

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

ADEQUACY

Wednesday, February 24, 2016

10:00 A.M.

Room 171, State Capitol

Little Rock, Arkansas

Representative Bruce Cozart, the Chair of the House Interim Committee on Education, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

MEMBERS OF THE SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE: Senator Jane English, Chair; Senator Eddie Cheatham; and Senator Bobby J. Pierce.

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 Gary Deffenbaugh; Representative Charlotte Vining Douglas; Representative Bill Gossage; Representative Michael John Gray; Representative Grant Hodges; Representative Mark McElroy; Representative Reginald Murdock; Representative Warwick Sabin; and Representative John W. Walker.

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE: Senator Jonathan Dismang; Senator Joyce Elliott; Senator Jimmy Hickey; Senator Jason Rapert; Representative Jim Dotson; Representative Charlene Fite; Representative Fredrick J. Love; Representative Stephen Meeks; Representative Betty Overbey; Representative Mathew Pitsch; Representative Jeff Wardlaw; and Representative Marshall Wright.

Discussion of Possible Amendments to the Adequacy Recommendations Contained in the 2014 Adequacy Report Pursuant to Arkansas Code Annotated 10-3-2104(d)

Presenter:

Ms. Nell Smith, Administrator, Policy Analysis and Research Section, Bureau of Legislative Research, was recognized. Ms. Smith stated that it is statutorily required that the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education meet jointly or separately, as needed, to review funding recommendations contained in the most recent Adequacy Study; and that any changes or amendments be made by March 1 of the calendar year of a fiscal session. She walked the Committees through *Section 17: Recommendations* from the 2014 Adequacy Report.

The Honorable John W. Walker, State Representative, District 34, was recognized. Representative Walker called the Committees' attention to topics in *Section 17: Recommendations* pertinent to funding recommendations for the Partnership Program, Professional Development, Principal, and Secretary. He asked whether the exceeding needs of school districts for supplemental funds for facilities, the needs for cultural sensitivity in biracial schools, and the formula in the Matrix not allowing for changes to staffing number or salary amount based upon seniority for principals and secretaries have been addressed and considerations been made in the recommendations.

Ms. Smith responded that the recommendations were made by the Committees, based upon evidence presented in the 2014 Adequacy Study. She said a response would best come from those legislators who were involved in the Study.

The Honorable Joyce Elliott, State Senator, District 31, was recognized, and, together with Representative Cozart, briefly discussed the rationale and need for compromise in making the recommendations. Representative Cozart said the Adequacy Study process will continue and new legislators will be involved in making more informed decisions for the next Adequacy Report. He encouraged members to attend the meetings on Adequacy.

Contributor to the Discussion:

Mr. Johnny Key, Commissioner, Arkansas Department of Education

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- tracking expenditures in each of the topics to ensure funding is going directly to those areas,
- foundation funding as a percentage of the total funding available to school districts,
- Matrix is a funding, not an expenditure, Matrix,
- funding from outside of the Matrix being used to meet the responsibilities of the Matrix,
- considering amounts that are necessary to *attract* staffing for school districts,
- foundation funding and local control of school districts,
- Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) penalizing poor school districts for not using all National School Lunch (NSL) funds and having a fund balance, and
- the Bureau of Legislative Research (BLR) doing the studies in Adequacy process.

Relevant Action:

The Honorable Scott Baltz, State Representative, District 61, was recognized and made a motion to recommend that no changes be made to the 2014 Adequacy Study recommendations. The motion was seconded by Senator Bobby J. Pierce.

The Honorable Reginald Murdock, State Representative, District 48, was recognized, and inquired about the necessity of a motion.

Representative Cozart explained the reason for the motion, and Senator Jane English supplemented the information.

Representative Cozart announced that the Committees have a motion on the floor.

Pursuant to the motion by Representative Baltz, and without objection, the motion was carried.

Exhibit:

Exhibit C – 10-3-2104 Statute

Handout:

Adequacy Study Recommendations

Discussion of Possible Funding Mechanism for Supplemental Transportation Funding

Presenter:

Mr. Richard Wilson, Assistant Director, Research Services, Bureau of Legislative Research, was recognized. Mr. Wilson presented a brief history and timeline pertinent to supplemental transportation funding. He referenced Exhibit C1 - Act 1248 of 2015 and Exhibit C2 – 2015-2016 Revenue Stabilization Law Allocations from the December 15, 2015 joint meeting of the House and Senate Interim Committees on Education, and noted the amount set aside for supplemental transportation funding for high-need school districts is \$3 million. He explained that the reason for calling this to the Committees' attention today is that the funding will be available at the end of the fiscal year, but the appropriation bill does not provide guidance to the ADE regarding the distribution of these funds to the school districts or any restriction(s) on its use. He discussed various procedural options that might be available for consideration during the upcoming Fiscal Session.

Issue Included in the Discussion:

- alternate methods for allocating the funds.

Handout:

Materials from the December 15, 2015 Joint Meeting of the House and Senate Interim Committees on Education
Regarding Supplemental Transportation Funding

Next Scheduled Meetings:

Monday, March 14, 2016, at 1:30 p.m. in Committee Room A, MAC Building, Little Rock
Tuesday, March 15, 2016, at 9:00 a.m. in Room 171, State Capitol, Little Rock

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 10:55 a.m.

Approved: 03/14/16