



Bureau Brief

TO :	House and Senate Education Committees Members	
FROM:	Policy Analysis and Research Section, Bureau of Legislative Research	
DATE :	September 25, 2018	
SUBJECT :	Adequacy Report Public Comment	Project #:18-001

During the August 21, 2018 meeting of the House and Senate Education Committees, members voted to collect public comments for inclusion in the educational adequacy study. The following notice was posted on the General Assembly’s website on August 27, 2018.

The House and Senate Education Committees are conducting the 2018 educational adequacy study required under Ark. Code Ann. § 10-3-2101 et seq. To that end, the Committees would like to receive comments from the general public, and requested that a process be established for that purpose. Please use the space provided below to offer your thoughts for the Committees’ review.

For your reference, [this link](#) will take you to all the materials the Committees have reviewed so far. The material is organized by the date of the meetings in which the information was reviewed. [This document](#) provides dates for each required review topic and may help guide you to particular reports most of interest to you. [This document](#) is a summary of the reports the Committees have reviewed and serves as a draft the Committees could use for their final adequacy report required by law.

Name:	
Phone number:	
Email address:	
Comments:	

The Bureau of Legislative Research (BLR) downloaded all comments submitted as of September 19, 2018. This document includes only the name of the commenter and the comment each submitted, but phone numbers and email addresses provided by commenters are available upon request. BLR staff did not edit the comments in any way, with the exception of minor formatting. Some commenters left their mailing address in the comment box—apparently an error resulting from an autofill function. These “comments” were excluded from the attached list. The individuals were contacted and encouraged to resubmit their comments.

Excluding the comments described above, there were a total of 109 comments submitted as of September 19. The BLR reviewed all of the comments submitted and categorized the topics addressed to provide a very general overview. The topics most frequently addressed in the comments included teachers’ salaries, school safety, mental health, special education and public school employee health insurance.

Just over half of the comments mentioned teacher salaries. A number of those mentioned the need for salary increases, the disparities among salaries in different districts, and the role salaries play in recruiting and retaining high quality teachers.

About 22% of the respondents expressed concerns about school security, including security equipment needed for school buildings, issues related to guns in schools, and the need for school resource officers. About 20% of the comments mentioned concerns about student mental health issues, including the mental health issues students face and the need for more services to address these needs. Many of the comments about mental health were coupled with comments about school safety.

Special education topics addressed include the need for more funding for students with disabilities, the increase in the number of these students and/or the severity of their condition, the difficulty of educating special education students in mainstream classrooms, and the amount of paperwork in special education. One district appears to have given its employees and patrons a list of issues to include in their comments, and the need for more Special Education Catastrophic funding was among the topic these individuals mentioned.

Many of the commenters mentioned the high cost of the public school employee health insurance plan. Several commenters expressed a wish for retirees to have access to the same health insurance in retirement as active employees.

	Name	Public Comment
1.	Steve Morris	Teachers need to be paid more money. It is awful how the teachers are treated by our legislator.
2.	Dustin Seaton	I am writing as both a public school employee and as a father. First, there is a concern regarding the discrepancy of teacher salaries throughout the state, but specifically in northwest Arkansas. I taught for five years in Prairie Grove before transferring to Springdale where I earned over a \$10,000 salary increase doing much the same work. I'm concerned such a huge difference in pay will create an inequality among big and small school districts in the state. Secondly, as a father of a kindergartener, I am very worried about the possibility of legislators pushing legislation to allow teachers to carry guns in schools. This concerns me immensely emotionally, logically, and logistically. Surely we can provide more funding for greater mental health capacities as well as trained resource officers in our state. I've seen far too often school counselors take on the role of scheduler, event planner, or test administrator rather than focus on the mental health needs of students. This isn't their fault but rather more unfunded mandates put on their plate. Surely we can provide our schools with greater resources to service the mental health needs/concerns of our students and their families.
3.	Kraig Brown	I am a new teacher under waiver at Drew Central High School. I would like to see some way found to increase funding to schools to allow them(us) to purchase technology so they(we) could be a 1-to-1 ratio of Chromebooks in every classroom. STEM is the way of the future and we must be able to equip our students to succeed rather than fail.
4.	Alicia Brown	Raise in teachers pay, more funding for public schools, and more safety training for school districts
5.	Robert Poole	1. Teacher salaries are a huge issue that needs to be addressed. The rich get richer and the poor get poorer. Schools that pay the best, get the best teachers and thus get the best results. Research will tell you that the #1 indicator in academic achievement is the teacher. 2. We have to address the issue that schools are a "dumping" ground for all students. We have students that need help and schools do not have the resources to serve these students (severe needs, mental health issues, behavior issues). These students get kicked out of facilities because they can't handle them. Then, they get sent back to public schools. This isn't fair to the kids who are trying to learn or the kid who has the issues. We have lost kids from our district due to this issue. 3. The TESS and LEADS system are very time consuming tools that have no to very little impact on education. All they do is take a lot of time on the admin and teacher. Teacher fair dismissal keeps a lot of bad teachers in the business. We need to do away with it. Tess and Leads are "dog and pony shows." Have teachers evaluated to the performance of their students, but then we must have students accountable to their performance as well. 4. We need a better insurance plan. Schools and employees are beat to death over insurance rates. The insurance cost is out of control and the coverage isn't very good.
6.	Doug Graham	Salaries and School Safety rank high. New money given to schools for the raises. Find a way to fund school safety issues. Mental Health counselors need to be a priority.
7.	Kathy Morledge	Please consider providing funding for PreK. It is essential for high poverty children and for children who are learning English. As you consider teacher salaries, I can understand a minimum, but please also find a way to provide funding for those districts who would need to cut valuable programs to meet the minimum. Please also consider not putting a cap on the teacher salary scale. Districts who choose to use local monies to fund these salaries should be commended for fiscal responsibility and conserving funds by filling class loads to the maximum to avoid having to hire new teachers. Reward effective innovations in schools.
8.	Rowdy Ross	I would like to see funding to help pay for School Resource Officers.
9.	Clifton Sherrer	As a lifelong educator, I'm concerned with some of the directions that education is going. Funding will always be a concern and as we move into new areas of education such as mental health and security, we must keep in mind that addressing these areas in our schools is above what we already are attempting to address. It is hard to do more without providing a way to accomplish that task. Most of our facilities are in need of additional security measures, especially in rural areas where this hasn't been an issue. However, implementing the governor's recommendations for security do not happen without some kind of funding. The only way to combat these security issues from a prevention perspective is to train students at early ages to deal with mental health issues and also identify students at risk that need additional support because of failure within their family structure. As we continue to evolve, our education will be required to address ALL areas of the student with the mental health side becoming an even higher priority than the educational side. We will need ways to fund and educate the adults who will take this task on. Many of our educators were not trained in these areas. I urge the legislature to find creative ways to broaden the scope of education and educators by creatively funding these areas of safety, security, and mental health in schools.

