that according to legislative findings within Arkansas Code Annotated 6-20-2302, the paying of competitive teacher salaries is a function of NSLA.

He stated that salaries are paid with NSLA funds in three (3) ways:

1. for specific positions in research-based programs that are designed to help students who are scoring below proficiency to gain proficiency, and to sustain performance,
2. to supplement the teacher salary schedule, and
3. for bonuses to classroom teachers.

Mr. Goff reviewed criteria for the use of NSLA funds; the common thread of which is that programs must be research-based, must be designed to bring students scoring below proficiency up to proficiency, must be designed to sustain that performance, and must be for students determined to be at-risk. He discussed

the use of excess NSLA funds to supplement teacher salaries above the minimum (SAM), and for bonuses, the criteria for which was established by Act 31 of the First Extraordinary Session of 2006. He briefly went over the accompanying attachments:

- ⇒ Attachment #1 – Request to use Excess NSLA Funds as a Bonus
- ⇒ Attachment #2 - NSLA Funds used to Supplement Salaries Above the Minimum (SAM)
- ⇒ Attachment #3 - Analysis of 2009 Assessment Data
- ⇒ Attachment #4 - Analysis of 2008 and 2009 Assessment Data
- ⇒ Attachment #5 - NSLA Funds Used as a Bonus

A discussion followed Mr. Goff's presentation, and included the following topics:

- The phase-out period for the use of NSLA funds,
- NSLA funds distribution,
- Bonus determination,
- Explanation of evidence-based research programs,
- Explanation of the original set-up of categorical funding for the NSLA funds, and
- Focus and effectiveness of the funding programs.

Senator Jeffress mentioned that there is a case study being readied for a report on the effectiveness of NSLA programs in the school districts. When completed later on this year, it will be presented by the Bureau of Legislative Research (BLR), and should prove to be enlightening to the Subcommittee.

Senator Jeffress thanked Mr. Goff for the presentation.

Discussion of Issues Concerning Professional Development (PD) Categorical Funding

Dr. Brent Benda, Senior Research Specialist, Bureau of Legislative Research, **Ms. Jerri Derlikowski**, Administrator, Policy Analysis and Research Services, Bureau of Legislative Research, **Dr. Tom Kimbrell**, Commissioner, Arkansas Department of Education, and **Ms. Debbie Coffman**, Education Associate Director, Professional Development, Arkansas Department of Education, were recognized.

Dr. Benda gave a PowerPoint presentation on teacher PD which, he said, is a critical factor in improving student performance and ensuring highly qualified teachers in the classroom. Currently, teachers are required to have sixty (60) hours of PD annually. The funding level for PD is \$50 per student. In FY2008-09, \$41.33 per student went to school districts, with the balance going to the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) for PD purposes, including the creation of programs on the Arkansas IDEAS portal by the Arkansas Educational Television Network (AETN). During FY2008-09, the ADE expended approximately \$17,547,335.00 on PD.

Dr. Benda explained that to examine the use of professional development for teachers in Arkansas, the BLR surveyed 244 school districts and a sample of 74 randomly selected schools for its Adequacy Study. It also conducted onsite interviews with school officials at the 74 selected schools. Chart 1: Number of Districts with % of PD Use indicates the sources (AETN, ADE, Coop, District, or Contract) most used for PD by school districts. Dr. Benda next elaborated on the responses that had been elicited on Ratings of PD on BLR Surveys & Interviews, and discussed Evidence-based Best Practices in PD.

Dr. Benda said that the conclusions drawn from the survey were:

- ◆ Professional learning plans should be a collaborative effort between teachers, principals, and coaches.

- ◆ Teachers need opportunities for practice application and feedback in PD.
- ◆ Attendance at workshops and conferences with little or no relevance in a teacher's specific area does not result in effective classroom instruction.
- ◆ Well-conceived, sequentially-planned, PD in a teacher's specific area is needed, along with follow-up practice opportunities, coaching, and classroom observational feedback over an extended period of time.

In the discussion session that followed, topics included:

- Background of the survey; response to survey; content of future surveys;
- Difference between funds received for PD and funds expended;
- Usage of AETN for PD by school districts;
- PD meeting teacher preferences; PD meeting teacher needs;
- Relevant teacher PD connecting to student needs;
- Beefing up curriculum of higher education;
- Changes in the quality of staff development;
- On-the-job application time counting toward the required 60 hours of PD;
- Strongest predictor in education of children is quality of teaching;
- Going in right direction to improve PD;
- Academic coaches in schools; and
- Effectiveness of the Arkansas IDEAS portal on AETN as a Web-based education system for PD.

Mr. Tony Brooks, Deputy Director and COO, AETN, and **Dr. Chris Caram**, Director of Education, AETN, were recognized. Mr. Brooks distributed a handout containing figures on usage of the Arkansas IDEAS portal to the Subcommittee, and asked Dr. Caram to address any questions from members. Dr. Caram discussed reasons why school districts may not use the portal, and any correlation between the AETN figures and the research data in Dr. Benda's report. She spoke additionally on the quality and subject-specific content of the courses. She explained that, while nothing can replace good, planned data-driven PD from administrators in a district, the quality of the PD offered on the portal is outstanding. Dr. Caram said the portal is locked to all but identified, licensed Arkansas teachers, but that the legislators would be given privileged access to preview its content for informational purposes.

Representative Abernathy, referring to the state funds allotted to AETN for program development on the portal, commented that the reporting system for the funds is doing its job in serving Adequacy.

Representative Abernathy thanked Dr. Benda for the report.

Representative Abernathy announced that the next meeting would be for the Joint Interim Committees on Education at 1:30 p.m. on June 21, 2010 in Room 171 of the State Capitol. The next meeting of the Joint Adequacy Evaluation Oversight Subcommittee would be at 1:30 p.m. on August 23, 2010, in Room 171 of the State Capitol.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:12 p.m.