

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

ADEQUACY

Tuesday, December 17, 2013
9:00 A.M.
Room 171, State Capitol
Little Rock, Arkansas

Senator Johnny Key, the Chair of the Senate Interim Committee on Education, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

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

MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE: Representative Charles L. Armstrong; Representative Les Carnine; Representative Robert Dale; Representative Jody Dickinson; Representative Charlotte Vining Douglas; Representative Jon Eubanks; Representative Debra Hobbs; Representative Sheilla Lampkin; Representative Homer Lenderman; Representative Mark Lowery; Representative James Ratliff; and Representative Brent Talley.

NON-VOTING MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE: Representative Randy Alexander; and Representative Harold Copenhaver.

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE: Senator Jane English; Senator Stephanie Flowers; Senator Michael Lamoureux; Senator Gary Stubblefield; Representative Eddie Armstrong; Representative Andy Davis; Representative Jeremy Gillam; Representative Bill Gossage; Representative Stephanie Malone; Representative Micah S. Neal; Representative Mary Slinkard; Representative Frederick Smith; Representative Wes Wagner; and Representative Tommy Wren.

Remarks by the Co-Chairs

Senator Key presented two citations, one from the Senate and one from the House of Representatives, to Mr. Jim Boardman, who was retiring after a 43-year career in education. Senator Key read the Senate citation.

Representative Debra Hobbs, State Representative, District 94, was recognized, and read the House citation. Senator Key congratulated and thanked Mr. Boardman for his service.

Mr. James Boardman, Retiring Assistant Commissioner, Research and Technology Administration, Arkansas Department of Education, was recognized, and thanked the Committees.

Ms. Nell Smith, Administrator, Policy Analysis and Research Section, Bureau of Legislative Research, was recognized. Ms. Smith referred to highlighted items on a handout of Adequacy Study responsibilities, and commented that presentations today would include discussions about the Division of Legislative Audit Report and the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment and Accountability Program (ACTAAP). Ms. Smith also updated the Committees on the district survey and the school site visits.

Exhibit:

Exhibit E1 – Statutory Responsibilities ACTAAP

Review of Division of Legislative Audit Report, “Department of Education Grants Summarized by the Division of Legislative Audit for the Year Ended June 30, 2013”

Presenter & Synopsis:

Mr. David W. Webb, Audit Supervisor, Division of Legislative Audit, was recognized. Mr. Webb stated that each year the division prepares a summary of all grants distributed by the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE). He said this report summarizes the \$3.2 billion that was provided as grants from both state and federal sources to school districts, education cooperatives, and other entities during fiscal year 2013. He said during the last fiscal year, \$2.59 billion was provided from the Public School Fund. The amount of federal funds that was provided to some recipients decreased from \$600 million to just under \$500 million. He noted most of this decline in federal dollars was due to the expected phasing out of programs which had been funded from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Mr. Webb went on to discuss the formatting and content of the report’s eight (8) attachments. He said there is a short synopsis of what each program does at the back of the report. Mr. Webb commented this report indicates how much money was provided to the recipient, but does not provide any explanation of what the recipient actually did with the funds. He noted the report was also available on the Division of Legislative Audit’s website.

Issue Included in the Discussion:

- clarification of the total amount of state grant funds.

PowerPoint Presentation:

Department of Education Grants Report For the Year Ended June 30, 2013

Handout:

Department of Education Grants Report For the Year Ended June 30, 2013

Senator Key congratulated Mr. Kevin Anderson on his recent appointment as Assistant Director of Fiscal Services for the Bureau of Legislative Research and Ms. Lori Bowen on her new appointment as Administrator for the Bureau’s Budget and Fiscal Review Section.

Discussion of Issues Related to Education Appropriations and Funding

Presenter & Synopsis:

Ms. Lori Bowen, Senior Legislative Analyst, Budget & Fiscal Review, Fiscal Service Division, Bureau of Legislative Research, was recognized. Ms. Bowen went over materials that complemented Mr. Webb’s presentation. She presented a brief synopsis of a two-part handout illustrating the spending authority that’s been granted to the ADE to operate and to distribute resources to public school districts across the state. She discussed data on authorized appropriations and expenditures, their differences for FY2013, and the differences in FY2014 appropriations and FY2013 expenditures. She also presented an Appropriation Summary, data on ADE Expenditures by Fund Source, and Uniform Rate of Tax and Miscellaneous Funding.