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10.	MACK SKELTON	There are many issues that are pertinent to the success of public schools in our state. While it is difficult to limit them to several, I will. 1) There must be accountability for current legislation, rules, and regulations. A prime example of this is with attendance and the ESSA index scores. There is no accountability or oversight of district attendance and therefore many districts take advantage of this by simply "fudging" their attendance. If we're going to be graded on something, we all need to be held accountable to do things the right way. Also, social promotion is still crippling our state's (and nation's) children. We have to find a way to identify social promotion, hold teachers and/or administrators accountable, and save our children's futures. 2) Something is going to have to be done to limit the special education load of general education teachers. While I will not debate the importance of socialization of SPED students, I will debate having more than four in a general education classroom. Given, I understand that no reasonable politician is going to kill their candidacy by "attacking SPED students," it is necessary to retain teachers. 3) Educator salaries and benefits in the State of Arkansas are almost comical - that is if you're a non-educator. If you continue to pay comical wages, you're going to continue to get comical interest and "professionals." We can throw this back onto local districts as much as we want, saying, "Well, raise your millage," but something is going to have to systematically be done to address this across the state. Poor communities aren't going to vote for a millage increase when many don't see the need for an education in the first place.
11.	Dean Stanley	A few items regarding public education: We are excited about the possibility of raising minimum salaries for teachers but do have concerns about how each district will be able to afford these proposed raises. School safety is obviously a key issue at this time and although we have addressed it with various systems on our campus, we feel that we need to be more secure and would hope that there would be funding to help in this capacity. A big issue today for public schools in regards to adequacy is dealing with facilities. We feel that there are huge discrepancies throughout the state in regards to facilities. There is a distinct need to be able to provide similar (adequate) facilities to all districts in the state. A growing district like ours is in dire need of more space and feel as if the state is not providing enough partnership money for all schools in our situation to build adequate space for our growing population. Finally, it is important for districts that are losing tax assessments to have a law enacted that rolls a millage rate back up when a district experiences over a 10% assessment decrease. The law is in place for a millage rollback when the assessment value increases by the 10% margin.
12.	Elizabeth McKinney	Public schools need funding to support mental health services and overall student safety that might include additional school counselors and resource officers. We also need the power to assign students to an alternative learning environment when they cannot function in the regular public school setting. We are not equipped with the man-power or expertise to handle some of the students currently in our population.
13.	Brad Williams	Schools are addressing safety concerns for students and faculty. We are also addressing the growing concern for social/emotional well being of students. The biggest concern is to develop equal and adequate funding for facilities for all Arkansas schools.
14.	Dr. Martha Dodson	Public schools need more mental health resources for the students. Adequacy funding needs to be revisited. More Funding for professional development is essential.
15.	Tyrene Gardner	Teacher Salary Teacher Insurance Equity in funding
16.	Davy King	As a high school principal, I am very concerned that there is talk about taking out some means of punishment. As a school, we have to have extraordinary measures available to us. Please fight to keep expulsion, suspension, and corporal punishment in the schools.
17.	Lee Smith	Teacher salaries: Teacher salaries are an issue that has been addressed in adequacy; but, what has not been addressed is the disparity between large and small districts. Giving teacher raises won't solve much for schools who lose teachers to districts less than 20 miles away that can offer \$5,000 more dollars per year to do the same, sometimes less, work. This is the issue that adequacy should address while dealing with the education workforce.
18.	Darrell Wayne Bolin	Whenever given an opportunity, I always ask that we look closely at the mental health support for our students, families, and teachers. I've been in this business for 25 years in many roles and have never seen the sheer numbers of students (especially in K-2) that are struggling to thrive in our schools due to social/emotional issues. Thank you for an opportunity to voice concerns through this forum.
19.	Jamie Stacks	The major concerns for Wonderview School District are funding/assesments, salaries, and school safety. WSD is a small district with fewer than 500 students which means that we have difficulty balancing staff numbers with required courses. This impacts our ability to offer competitive salaries

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		because of our low teacher-student ratio. Another area of concern is future funding because of the assessment issues at the county level. Because businesses and individuals are allowed to appeal their assessments and not pay taxes without penalty or interest until their appeal is settled, school districts are at a risk of losing large amounts of funding without the ability to budget ahead. Southwestern Energy (SWN) is currently refusing to pay taxes in Conway County which will greatly impact Wonderview. This will impact the ability to budget, meet the needs of students, and offer stable employment to teachers. Finally, school safety is a concern. WSD needs security cameras in buildings, parking lots, and buses but we do not have the funds for the system. Also, mechanical/electronic door openers would add another level of security but the district cannot absorb this cost. Finally, WSD is unable to update or add any facilities through the Partnership Project with the state because of the current formula. We need new, upgraded facilities but do not qualify for assistance.
20.	Devin Carr	Teacher pay and insurance is a major concern of most of the teachers I represent. There also needs to be a push for more CTE programs in the state to help connect students to real world occupations.
21.	Brett Bunch	I would like to discuss three main issues; teacher salaries, mental health in schools, and homeschool students. Teacher salaries continue to be an issue for small districts and in truth for most districts that are outside of the Northwest or Northeast corridors of the state. Teachers should be some of the top paid professionals in the country but are too often looked at as "just a teacher" rather than an educator. Mental Health issues in our schools continue to rise and there is not a good solution in the works to meet the needs of students as a whole at this point. Students are battling greater adversity today than ever before and the need for high quality and accessible services is not being met. We are required as public schools to accept and attempt to provide an equal education for all students yet we are given the proper support or tools to meet those needs. We have to recognize these needs and shortfalls and address them in a better fashion. Make funding available to schools to hire their own therapist and support those needs. First I am not against homeschooling children, I am against there not being any accountability for them. Some students are receiving a good education through homeschooling yet a majority of them are not and they are not being tracked for accountability. If students are allowed to continue to have parents remove them from a school district for homeschooling we should at least require them to check in with their home district once a month to make sure they are progressing and are actually getting an education. Too often these students parents pull them out of the public system to "homeschool" them and after a couple of years they return to the public school behind and the parents do not understand how they were classified as a ninth-grade student while homeschooled but are actually still on a seventh grade level when they come back to the school. We must hold them more accountable for these students and meet the needs of these kids.
22.	Angela Garland	It would be nice if there could be a solution to the high costs of teacher insurance. Our insurance deductibles are VERY high, and the cost of the plan is also very high. It's very expensive to go to the doctor and basically have to pay the whole bill, while also paying \$350/month for the premium. Also, our schools need some type of funding so we can make them safer for our students. School shootings are happening more and more, which I believe is a two-part problem. We need to be able to provide the mental health support for our students that need it, while also making our buildings safer places to be.
23.	Danny Ketcherside	The public school teachers must have raises that at least reflect the cost of living. People that are satisfied to work minimum wage get more attention than legislators than people who sacrificed to get their college degree. Also, teachers that are retiring have limited sources for health insurance, like other state employees. This is a not a good way to attract quality educators. Teachers should be able to get state employee insurance upon retirement.
24.	Jonathan Ward	Hello. I am a public school educator. I believe that there are problems in education that need to be addressed. One is the discrepancy of salaries across the state. Teachers in parts of the state are starting at the minimum of approximately \$32,000, but schools in northwest Arkansas are able to start out at approximately \$40,000, which is comparable to my salary in Northeast Arkansas with 8 years of experience and a Master's degree. I believe that there needs to be steps taken to address this discrepancy. Another issue is teacher insurance. Our insurance is not bad insurance, but we feel that the cost rising each year is hurting educators. There are teachers in this state who carry their spouses and children who have to work second jobs due to the amount of their income taken by insurance. To do our job, we are required to have a minimum of a Bachelor's degree and constantly receive continuing education. We want to be treated like our field of expertise is

