

EXHIBIT C.1

Approved: 06-09-2020

MEETING SUMMARY HOUSE AND SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEES ON EDUCATION

Monday, May 18, 2020

1:30 P.M.

Room A, MAC

Little Rock, Arkansas

ADEQUACY

Committee members present: Senators Jane English, Chair; Joyce Elliott, Vice Chair; Eddie Cheatham, Linda Chesterfield, Lance Eads, Jim Hendren, Mark Johnson, and James Sturch; Representatives Bruce Cozart, Chair; Reginald Murdock, Vice Chair; Rick Beck, LeAnne Burch, Gary Deffenbaugh, Jana Della Rosa, Jim Dotson, John Eubanks, Brian Evans, Denise Garner, Grant Hodges, Mark Lowery, Richard McGrew, Stephen Meeks, Joy Springer, Dan Sullivan, and DeAnn Vaught,

Other members present: Senators Trent Garner and Kim Hammer; Representatives Harlan Breaux, Denise Jones Ennett, Kenneth Ferguson, Jack Ladyman, Fredrick Love, Tippi McCullough, Aaron Pilkington, Marcus Richmond, Jamie Scott, and Stu Smith.

Representative Cozart called the meeting to order.

Review of Nurses, Administrators and Educators, Mental Health Services, and Selection of Case Study Schools Presentations by Mr. Justin Silverstein, Co-CEO; Ms. Jennifer Piscatelli, Associate, APA Consulting (Handout C.1)

Study Update

APA, WestEd, and contractors have finalized the databases. The study team has begun to reach out to schools to set up case study visits (webinars) in late May and early June and will present on several areas at the next meeting. The update will include the impacts on equity, enrollment changes, vouchers, and waivers; and examination of the Uniform Tax Rate.

Nurses

Nurses are often the only healthcare professional that some students see regularly. A full-time nurse can reduce the time that school staff spends providing health services. Incentives for attracting and retaining school nurses include showcasing the school schedule, offering increased support and resources such as sufficiently equipping the health room and supplies; increasing salaries -- in Arkansas, an RN is paid \$11,000 less per year than the national average; an LPN is paid \$7,500 less. The National Association of School Nurses recommends one nurse per school and a ratio of 750:1 for healthy students; 225:1 for students requiring daily service; 125:1 for complex health needs; 1:1 when needed for individual care. Arkansas's funding includes one counselor/nurse per 200 pupils.

Educators

The Economic Policy Institute estimated that at the beginning of the 2019-20 school year, public schools will face a 307,000 teacher shortfall. The reasons for the shortage include student growth -- enrollment grew by almost 1.6 million in 2008-20 and the number of school teachers shrank by just under 8,000. The most common reason cited for leaving was dissatisfaction with the job and financial reasons. Arkansas has a 13.7% turnover rate (2013) and a 4.6% leaving rate. Incentives for teachers include loan and scholarship programs, differentiated pay programs, mentoring programs, and a reduced workload for new teachers. The most recent survey of teachers in SREB states show that 58 percent of Arkansas teachers were far more likely to say they feel supported by their administrators. This number is higher than the national average and the highest ranking among the SREB states and Massachusetts.

Administrators

Approximately one in five principals leave their school each year. In 2016-17, the national average tenure of principals was four years with 35 percent of principals having been at their school for less than two years. Principal turnover is associated with significant decreases in student achievement and increases in teacher turnover.

Many states have policies in place using data to identify priorities for leadership development, set goals to improve school administrators, and support underperforming principals. *Upon questioning by Senator Chesterfield regarding what programs are in place to determine the performance of school principals in Arkansas, Mr. Silverstein said Arkansas does not have a specific program that uses the evaluation system, but he will research the issue and report back to the committees.*

Mental Health

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, one in five youth have a mental health condition, with half developing by age 14. Less than half received treatment in the past year -- schools can identify warning signs and connect students with services/support. Arkansas has 67 students per support professional (lowest ratio of comparison states). The national average is 142 students for every student support member. State approaches include targeted funding, staffing requirement or targets, specific framework/model or curriculum, professional development, programming and resource banks in areas such as bullying, suicide prevention, substance abuse, and partnerships with other agencies and community organizations.

