

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

**ADEQUACY**

**Tuesday July 19, 2016**  
**9:00 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 9:00 a.m.

**MEMBERS OF THE SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE:** Senator Jane English, Chair; Senator Uvalde Lindsey, Vice Chair; Senator Alan Clark; and Senator Blake Johnson.

**MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE:** Representative Bruce Cozart, Chair; Representative Charles L. Armstrong; Representative Nate Bell; Representative Gary Deffenbaugh; Representative Charlotte Vining Douglas; Representative Jon Eubanks; Representative Jeremy Gillam; Representative Bill Gossage; Representative Michael John Gray; Representative Greg Leding; Representative Mark Lowery; Representative Mark McElroy; Representative Reginald Murdock; and Representative James Ratliff.

**OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE:** Senator Joyce Elliott; Representative Andy Davis; Representative David Fielding; Representative Lane Jean; Representative Stephen Meeks; Representative Sue Scott; and Representative Dwight Tosh.

Discussion of Issues Related to Workforce and Career Education

***Presenter:***

**Ms. Nell Smith**, Administrator, Policy Analysis and Research Section, Bureau of Legislative Research, was recognized. Ms. Smith discussed Career and Technical Education (CTE), and framed the information in terms of Adequacy. She stated the analysis of this topic is not specifically required under the Adequacy Study statute; but it is a major part of K-12 education. She said state law makes the general statement that a rigorous career and technical education program of study that links elementary and secondary education with higher education shall be made available. Ms. Smith walked Committee members through the Bureau of Legislative Research (BLR) 23-page report, *Career and Technical Education in Arkansas's K-12 Schools*, highlighting various points regarding CTE Governance Structure, Career and Technical Education Courses and Requirements, CTE Delivery, CTE Funding, CTE Expenditures, and Student Achievement.

***Contributors to the Discussion:***

**Dr. Charisse Childers**, Director, Arkansas Department of Career Education

**Ms. Maria Swicegood**, Program Coordinator, Division of Career and Technical Education, Arkansas Department of Career Education

**Ms. Kathi Turner**, Deputy Director, Division of Career and Technical Education, Arkansas Department of Career Education

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- improvements shown in monitoring and assessing programs following passage of Act 1181 of 2015,
- resolving potential issues of conflict with the Career Education and Workforce Development Board over a school district's choice of CTE courses relevant to needs of local industry,
- importance of diversity in the makeup of the Career Education and Workforce Development Board,
- serving students in an Alternative Learning Environment (ALE) with CTE programs,
- responsibility of a school district to align programs of study offered with current labor market data for the district's area,
- requirement for ACE, under the federal Perkins Act, to track CTE completers to job placement,
- student access, or the lack thereof, to secondary career centers,
- encouraging school districts to realign courses to opportunities available in industry,
- concern over training for agricultural jobs and changes in the agricultural industry,
- importance of retaining CTE Family and Consumer Science courses in K-12 in order to teach fundamental life skills,
- incorporating the Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) and the components of CRC into Career Ready 101, a curriculum that helps students master work readiness skills,
- providing career pathways to jobs,
- keeping agriculture, the number one industry in the state, as priority career focus, and
- reaching students in non-traditional programs.

Handout:

Career and Technical Education in Arkansas's K-12 Schools, Research Report

Discussion of Issues Related to Isolated Funding

Presenter:

**Mr. Richard Wilson**, Assistant Director, Research Services, Bureau of Legislative Research, was recognized. Mr. Wilson presented a statutorily required report, *Review of Isolated and Special Needs Isolated Funding and Expenditures*. He stated isolated funding is additional money provided to school districts with geographic challenges which increase certain districts' costs. Mr. Wilson began his presentation with the comment that isolated funding for statewide distribution has been capped at \$11 million a year for years, which translates to one quarter of one percent of state and local funding in 2015. He said the difficulty of studying isolated funding is that it is a piecemeal, convoluted, intractable collection of statutes, rules, and criteria that requires the creation and use of sixteen (16) different spreadsheets and other sources. He said the good news is that, based upon BLR staff visits and discussions with school district superintendents and chief financial officers (CFOs), isolated funding appears to be effective in reaching and helping targeted districts as was the original intention. Mr. Wilson discussed Appendix C, 2014-15 Distribution of Isolated and Isolated Special Needs Funding, on page 17 of the report, and a one-page flow chart, a tool created by Ms. Nell Smith, both of which illustrate a breakdown of the \$11 million under discussion. Mr. Wilson presented a background on isolated funding, including legislative history, criteria for consideration as an isolated school district, closing of school districts, isolated funding, special needs isolated funding, special needs isolated-transportation funding, and transfer of excess isolated funding to special needs isolated. He then walked Committee members through the report, presenting detailed information on Expenditures, School District Characteristics, Characteristics of Districts Receiving Isolated Funding, and School-Level Expenditure Comparisons.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- ≡ request for data in table at top of page 12 to be broken out by district,
- ≡ grades utilized for the comparison of average proficiency in literacy and math in tables on page 12,
- ≡ role of route miles per student in calculations in table at top of page 12,
- ≡ route miles as the number one driver of costs by school district in transportation,
- ≡ whether isolated transportation funding is being divided reflective of true cost,

- ≡ addressing outcomes of the work being done in the reduction of seat time on buses on transportation costs,
- ≡ study of the ride time of every student in every district,
- ≡ complications arising from a reduction in funding as a result of the loss of route miles,
- ≡ shortage of bus drivers in school districts,
- ≡ fixing “transportation” in the Matrix, and
- ≡ removing transportation funding as a line item in the Matrix.

Handouts:

Adequacy Study Responsibilities

Isolated Funding Flow Chart

Review of Isolated and Special Needs Isolated Funding and Expenditures

Discussion of NSL/Closing the Achievement Gap Report Required by Arkansas Code Annotated 6-20-2305(b)(4)(C)(xii)(E)(ii)

Presenter:

**Mr. Elbert Harvey**, Coordinator of Public School Accountability, Arkansas Department of Education, was recognized. Mr. Harvey presented the *Biannual Report on the Impact of National School Lunch (NSL) Categorical Funding on Closing the Achievement Gap*. He said he anticipated the first question from Committee members would be whether or not the achievement gap is being closed. He noted this is a very difficult question to answer since so many variables have to be figured into the process. He said by implementing the ACT Aspire assessment and the statewide conversion from the previous Arkansas Comprehensive School Improvement Planning (ACSIP) software to Indistar, school districts now have better tools to more accurately determine the impact NSL expenditures have on closing the achievement gap. He said, through the ACSIP process, the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) will continue to work with districts to determine the effectiveness of NSL expenditures in improving learning opportunities for struggling students; and good data from which to draw conclusions will become available over the next few years. He said, as of right now, that data is not available. Mr. Harvey said he would be happy to take questions.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- individual needs of school districts having to be identified in order to determine the impact of NSL money,
- categorical funds were not supposed to supplant what we were supposed to fund in the Matrix,
- spreading the use of NSL funds to support so many programmatic offerings within a school district as to make reliable statistical analysis of program effectiveness impossible,
- prioritizing money in the lowest performing schools, and
- putting more teeth in what is legislatively allowed to push reform and change in lower performing schools in a quicker manner.

Handout:

Biannual Report on the Impact of National School Lunch (NSL) Categorical Funding on Closing the Achievement Gap, ADE Biannual Report

Relevant Action:

**The Honorable Nate Bell**, State Representative, District 20, was recognized. Representative Bell made a motion that the Committees request an expedited Attorney General’s opinion on the legality of removing transportation funding from the Matrix, due to the statutorily established Adequacy timeline the Committees are operating under. The opinion request should include a specific inquiry as to the legality of assigning transportation funding based on a statistical analysis. The motion was seconded by Representative Bill Gossage.

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

*Next Scheduled Meetings:*

Monday, August 22, 2016 at 1:30 p.m. in Room 171, State Capitol, Little Rock

Tuesday, August 23, 2016 at 9:00 a.m. in Room 171, State Capitol, Little Rock

*Adjournment:*

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

*Approved: 08/22/16*