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		important. I am a strong believer in checks and balances. I fully agree that schools have to be held accountable for the work we do; however, a generalized test, like the ACT Aspire, is not the only way to do that. One test should not be the only thing used to measure how well schools are performing. I would recommend looking at teacher and student retention, days missed by students and faculty, in addition to the factors already considered, such as graduation rate. I thank you for the time you have taken to read this. I am passionate about education; because, I have seen how a teacher can make a lasting impact on students' lives. I would love to see more teachers asked about the state of education in Arkansas. We are on the front lines. We often know what needs work before others do.
25.	LuAnne D. Dugan	Hello, I have been in the public schools of Arkansas for 34 years. I began my career in Springdale, I have taught the majority of my years in Wynne Public Schools. I obtained a BS in General Sciences and Home Economics from the University of Arkansas. Teaching is rewarding and demanding, and I love it. I have experienced many years of low salaries, reduced insurance coverage with skyrocketing premiums, continuous added work responsibilities and not to mention, TESTING. Oh and don't forget over-crowded classrooms and a yearly evaluation process that produces extra work and few results. Most of the teachers I started teaching along side of are long gone, at least by 28 years. We don't have many "veteran" teachers anymore, the daily stress becomes overwhelming. New teachers do well to stay 3-5 years. Many young teachers barely survive on their starting salaries due to student loan debt. Teaching was considered a most noble profession when I began in the '80's, but few citizens, law makers, or administrators view it as such today. Teachers are rarely held as pillars of our community and rarely consulted on their own best practices. We are feeling marginalized. And then, there's the violence and some lawmakers think I need a gun?!WE DO NOT NEED GUNS!!We need to know we are supported by our community and state to ensure that our campuses are safe havens for our students and staff. Budgeting for 1 officer on a campus of 900 makes no sense. Safety should be a priority, not a sidebar. School boards should be relevant by electing only stakeholders/parents, not politicians with agendas. We are top heavy as well, highly paid administration as well as staff that are paid primarily for head coaching jobs. Education should always be the main focus of the school, not sports. Ask this question, "Could/would I be a classroom teacher?" Our students, in public schools, deserve every opportunity to survive and thrive! If you are sending your child to a private institute, I'm wondering "Why?" Yours, LuAnne D. Dugan The Academies of Wynne High Wynne, AR72396
26.	Beth Fullerton	Teachers in Arkansas need to be making salaries that is at least equal to other states or at least is keeping up with the cost of living. Arkansas teachers should also be given access to state insurance after they retire instead of having to purchase insurance that will cost them half of what they are drawing in retirement each month
27.	Krystle Hooten	My concerns were for equal teacher pay, or at least raises that keep up with the cost of living. I also have the concern about teachers having the same access to state insurance upon retirement.
28.	Casey L Squires	I would appreciate consideration for a raise that is comparable to the rising cost of living across the state. We are so often overlooked because teaching is a job of the heart - The hours may be 8-4 but the time is 24/7. We are never "off" and that is not a complaint - I LOVE my students and intentionally check my mail and messages several times 7 days a week to see where I am needed and what I can do for my students. There is not a summer - That is time for professional development and refreshing of content and skills. I ask that a raise be implemented to bring more professionals into the field of education - As a school counselor in a high school of 700 students - Rarely does anyone want to enter the field of teaching - They always refer back to the career planning and research done in grades 7&8 and remember the salary and also look around their group of peers and wonder if they would ever receive enough training to be able to deal with the diversity of learning, personalities, and safety concerns in public schools today. My strong math students want in engineering and do not even want to consider education when looking at pay. I tell them teaching is of the heart but they are not swayed. An increase in pay will retain great teachers and recruit great teachers. We hold the key to every future career in the world - We are training students for careers that do not even exist yet. An increase in pay comparable to other professions would be greatly appreciated. Now for the insurance. As a family of four, I am thankful every single day that my husband is in the filed of education as well because therefore we can carry two separate insurance policies and be able to afford it. We also have to carry two different HSA Accounts then just to be able to pay the \$100 up front out-of-pocket costs to see the doctor for a sinus infection. I had a recent thyroid surgery and the costs were astronomical - especially when I am trying to pay for my child to have braces and have another child waiting patiently for braces

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		because we can't afford to pay for two sets at one time. I ask for consideration to please be made for those of us working to prepare future Arkansans to be productive citizens and get Training and an Education to WORK. Thank you for your time - Please feel free to contact me for any further discussion.
29.	John Karnes	Besides being a taxpayer and parent of a student attending a K-12 public school, I happen to be the Superintendent of Schools in West Fork. This is my 32nd year in education and I have witnessed first-hand the evolution of education in Arkansas. Thankfully, most of what I have witnessed has been positive and in the best interest of our students. However, over the past five to ten years, I have watched the number of special education students rise approximately 5% (from 10% to 15%) in my district. Additionally, the needs of those students are getting greater and greater. At that same time, additional funding for special education has been minimal at best. In my district, there is no one area that is more grossly underfunded than special education, and we desperately need help. Unless you were an educator, you would have no idea what public schools are dealing with in this area. We have 5 year olds, kicking, biting, and hitting our employees while at the same time cussing them like dogs. The mental health aspect of special education should be a huge concern for us all. If we can't give these kids the help they need now as children, I can't imagine what our society will be like 10-20 years down the road. Please give us more funding and resources for our special needs students.
30.	Nathan White	In regards to education there needs to be a look at the adequacy for funding in public schools, look at teacher salaries, look at facility funding, and look at school safety. It is necessary to also support initiatives that encourage schools to implement online learning courses, flexible scheduling and other innovative practices that mirror today's work environment. We talk about preparing our students for the future but we don't want to invest in them equally or equitably. We have to encourage schools to take chances realizing that they may not work for their students. We have to realize that while communities say they want a proper school more often than not they are satisfied with the way things have always been. We can not be satisfied with what we have always done. We must look to the future. Funding is needed from the state level because many local communities can not pass needed infrastructure millage or refinancing. We should also hold our schools accountable for the money that they are putting back. Where did that money come from and what was it not used on. If we do not invest in education with an eye toward developing skills that will attract business, improve graduation rates, decrease crime rates, and improve K-12 and college attendance and graduation, then we are providing a disservice to the youth of Arkansas. I would also encourage you to look at preventive actions to help students succeed instead of reactive measures. Health care, mental healthcare, vision screening, dental health, and many other programs are necessary to help meet the needs of the children in our State. Please look at those programs and expand them to help those who can not help themselves.
31.	Bryce Farmer	As a school board member at Heber Springs School District, the biggest obstacles to providing the best possible education for our students: 1) 1% funding increases when cost of living increases are 2-3% 2) Public funds going to private schools 3) Lack of accountability for those who home school 4) Unfunded mandates like minimum salary increases w/out a funding stream 5) Catastrophic special education funding that only covers 29% of our costs. We are a frugal district that has to make more cuts every year. This comes at the expense of our students, as you know.
32.	April Grace	Items that affect our local school district (Heber Springs) include the calculation of 1% funding increases when our cost of living increases have been rising by 2-3%, our public funds going to private schools, a lack of accountability for those who home school, frustration with unfunded mandates like minimum salary increases without a funding stream, and catastrophic special education funding that only covers 29% of our costs. Thank you for looking into these issues.
33.	John Hill	I have several issues that I would like the committee to address. First, it is my understanding that current funding calculation for schools is a 1% increases when cost of living increases have been 2-3%. Like anything else, you get what you pay for and higher quality education means having to pay higher wages to entice a higher caliber of teacher. The statistics of college graduations in AR show that we are heading towards a teacher shortage. Second, I am concerned about the lack accountability for parents who home school. I was homeschool from 3rd grade until I graduated and was tested every single year to make sure that I was on grade level. I have students that are homeschooling that are not receiving an education at home but are allowed to returned to school in higher grades woefully behind in core subjects. Thirdly, I have issue with unfunded mandates like minimum salary increases without a funding stream. My school, Heber Springs, voted down a millage that would have moved our salaries into the middle of the pack within the state ranking.