Case Study Schools

Statistical methodology using 2018 data and predicted growth based on 2019 data ranked schools based on performance; filtered list by selection criteria; and grouped schools by region

Analyses of Alternatives to Using Free and Reduced Price Meal Counts as a Proxy for Economic Disadvantage, and of the Impact of the Community Eligibility Provision on State Aid Formulas. Presentations by Dr. Mark Fermanich, Senior Associate; Mr. Michael Griffith, Consultant; Ms. Michaela Tonking, Associate; Mr. Raifu Durodoye, Research Associate, WestEd, APA Consulting (Handout E.1)

Review of the Literature on Counts of Economically Disadvantaged Students

The count approach of using Free Reduced Price Meal (FRPM) data to identify economically disadvantaged students has been in use for decades and is generally accepted. Prior to the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), FRPM counts were collected annually across all school districts. The most common count alternatives in use are direct certification of family eligibility (TANF, SNAP, Medicaid, housing assistance), census counts, and other student risk factors such as homelessness, being a migrant, foster care, and/or neglected, or some combination of each. There are other alternatives for counts listed in the report, however, the key issue for many of these factors is the ability to economically collect accurate data on a regular basis while protecting privacy rights.

Impact of Alternative Counts on the Distribution of Economically Disadvantaged Students in Arkansas

The study team analyzed the impact of 5 alternative counts for Arkansas:

- direct certification/direct certification x the federal multiplier of 1.6; direct certification x a 2.1 multiplier (results in statewide total count similar to current FRPM count)
- U.S. Census count of children ages 5-17 living in poverty; Title I count (census poverty count plus count of students who are neglected, delinquent, in foster homes, or eligible for TANF)

The Effect of CEP on FRPM Counts in Arkansas and Across Other States

Under CEP, schools may qualify all students for free meals if 40% or more students are directly certified as FRPM eligible in the prior year. CEP eligibility is for four years, during which time all students receive free meals. Arkansas funds free and reduced-price lunch in three tiers: school districts with 90% or more FRL students; school districts between 70% and 89%; and school districts with less than 70%. If a district grows by 1% in enrollment for the three previous years they receive growth funding. In Arkansas, 19% of schools use CEP and 60.15% use FRL.

The study team analyzed the difference in FRPM trends in CEP vs. non-CEP districts and the effect of increased CEP participation by schools and districts:

- for all districts the FRPM percentage decreased by 0.87 percentage points; on average, the FRPM percentage for CEP districts increased by 1.58 percentage points; non-CEP districts, the FRPM percentage decreased by 1.64 percentage points; non-CEP districts with higher FRPM concentrations such as those designated as eligible but not participating or near eligible by the state experienced an increase of 0.79 percentage points.

Impact of Waivers: Background and Analysis Plan (Ms. Amanda Brown, Senior Associate) (Handout D.1)

APA proposes to focus on the impact of waivers on Act 1240 schools (94% participation) excluding conversion charters and open-enrollment charters; examining the areas in which schools receive waivers; examining waiver areas individually, as well as aggregated into instructional and resource use categories; excluding waivers for schedule changes, and analyzing impact of waivers over time. To determine the impact of waivers APA will analyze available waivers, demographic performance, and expenditure data; compare the changes in performance outcomes and expenditure levels before and after the implementation of the waiver between schools that have a waiver and those that do not; and control for available school characteristics (student need, school size, grade level, and performance level prior to receiving the waiver).

Requests by members:

- **Senator Elliott** asked for information regarding other parts of the world with real mentoring programs for teachers to assist with retention in teaching positions; she also wanted to make sure that non-SREB states that were originally requested by committee are included in APA's reports (the final instruction to APA was for them to use the comparison group of SREB states and Massachusetts). Although other states were suggested by various committee members, the Chair decided that this list was the consensus and with no other input forthcoming from the committee members, this was the Chair's instruction.
- **Representative Garner** would like more information regarding alternative learning environments in schools as a mental health issue
- **Senator Mark Johnson** requested the April presentation be revamped to show COVID-19 implications on the provided information and for COVID-19 implications to be considered as part of APA's study going forward. (Chair advised this was not part of the scope of work under the contract)
- **Senator Chesterfield** requested APA or the Department of Education provide what type of programs are in place to determine the performance of school principals in Arkansas
- **Representative Eubanks** – p. 25, wants list of districts and schools included in the numbers on the chart; also wants CEP participation by region for 2018-2019)

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:45 pm.