Contributor to the Discussion:

Dr. Tom Kimbrell, Commissioner, Arkansas Department of Education

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- clarification of what was in place to ensure that federal funds in the line item on page 10 were spent on one-time projects that would not create an ongoing burden for the state needing to be replenished by state funds,
- clarification of what is included in Miscellaneous Funds on the Uniform Rate of Tax and Miscellaneous Funding chart,
- clarification of the cash flow of the Uniform Rate of Tax (URT),
- funding for professional development opportunities for ADE personnel,
- impact of opportunities for reduced testing expenditures on the state's budget,
- pace of increase in teacher salaries relative to the approximate 7% increase in expenditures per year over the ten-year period, 2003 to 2013,
- decision-makers for expenditures,
- increase in dollars per child and correlation with increase in teacher salaries,
- growth of administrative positions and the impact on funding,
- federal funds spent on compliance activities vs. on classroom teaching,
- spending categories that make up federal funds,
- clarification of state National School Lunch Act (NSLA) funds and federal free and reduced-price meal funds,
- availability of charts that help discern trends at the pre-K level,
- duplication of services to population groups served by programs,
- appropriations for technology,
- availability of report on issues including declining enrollment funding and growth funding,
- changes in professional development (PD) funding and effects of the changes,
- need for more "student contact" days,
- annual review of Arkansas Comprehensive School Improvement Plans (ACSIP Plans) to monitor student achievement and to improve teaching, and
- funding for, and role of, Arkansas Educational Television Network (AETN) in PD.

Handouts:

Arkansas Department of Education Public School Fund Account
Department of Education Expenditures by Fund Source

Discussion of Issues Related to the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment and Accountability Program (ACTAAP)

Presenter & Synopsis:

Ms. Nell Smith, Administrator, Policy Analysis and Research Section, Bureau of Legislative Research, was recognized. Ms. Smith presented a broad overview of the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment and Accountability Program (ACTAAP), and next detailed the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). She said the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) would be answering questions provided by the Bureau of Legislative Research (BLR) in its presentation.

Contributors to the Discussion:

Mr. John Hoy, Assistant Commissioner, Division of Academic Accountability, Arkansas Department of Education, was recognized. Mr. Hoy discussed defining the criteria for assigning a performance rating to schools, changes to the Arkansas School Recognition Program, and how \$7 million in General Improvement Funding for this program will be distributed.

Dr. Megan Witonski, Assistant Commissioner, Division of Learning Services, Arkansas Department of Education, was recognized, and discussed several issues related to the implementation of the Common Core State Standards, including requirements for their implementation and the collection and use of student data.

Ms. Melody Morgan, Director of Student Assessment, Arkansas Department of Education, was recognized, and discussed the national and state issues related to the PARCC Consortium and the cost of the PARCC tests.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- ◆ transition to PARCC and online testing,
- ◆ students having access to technology,
- ◆ longitudinal use of assessment tools,
- ◆ student growth percentiles,
- ◆ pause in accountability designations,
- ◆ process of creating the PARCC assessments in Arkansas,
- ◆ option of a paper test as a backup,
- ◆ aligning assessments in the transition to the Common Core State Standards,
- ◆ uncertainty and ambiguity of the transition to the Common Core State Standards,
- ◆ higher standards in assessments and the effect on student scores,
- ◆ making additions and other changes in the Common Core State Standards,
- ◆ preparing school districts to administer the PARCC assessment online,
- ◆ requesting assessment data from a “cache” component,
- ◆ annual membership costs for the PARCC consortium,
- ◆ required speaking and listening component of the assessment,
- ◆ number of states that have pulled out of the PARCC consortium,
- ◆ debating only the facts about the Common Core State Standards,
- ◆ pricing per student for PARCC,
- ◆ bias and sensitivity review of assessments, and
- ◆ making decisions to remove inappropriate or offensive questions from assessments.

Exhibits:

Exhibit E2 – ACTAAP Highlights BureauBrief
Exhibit E3 – Legal Framework for ACTAAP
Exhibit E4 – ACTAAP Flow Chart
Exhibit E5 – PARCC Highlights BureauBrief
Exhibit E6 – Questions on ACTAAP

Handout:

2013 Legislation Related to ACTAAP BureauBrief

Senator Key announced that Item F, Discussion of Issues Related to Student Achievement Statistics, would be moved to the agenda for Monday, January 13, 2014.

Next Scheduled Meetings:

Monday, January 6, 2014, at 10:00 a.m. in Room 171 of the State Capitol in Little Rock
Tuesday, January 7, 2014, at 9:00 a.m. in Room 171 of the State Capitol in Little Rock

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 12:04 p.m.

Approved: 01/13/14