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		Without that millage and with the mandated minimum and additional areas mandated by the state (without funding, special education for instance), my school has reduced staff every year that I have been here. We lost our vice principal and several other teachers this year. We are supposed to serve these students provide them with an education to make them successful in life but each year we have less funding and staff to do so.
34.	Elizabeth Newman	I would like teachers' pay to include raises that keep up with the cost of living. I would also like teachers to have access to to the same insurance upon their retirement.
35.	Dr. Lisa Kissire	The discrepancy of teacher salaries among the state is an issue for smaller schools, and schools needing the greatest improvements. These schools need to draw the best teachers to these areas, but the pay is much greater elsewhere, limiting their ability to do that. In addition, teacher salaries are too low for our state in general. Teachers should be treated and paid like other professionals; however, mandating a min salary to school districts without additional funding, only serves to put more of a strain on schools. Furthermore, our students are our most precious commodities and need protection. For this reason, the other area of greatest need in my opinion is that of school resource officers and the funding for them. Teachers do NOT need to be the ones armed for this purpose, but we do need armed officials on site.
36.	Linzi Johnson	Students need slightly longer lunches. What happens on paper (per schedule) and what actually happens in the lunch room are NOT the same. Teachers need higher pay. A teacher should not have to take on side jobs to make ends meet. Better insurance. I've actually looked at picking a new career just based on the lack of good insurance. It's horrible!! Students with special needs NEED to be meet but at what cost to the other students? We have students in our classrooms that are so loud and disruptive that it effects the other students learning capabilities.
37.	Jean Rose	My concern is that as teachers, we are not receiving salaries that correspond with the amount of work, training, and caring that we have and do for these students. If a substantial raise is not possible, then why can't a raise that correlates with the cost of living not at least be considered? My second concern is insurance after retirement. The access to the same insurance that we have as a retiree should be the same, or even better than the insurance that we receive when we are still active teachers.
38.	Kimberly Knowles	Teacher salaries are of the utmost importance to me. I am currently going through a divorce and cannot afford to live in anything but a small 2 bedroom apartment. I have no debt to speak of, other than a vehicle. My 2 children now qualify for free lunch. A professional should not have to have 2 jobs or a spouse to make ends meet.
39.	Lisa Olmstead	I love our public school and 18 years ago I came to work as a Paraprofessional in the Elementary School. After 15 years with the district, and the the talk of raising minimum wage, I took a secretarial position in the administrative office to increase my salary. If I stayed in position working with students I would make less than minimum wage. I had to look at the financial gain for my family. The school budgets keep getting cut in favor of other school choices. A community is only as strong as the local school district. Home Schooling has no accountability. At one time they tested the students-no more. At one time you had to post the course of study-no more. Yet money is taken from the public school to fund this program. On line schools - they are taking students from our schools. I do not know if they are accountable. Student numbers are dropping therefore federal and state funds are being taken away to give to the other school choices mentioned above. I am worried about the future of our public school system.
40.	Matthew Beard	I think there needs to be more non biased inclusivity for people as well as possibly more education on accepting that everyone has different beliefs. I believe that discrimination starts with the school where everyone learns how to interact with each other. It should not matter what belief you have about anything. Every human being should be able to feel safe around their peers.
41.	Sandra Lanehart	1. Please revisit adequacy. Monticello is a small district in Southeast Arkansas. We are experiencing a declining enrollment as is most districts in this area which greatly affects funding. 2. Partnership funding needs to be revised. Schools in this area of the state may receive approval for safe, warm, dry projects; however, there is never any funds available. 3. Funds to hire additional SRO's for our buildings, as well as funds for security doors and surveillance cameras, are greatly needed. I know that NSLA funds can be used for this, but most districts use NSLA for dyslexia therapist, academic coaches, and technology.
42.	Taylor Garrett	Teacher pay is a huge problem not only in Oklahoma and Kansas, but here in Arkansas as well. If there were a statewide teacher strike today, I would participate in a heartbeat (as would thousands of others). A 1st year teacher at MHS makes around \$35,000 before taxes. On top of having to buy our supplies (plus student supplies) and pay our own bills, that is not enough money to live on,

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		especially if one is single. For the non-paid overtime hours teachers work every week, anything under \$40,000 is absurd. It must change if this state wants to keep passionate, motivated teachers in the classroom. Otherwise, we'll find another profession if we don't start receiving the treatment we deserve. In addition, the Trump administration's belief that federal dollars can be used to arm teachers is disgusting. It is the antithesis of why myself and thousands of teachers got into this fulfilling, yet stressful career. How about using the funds to improve student and teacher achievement in the classroom, not giving us more problems to deal with. The idea of arming teachers is disgraceful and idiotic. It will only exacerbate an already horrifying epidemic.
43.	Larry Ben	It is becoming an expectation of the public that schools increase safety measures at schools in the areas of facilities and personnel. Facilities, in more security features like adding or replacing locks (depending on their design), adding buzz-in features in all schools, and hardened structures; and personnel in security officers or increased SRO's. These are additional measures and we're not willing to take away other education services for safety. Therefore, this is a call for additional funding.
44.	Tiffanie Manes	Great that we are 9th in the nation for teacher pay, however, teachers still do not make enough money to only have one job in this state. This is a national crisis but can be solved on a state level.
45.	Andrea Thompson	I would like to see you address: -The calculation of 1% funding increases when cost of living increases have been 2-3%,-public funds going to private schools -unfunded mandates like minimum salary increases without a adequate funding -catastrophic special education funding that does not cover costs
46.	Susan White	Southeast Arkansas needs salary increases to recruit teachers. Jobs which do not require a college degree are paying what a beginning teacher makes. Teachers never get pay raises. I just received the first pay raise in 10 years and it was \$1000. Also due to the decline in student enrollment in our part of the state, funding is a major issue. There is nothing equitable about education for kids in different parts of the state. It appears the state stops at Little Rock when traveling from north Arkansas. Help all students and teachers and not just the ones in the northern portion of the state.
47.	Regina R Stewman	Please consider investing in mental health support in the school setting. Many of our children are coming to us having experienced trauma. Teachers need more training; schools need additional support services to assist our students. Without this support, students won't be able to achieve their ultimate potential.
48.	Kelli Patchin	Areas of concern for me specifically when it comes to education in Arkansas would include public funds going to private schooling and the decrease in funding for special education. Also, salary and funding increases not matching the cost of living increases over the past few years.
49.	Lindsey Hartsell	I believe more money is needed for school safety and mental health. This areas are major weaknesses but of upmost importance to our patrons.
50.	John Carey	Teacher salaries should be addressed. Also facility studies on specific districts that have deteriorating facilities need to be done. There are districts where the voters continue to turn a negative ear to millage increases as the district facilities are worse every year and impact negatively on the students.
51.	Alexander Harmon	I am ashamed of this public school system. Arkansas should be number one in education in every level. Not by ratings on a test, but buy new inventions, new awards, new scholarships. step one. year around school students study 3 months have 2 weeks off. This garuntees less material being lost over summer break. 2. Teachers keep their right to actually teach a class withought being driven by the state like slaves to pump out factory workers and underpaid employees. They also receive a minimum \$20,000 raise with options if pensions, retirement, and the best healthcare. 3. Extend lunch and recess/down time, we have one of the highest weight issues in American and you make our children inhale food and cut down on physical activity which is stimulating for the brain and gives the teachers a break. 4. NO child should ever go without a meal no matter what their status is. 5. School days need to be shortened by minimum one hour and no homework.(8 hours is enough). 6. Stop pushing stem harder than every other acedemic program in the school. musicians, artists, actors, athletes, poets, historians, writers, all hold their weight in profesionalism and stableism and contribute to society. Build bridges with colleges not debt with student loans and cost of education..education is a gift and a right not a privilage.
52.	Christina Bartlett	As a teacher, I have three primary concerns: 1. Safety in our schools. I believe ALL schools should be provided the materials and/or funding to be sure the campus can be adequately locked down in the event of an active shooter. Many schools are not fully prepared for this event--for

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		example, doors that open into the hallway so that it is more difficult for teachers/students to defend themselves. 2. Teacher pay. Teachers in Arkansas MUST be paid a wage that is competitive with other careers. The large majority of teachers work WELL beyond the contracted day and work and attend trainings over their "vacation". This is a job that does not end when you leave campus. We still receive emails, phone calls, Remind messages, etc. from parents, students, and co-workers, not to mention lesson planning, grading, and just generally worrying about our jobs and our students. Our state should pay our teachers in a way that says we are valued just as much as other fields. Our current pay is absolutely embarrassing and we will be unable to keep COMPETENT teachers any other way. Training people to be teachers in 1-2 years through MAT programs is not the answer, either. 3. Retirement benefits. Because of the time commitment, fears regarding safety, and relatively low pay, many teachers power through with the promise of a somewhat early retirement and benefits for the remainder of their lives. If these benefits keep being changed and cut, teachers will ABSOLUTELY leave the field and never look back. Arkansas deserves QUALITY educators and this will never happen until these three items are addressed.
53.	Jessica McKay	Educators need to be paid more than what we currently receive. Our benefits (insurances) could also provide a more for what we pay for them each month. I'm actually worse off financially now than I was as a single mother of two going through college working part time, and there's absolutely no reason for that.
54.	Andrew James Werb	we need raises and some inclusions ruin an entire class period all year.
55.	Kathleen Doss	I have worked as an instructional aide for the past eight years. At the end of my first year we classified staff all received about a 1% pay increase. The only increase in salary I have received since has been my expected step increase of \$200 per year. We are loosing students, why, I don't know and therefore are always under the threat of less money, less money. Teachers leave and literally go eight miles up the road and instantly go up in salary \$11,000 per year and then get a 3% across the board raise at the end of year one and then everybody in that district gets another one the next year...all for the same exact work. I am frustrated about funding being tied to property tax, but don't have any suggestions. Don't really know why I am even submitting this. Thanks for the opportunity though.
56.	Susan Dyche	While my school district has been able to give us \$400 raises, two years in a row, Arkansas seriously lags in teacher pay compared to other states. Arkansas expects a LOT from teachers, but gives little incentive where salaries and stipends are concerned. Financial support for teachers AND for schools is needed.
57.	Julie Douglas	School funding is based off a calculation of 1% funding increases when cost of living increases have been 2-3% Public funds going to private schools. The lack of accountability for those who home school makes this option more appealing and then they return grossly behind. Unfunded mandates like minimum salary increases without a funding stream, and catastrophic special education funding that only covers 29% of our costs continue to exacerbate the situation.
58.	Portia Jones	Align Pre-school with Kindergarten requirements. Too many Kindergartners are entering kindergarten too far behind; therefore, many of the students remain behind throughout their school years. Also, use assessments for what they are designed for. They should not be used to score schools but used to develop action plans based on testing data results in areas of weaknesses.
59.	Caleb Powers	My concerns are for equal teacher pay, or at least raises that keep up with the cost of living. It is hard to keep up with the cost of living on a base teacher salary. I know many educators that have to have two or even three other jobs in order to make ends meet. I also believe that teachers should have the same access to state insurance upon retirement.
60.	Wayne Guiltner	My only comment is in regards to the wealth index for my district and districts in the same situation. Our wealth index is over 70% and we have nearly 70% of our students on free and reduced lunches. We are completely debt free because of our financial responsibility; however, with a wealth index of 70%+, it is extremely difficult to build the additional six classrooms we need even with partnership funding. I appreciate the efforts made to address this issue. Wayne Guiltner Salem School District
61.	Ray Girdler	Thanks!
62.	Tom Hills	There is no need for unfunded mandates in regards to pay increases or benefits. If you do not offer a revenue stream then do not dictate how we spend our general revenue! Special Education Funding is horribly anemic and needs an injection of funds. The Laws that allow red light violations to go without punishment are abhorrent. Our Prosecutor will not attempt legal action unless it is an open and shut case. We do not have the funds to video every angle of the red light violation which

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		is what the Prosecutor demands. No, the recent law changes are not sufficient - no matter what you tell yourself about how they can work. They do not work, to Prosecutors do not care to spend their time on these cases. I suspect you are waiting for a target number of kids to die in red light violations before you enact tight loophole free legislation. Bus driver pay should be addressed on a statewide basis and mandated for levels much like teacher pay. You will let anyone substitute in a classroom but only a select few to drive a bus or substitute drive a bus. Let's fix this.
63.	Gentrey Dew	I appreciate your willingness to address the concerns of teachers and administrators from around the state. My biggest concern for Arkansas public education is the fact that we have been allotted a 1% funding increase against a 2-3% cost of living increases. However, I would like to commend our state legislators for giving authorization that allows for well trained school teachers and administrators to defend our students from the threat of school shootings. Thank you.
64.	Chris Eubanks	I think you guys have a very difficult job, and I will not tell you how to do your job. I would like to request that schools receive help with armed security either in the form of police officers or military who need to supplement their income (they don't get paid enough for their regular job) and who will protect our most precious resource. Arming teachers may be more of a hassle than it is worth due to the higher stress levels on the positions normally. Another area is in mental health for students. Schools have counselors, but they really deal with paperwork that is necessary bu for a different reason. A mental health professional in each building that works with certified, classified, and students would be a great benefit. Again, thank you for what you do. God Bless
65.	Kelly Simmons	I have recently moved to Heber after being hired into the school district. I am a special education teacher. I would like to see the following items to be addressed. The calculation of 1% funding increase when the cost of living increases have been 2-3%, public funds going to private schools, lack accountability for those who homeschool, unfunded mandates like minimum salary increases without a funding stream, and catastrophic special education funding that only covers 29% of the school's costs.
66.	Linnet Tournear	I see several things lacking in the special education division. There is always a lack of man power to handle the needs of these students. Also, the need for certified teachers in this area is lacking. The amount of paperwork required causes teachers to leave this profession. Our community is small and there is a lack of community things available to these students. I have students that never get to leave their home unless a school bus picks them up. There are not resources in our community for transportation for these students and parents. There are not many job opportunities either. Funding from the state and federal have changed the laws to the point we cannot use special education money to take them into the community and pay for a meal. These parents do NOT have funds for things like this. School may be the only chance these kids get to have life skills opportunities in their community and now there is no funding available to even take them. Instead of spending millions of dollars on testing a kid with an IQ of 45 to 60 on standards---how about money being spent to help them be able to care for themselves as independently as possible??
67.	Dale Query	Please don't fall into the slash & burn tax cuts to which our surrounding state have implemented. Arkansas has first hand knowledge this disaster has created in Kansas and Oklahoma. Not only education has suffered, but every other state entity also. Yes, there are schools underperforming, found almost exclusively in under performing communities. Yes, there are examples of overspending, but the Department has harsh sanctions for this. And, yes, there are administrators who don't live up to the high expectations. All these groups make up a very small percentage of Arkansas schools, like your fellow legislators who misuse and abuse make up a very small percentage of the legislative body. Please don't focus on the few as examples that all are failing, and please don't send any public money to privates, for profits or homeschool!!
68.	Bobby Ashley	A couple of items that concern me is the funding for security and the support of the proposed Facilities proposal.
69.	Taylor Montgomery	Teacher salary Mental health awareness
70.	Dennis Johnson	School Board Reform.
71.	Sharon. Hargis	Needs for Ar schools: equal pay for All Ar teachers! South AR teachers work to educate students as hard or harder than central and north Ar teachers and yet are paid 15-20 thousand LESS than any others!!! Equal pay for equal work!!!! Just totally unfair pay !!!!Also, more advantages for special events to Soith Ar for students to take advantage of!!!! More \$\$\$ for low income schools!
72.	Stacey Webb	My greatest concern is teacher's salaries across the state. The pay to become a professional educator is not the best. Four surrounding states have higher starting salaries for teachers. We

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		<p>have exemplary teachers leaving the profession due to low pay and we are experience a shortage in much needed areas. Some teachers spend tens of thousands of dollars to become educators only to have to find supplemental income through night and week-end jobs. And then most, turn around and put it back into the classroom or purchase items for their students. Furthermore, the state's school funding formula that is based on student enrollment drives good teachers in small towns and poverty stricken communities away. These districts are struggling trying to appropriate funds and keep qualified teachers. Increasing teacher's salaries is a necessity! Appropriating funds based on student enrollment in not reasonable. I say "yes" to increase in teacher's salaries and more equitable funding throughout the state. It's literally an investment for our future. Another area of concern is the growing number of students with mental health issues, especially at the elementary level. A higher percentage of students entering school have greater needs and schools need qualified staff members throughout the districts to cope with these every growing problems. Teachers and staff are not equipped to deal with students that are aggressive, defiant, threatening, and emotionally distraught. Teachers, counselors, and administrators spend a majority of their day dealing with the demands of student's with mental health issues, which is taking instruction away from other students. Schools need more guidance and support within the schools and more outside agencies that are better equipped to handle these students.</p>
73.	Andrea Robertson	<p>I am the counselor at Paris Middle School. I think that we have an urgent need in our school systems for mental health. Gun control is not the answer, it is the person behind the gun that needs addressed. I feel that each school within a district should be given funds to hire their own School Based Mental Health counselor to address these needs immediately. It would also be nice if the state took better care of their teachers, insurance wise. Insurance for educators is ridiculously expensive. It is really sad that most single mom or dad teachers can't make it financially and have to work two jobs. Lastly, as being the counselor in a rural area, we see so many needs for students, just basic needs that aren't being met at home. It would be really nice to have funds set aside for those students that aren't classified as homeless, but that have parents who struggle financially. I am constantly using my own money or begging for donations for food sponsors to send in our backpack program for food on Fridays. Our outside resources keep getting cut and our kids are the ones who suffer.</p>
74.	Carla Suiter	<p>Please consider a competitive bidding process to procure a good health insurance plan for teachers. I am currently having to work a full-time night job in order to pay for medical bills that are not covered by our insurance plan. I pay over \$500 a month for insurance that will not cover any of the diabetes medicines that my endocrinologist prescribes. Good benefits would go a long way toward improving teacher morale.</p>
75.	kim wilson	<p>Yes to raises for public school teachers. However, just increasing the starting salaries only is ridiculous! It will only cause veteran teachers to become angry and not feel as they are an important asset to the educational system. Why punish teachers who have put their heart and soul into a low paying job only to reward the incoming teachers who have no experience. That is insane. Please consider pay increases to all teachers' salaries.</p>
76.	Pamela Turner	<p>I work as the Special Education Supervisor for my school district. Mental Health is a huge issue especially in south Arkansas. The resources in this area are limited and we need help with students where mental health is the issue. Please make mental health a hot topic and get us some help! Thanks for all you do to support educators in our efforts to educate ALL children.</p>
77.	Amy Brewer	<p>Public School Educator - High School Counselor, District Test Coordinator, District Data</p>
78.	Gary O. Owens	<p>Teachers in the Pine Bluff School District have not received a raise in at least seven (7) years. District personnel need recurring training in financial management of all sources. Teachers need more public recognition for the job they do.</p>
79.	Janet Wood	<p>School based mental health needs to be a top priority - at least based on what I have seen in the past 10 days. As a Kindergarten Principal, what I have seen this year compared to last year - in terms of student behavior resulting from a gamet of diagnosis- is very concerning. We had a total of 240 K students last year and of those, 1 student required extensive supervision for extreme behavior. We had several who received school based mental health services but again, only 1 severe. This year (out of 278 students), in addition to the 14 students who are in 2 new self-contained classrooms; 8 in mild-moderate and 6 in moderate to severe, we have 6 students (3 in the severe category) who are currently in regular classrooms waiting for school based mental health and/or referral conferences. It would be my recommendation that we monitor special education and mental health needs of our students and provide more financial help in these areas. The increase in the number of students in Kindergarten needing these services is staggering. The</p>

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		biggest challenge with outside sbmh agencies is that they are not always available and can only see students for x number of minutes per week for billing purposes. From a teachers/admins perspective, we just need the student to get the help before he/she melts down and also to see these students when they melt down. These students need immediate help with coping skills - not three hours or the next day when they do not even remember melting down. Thanks for your attention to this very serious matter. I spoke to a couple of my admin buddies in neighboring school districts and they have also seen a drastic increase in Kindergarten behavior referrals. jwood
80.	Harrie Farrow	Please fund our public schools. Education should be a top priority. It's important to the future of our state more than almost anything. Funding charter schools instead results in a high number of poorly educated citizens which is harmful to all of us.
81.	Kelvin Hudson	The teacher salary disparity across the state of AR must be addressed. A teacher in South AR is no less important than a teacher in Northwest AR. Giving financial assistance across the board to all schools does nothing to decrease the wage gap and correct the issue. If we can give financial assistance to rural schools for transportation b/c their costs are higher then we can give financial assistance to rural schools for salaries b/c their need is greater. The teacher shortage is looming. Oklahoma has just approved the largest number of non-certified teachers ever, Texas is also reporting teacher shortages, and AR has known for years the number of new teachers entering the profession is decreasing at an alarming rate. Stand up for the State of AR and make teaching a more lucrative career. Make it more attractive to our brightest students and PLEASE pay these people for providing a constitutionally guaranteed free and appropriate education!
82.	Dana whited	In our district, we are unable to keep great and qualified teachers because of low pay. I moved her after working in rural, KY , TN and NE. I assumed pay would be comparable. I took a \$12,000 pay cut. Many teachers move to the northern part of the state or go to other fields of work. Elementary teachers are not qualified to teach reading, however the RISE initiative seems to be a step in the right direction. As a dyslexia therapist, Inwas required to take coursework above and beyond my masters . I had to attend classes that were equivalent to two grad courses while submitting lesson plans and videos to my trainers over a two yr period. I have to take the CALT exam and am getting no pay raise nor stipend. There is no incentive to improve your education.
83.		I believe we need funding in our public school system for SROs and other safety measures. I believe that education funding needs to increase for public schools and that no other private or charter schools should receive state assistance without the same requirements of public schools.
84.	Cindy Wann	I've been teaching for 30 years. I went in to education because I felt like I was called by God. I love teaching, but spending time with my family and enjoying life in general isn't the case for me the last 10 years. Teachers are ask to work miracles and to create their own curriculum. I teach math and science and spend hours every weekend trying to find curriculum that meets the needs of my students and the state. There's not a lot of curriculum out there that is research based for math and science with new standards that you have required from me. If we find something great it cost money. The school can't buy it because they can't afford it. I have no textbook that go along with the standards, especially science. I'm required that students apply what they know in both subjects on state testing. Science is tested, but are lacking examples to help teachers in the classroom. With all this being said, I don't recommend anyone to go into education, because you don't have a life and if you paid me for the hours I spent after school and all the weekends working on school stuff, then you would go bankrupt. It's not possible to get all you need done within the school hours. Also we're expected to be on committees, after school faculty meetings, meetings with parents, and one on one tutoring within the classroom, while 25 other kids are suppose to be taught too. This is just a few items that I have on my plate during the day. I'm expected to be a SUPER TEACHER! The class size needs to be lowered too. Twenty-eight children in a 5th grade classroom is too many, especially when half have ADHD, ADD, anxiety, dyslexia, or some other mental issues. Then at the same time we mainstream special ed. children in our classroom. Would you do it for such low pay??? If you want quality teachers, then we need more pay, lower class size, add para to help with the teacher's paperwork along with helping students. It's sad, when a married couple with 2 kids, who are teachers, qualify for reduce lunches for their child. Somethings wrong with that picture. They both have a degrees and don't make enough money! We need lower cost on insurance too. I think the government thinks we should work extra hours for free. Please help teachers feel proud, respected, and feel successful at their job. Teaching child isn't an easy job and we need your help. I feel tired, overworked, and under paid it's just September.
85.	Christopher Brown	Good day, I am a school board member for the Dover school district and I would like to voice my concerns with funding adequacy as it is grossly sqewed. The case of Arkansas vs. Lakeview needs

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		to revisited and the formula for funding districts needs to be adapted to spread funding evenly. My school is 15 miles from Russellville and they have so much money they are building new building every year will my district is not even on a 1:1 computer ratio with window product computers. I know I an NOT the only district to feel this way as we all talk at out school board training classes. Please revisit this issue because soon you'll be old and retired and want people well educated taking care of you! It all starts with you the house and senate....
86.	Cody Beene	1. I believe that teacher salaries must be addressed, if not we are going to continue see mass shortage areas across the state. 2. Mental health issues are making their way to the forefront and I believe schools need more guidance to insure we are able to make better decisions on the front end on how to structure services. 3. Teacher retirement is a big concern for many educators today, this is an area that has long made it possible to attract and retain teachers. I fear with the changes being tossed around like defined contributions instead of defined benefits it will hurt our strong retirement system. 4. I feel all schools should have the ability to develop their own discipline policies, one size does not fit all. 5. Library media admin time needs to be revisited, this is a problem for all schools, especially smaller districts. 6. K-2 testing needs to be universal, it sets your growth for the 3rd grade test without knowing where you are in comparison with other districts. 7. AP and Pre AP needs to go away, in todays time with all the concurrent options and scholarship opportunities I do not feel we get our monies worth. It is nothing more than a label.
87.	Coleen Burrell	I believe students achieve goals set for them when there are smaller class sizes. I have taught kindergarten classes that range from 10-19 and I can tell you the larger they get the harder it is to work in small groups with the struggling students.
88.	Amanda Simpson	I would like to see teacher pay across the state to be higher. I am a teacher, with a masters degree, who also coaches and I have to work a part time job (most teachers I know do) and work three jobs in the summer; I still barely make a living wage. Also, the pay scales across the state need to be evened out.
89.	Erica Thomas	Lower the amount of screen time or limit it, we be need more special ed teachers, make a free path to become one for certified teachers or paraprofessionals with at least an associate degree. Limit the case load to 15 per teacher. Pay teachers accordingly or start paying their student loan payments and give them affordable health insurance that has a realistic deductible. Such as a 30\$ copay per office visit when the deductible isnt met. Rather than expecting them to front 3000 - 12000 before they are covered. Require ten years of teaching experience for an administrator. Give priority to public schools. The state cut their own throats when they let charters open every where. In my experience charter schools produce a lower result. Or place the samw requirements on charters as with public schools.
90.	Elaine H. Walizer	I am a special education teacher with a graduate degree from Univ. of Cincinnati. I am not a native Arkansan, but a transplant of 16+ years' residence. I substituted in Conway Schools and worked at Easter Seals' Children's Rehab Hospital as a teacher. The IEP at the time I retired was 29 pages. For every student I taught, hours and hours of paperwork were required (not to mention the 'alternative evaluation') plus there was long-term care paperwork required of every teacher. As I observed to my supervisor: if I wrote a goal/objective for everything I did in the classroom, I would do nothing but paperwork! And if I focused solely on the goals/data recording/assessments, the classroom program would be severely impoverished. The state 'plans' have reached the point of the ridiculous. (I will mention that I had difficulty finding a job because my education and years of experience made me more 'expensive' than, say, a new graduate.) When I was in UNDERgraduate school (Georgia State, BSEd '69) I read research by Uwe Reinhardt (Yale University) in which the findings revealed that the single most important factor in student improvement was *that the families had the economic means of survival!* You cannot focus merely on the educational programming, the funding, the facilities. Students have achieved educationally with nothing but slates and slate pencils. Adequate food, clothing, shelter, and parents who have the time and energy to foster their children's progress--those are the necessities. The recent Gates studies (millions spent on 'training teachers to be more effective') did nothing to improve student outcomes; inescapably, one must conclude that the problem isn't/wasn't/won't be the teachers and their methods. (Only the charter schools showed increased achievement--because those 'teachers' were not actually trained in pedagogy.) Arkansas is not being helped by the false claims of governors and legislators regarding improved income, tax breaks, and so on. Inflation has already negated any such benefits. There are enough projects in need of attention in this state to recruit, train, and employ every citizen who is able to work. If the Federal government cannot demonstrate leadership in addressing the actual problems--all of which are inter-related--then you will have to

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		step up and do it yourselves. Enough with the reports! Teachers quit every year not because of the pay, but because of the futility.
91.	Dennis Farmer	We are grandparents of three children in the Heber Springs School District, we are very concerned about several issues that concern not only our school but those public schools through out our county. Some of the issues we are concerned most about are: 1. The calculation of 1% funding increases when the cost of living increases have been 2-3%. 2. Public funds going to private schools. 3. Lack of accountability for those who homeschool. 4. Unfounded mandates like minimum salary increases without a funding stream. 5. Catastrophic special education funding that only covers 29% of the schools cost. We feel these concerns should be addressed before we cut taxes. Our schools are the lifeline of our community, please help us save them and make education a priority. Thank you, Dennis & Gail Farmer
92.	bruce shearer	Issues that are specific to Heber Springs include: The calculation of 1% funding increases when cost of living increases have been 2-3%, public funds going to private schools, lack accountability for those who home school, unfunded mandates like minimum salary increases without a funding stream, and catastrophic special education funding that only covers 29% of our costs.
93.	Shawnda Majors	We must go back to teaching children how to learn to read using the science of reading instead of whole language. We need to reform the way reading is taught from Kindergarten. In an effort to attempt to make children read earlier simple things were taken out of instruction and those things were crucial to teaching children how to read. We now we have 68% of children reading below grade level. Also, we must identify children that are not reading on level earlier. Reading is a skill that you need to be successful in life in general. Reading recovery must cease to exist and be replaced by scientific methods to teach reading. If you want to see change in our state we must educate all children with proven methods.
94.	Dana Carlton	I feel it is very important Arkansas schools teach kids to read. I've seen so many kids passed without the education the school is supposed to provide. I would really like to see schools held accountable for meeting standards. I feel it is a disgrace to place 49th out of 50 states in reading. I strongly disagree with the way the ADE handles issues. When will our state start holding education as an important issue? When will we produce and grow intelligent children in the public education system? Let's provide incentives for schools meeting grade level accuracy.
95.	Juanita McCracken	Real science must be taught. Critical thinking is a must. Recess for 1-6. School starts at 9 for teens Free breakfast & lunches for the needy Music or art
96.	Dallas Green	https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/06/180628120039.htm
97.	Stepheni Appleby	I feel very under-represented by the Senator of my district. He is unavailable, argumentative, and just a divisive person. Stanley rapert has not and never will adequately represent the values of Conway which include unconditional love of others, acceptance of others, and closeness of community. He does not listen to any opposing view he simply hunts for an insult. So many of his constituents feel he is inaccessible and unapproachable. Stop putting Arkansas at the top of every negative list and the bottom of every positive list. You all are responsible for these shortcomings. Your legislative support of your constituents is directly reflected in the adequacy of education, housing availability, and socioeconomic standing of Arkansans (all of which are far below national average). 1 out of five children in this state go to bed hungry and you are busy coordinating high-dollar campaign dinners. Instead of restricting opportunity you should pour every ounce of power you have into uplifting, feeding, educating, and medically caring for every single Arkansan. Especially the most vulnerable. Your outdated views and policies will continue to hurt generations of Arkansans. Your jobs and your checks depend upon Arkansans. You should take care of them. Once you start including instead of excluding, your political influence would make the most valuable and long-lasting impact.
98.	Amy Scales	Since our son was diagnosed with double deficit dyslexia in early 2018, our family has seen inadequacies in education many times over. It was a struggle to get the school district to take his challenges seriously. We have paid thousands of dollars out of pocket for testing, private tutoring and healthcare due to anxiety stemming from intense struggles with school work. The law requires a FREE and appropriate education for all, but that simply has not been the case for us. Thankfully, we are able to support our son's disabilities both financially and as advocates. Studies show that 1 in 5 students have some form of dyslexia. With that in mind, imagine how many students don't have someone to speak up for them. Where is their guarantee for a free and appropriate education. School districts must be held accountable for exactly what they are in business to do. They MUST educate ALL students.
99.		Repeal Act 60

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100	David Woolly	For the past six years, the increases in state funding for public schools has been less than the increase in the Consumer Price Index, as well as less than what was recommended. Arkansas is at risk of falling far behind neighboring states in teacher salaries and support for education. Our economic well being as a state is directly tied to the quality of our education system. It is important to remember that the Funding Matrix was not designed and never intended to be a template for expenditures. It is simply a mechanism for determining on a statewide basis what it costs to provide an adequate education.
101	Jean Rose	A couple issues that should be addressed are the salaries for educators, as well as the retirement plans.
102	Holly Davenport	School employees work extremely hard everyday and deserve to keep our retirement. Stop spending our money on nonsense items and keep it in our retirement.
103	Mike Mertens	Arkansas teacher salaries need to be increased to attract the best and brightest students to the teaching field. AR average teacher salaries have dropped to 12th of the 16 SREB states as reported at the June 2018 Adequacy meeting. The School Facilities Partnership Program needs a dedicated funding stream in the amount of \$90,000,000 per year to provide adequate facilities for ALL children in AR. School construction not only enhances student learning but supports AR construction trades and the State's economy. Statewide, actual school district expenses for Maintenance & Operation exceeds foundation funding for M & O by almost \$200 per student. Additional funding in this area would free up district money for other needs, such as raising teacher salaries.
104	Bob Chism	September 14, 2018 Below are my comments for the Education Committee. I am a teacher in West Fork, Arkansas. I have been teaching since 1982. Teacher salaries are too low in this state, but what is more difficult to understand is how there is such a disparity in teachers salaries from district to district. Greenland School District teachers who top out the pay scale at thirty years make less money than Springdale teachers who have zero experience. Change this. Just change it. Please don't rely upon the excuse that this is just the way things are; change it. Another thing is the disparity of salaries of teachers who are actually having one-on-one time with students and administrative staff. My gosh, it makes me ill to look at those figures. Get a rule in place that guarantees that schools follow the teacher/student ratios. Schools overload classes and then ignore the consequences. Make education a priority in this state. The current level of funding makes us look like we are merely playing at education. Interview teachers. Send for them, and speak directly to them. Allow them to sit across the table from you and tell you what is happening across the state. You'd find out that things are not as peachy as we'd like to think. Having public hearings will not give you the critical data you need to make informed decisions. Put some teeth in the textbook statute so that schools have an incentive for purchasing texts. Our school quit buying instructional materials for our students, and the test results speak for themselves. I am willing to speak. Draw teachers to the profession in Arkansas so that students have fully certified teachers and not just someone with a college degree. We do our children a disservice when they are taught by teachers who do not have the credentials. Low pay and lack of real discipline account for people avoiding teaching as career. Fund reading. Pour lots of money into reading. It is the most critical skill a child will acquire in school. Bob Chism
105	Suzanne Moheng	Schools need more money. To help with whatever needs for all schools (mainly small) to have the same opportunities as the larger schools. Smaller schools receive less money, because of less students. The Government makes small school students, teachers, Aides, Bus Drivers, & Costodians feel like they aren't worth much. Which in turns can cause low esteem for everyone in that school. It schools be that smaller schools get more money so they can offer the same as the bigger schools. In every way, acedimics, activities, sports,and especially the Arts (Band, Choir, Drama, and Art). Thank you for your time
106		It would be helpful to be able to offer school bus drivers health insurance as a benefit and recruitment incentive - many districts in the state are hurting for bus drivers.
107	Lois Evans	Education is the very thing to bring the state up to better standards and ratings. This has to start with colleges educating future teachers about science of reading not whole language .Every child has the right to be able read and hopefully will decrease crime and bring the Delta out of the 1900's in education. The classroom should never have more than 15 to students per teacher. Every school should have tutoring for students if they are below average in a subject . I know first hand hard it is to find a tutor for any subject . Most schools do not even try to help students that are struggling! I had to go to a different school district to get a math tutor for my daughter .Some teachers will not help a student that is struggling I know because my daughter was one and many

	Name	Public Comment
		<p>other parents in the district has had the same problems I had through out the years ! This needs to stop if teacher will not help with struggling students they change to another career. To many schools hire family that is related such principle , cousins, wife and in laws . School board boards need to focus on the education and not trying to hire friends and family members . If a parent has a problem with a teacher than everyone in the school gets upset with the parent because everyone is related. Parents that are concerned will speak up however some will not because so scared the school will take it out of the child. The Schools in the Delta that run along the river has a lot of dyslexic children that does not get tested until 3rd grade that is to late for a school to test anyone that has read information on this subject is aware . Schools in the state needs to be required to be educated every year on dyslexic . Parents should not feel like they are asking for special treatment for the student because they want a 504 or IEP, this is a law and so many parents and students are looked down on when they have to provide accomations ! Kids are bullied to the point that they do not want help for fear of being made fun of or still failing because a teacher just plain out will not take the time to help some students ! The teachers that do get this are wonderful . Yes I am bitter but we have just been through hell in school where some many students are being ignored or they have just stopped helping students . I feel like that reading ,math and language is the most important thing for grade 1-4. If a child does not have the basics then they will struggle forever in their life . Arkansas needs to shine and the only way to start is with education that the children needs and are in title to .</p>
108	Amy Fisher	<p>ATRS is not one that the Arkansas State Legislators need to be "tinkering" with. IF they want to "tinker" with any retirement system, they should try playing with their own money not others!</p>
109	PATRECA HUTSON	<p>Please leave ATRS alone.</p>