

MEETING SUMMARY

LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON  
WORKFORCE EDUCATION EXCELLENCE

Tuesday, August 22, 2017  
1:30 P.M.  
Room 171, State Capitol  
Little Rock, Arkansas

Senator Jane English, the Senate Co-Chair of the Legislative Task Force on Workforce Education Excellence, called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

**LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON WORKFORCE EDUCATION EXCELLENCE IN ATTENDANCE:** Senator Jane English, Senate Co-Chair; Representative Bruce Cozart, House Co-Chair; Senator Eddie Cheatham; Senator Lance Eads; Senator Blake Johnson; Representative Sonia Eubanks Barker; Representative Rick Beck; Representative Dan M. Douglas; and Representative Dan Sullivan.

**NON-LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON WORKFORCE EDUCATION EXCELLENCE IN ATTENDANCE:** Mr. Kenneth Calhoun; Mr. Randy Henderson; Mr. Stephen Horton; Ms. Sarah Zigler for Mr. Paul Rivera; Mr. Mike Rogers; and Mr. Greg Taylor.

**OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE:** Senator Joyce Elliott; Representative Ken Bragg; Representative Frances Cavanaugh; Representative Charlene Fite; and Representative Danny Watson.

Senator English recognized **Mr. Nate Klinck**, Vice President, Thomas P. Miller & Associates, who attended the meeting via conference call. Senator English stated that Mr. Klinck would attend the next meeting and act as facilitator at that meeting.

Remarks by the Chairs

Senator English and the **Honorable Bruce Cozart**, State Representative, District 24, and House Co-Chair of the Legislative Task Force on Workforce Education Excellence, welcomed members to the organizational meeting of the Task Force.

Introduction of Members of the Task Force

Senator English requested that Task Force members introduce themselves. Legislative members introduced themselves and described the industry most prevalent in their respective districts; and non-legislative members introduced themselves and the industries they represent. Members also discussed the need for technical education and the availability of workforce development programs in each area.

Adoption of Task Force Rules

*Relevant Action:*

**The Honorable Dan Douglas**, State Representative, District 91, was recognized, and made a motion to adopt the Task Force Rules of Procedure. The motion was seconded by Representative Rick Beck.

*Pursuant to the motion by Representative Douglas, the motion was carried on a voice vote.*

Exhibit:

Exhibit E – Task Force Rules of Procedure

Review of the Provisions of Act 951 of 2017

Presenter:

**Mr. Isaac Linam**, Staff Attorney, Bureau of Legislative Research, was recognized. Mr. Linam reviewed Act 951 of 2017, sponsored by Senator J. English, which created the Task Force. He explained what is set out in the Act as duties of the Task Force and what Senator English envisioned as its purpose. His discussion included its organization, conduct of its meetings, and definition of its quorum. He stated the overarching duty is to review and research ways to improve career and technical education programs and workforce development programs to achieve a positive economic impact on the State of Arkansas. Mr. Linam stated that a written preliminary report of the activities, findings, and recommendations of the Task Force is due on or before February 1, 2018; and a written final report of the activities, findings, and recommendations of the Task Force is due on or before September 1, 2018. He noted the written reports shall be filed with the Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, and the Chairs of the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education. He said the Task Force expires on July 1, 2019.

Senator English commented on the increased interest of business and industry in making a workforce development system happen across the United States. She said industry has to be the driver in determining the skills and the systemic structure needed. She briefly discussed a business profile of companies across the nation, put together by the national Business Roundtable, and things those companies are doing in cooperation with the education system to push middle skills forward. She stated there are many examples of industry in Arkansas working with the K-12 system, two-year colleges, and 4-year colleges; but, it is necessary to ascertain the effectiveness of these programs. Senator English noted that Arkansas spends about \$5 billion on K-12, and another \$245 million on workforce training. She said new data is available to help determine the success of current workforce training. Senator English said Arkansas is 49<sup>th</sup> in the nation in income and that number needs to be improved. She said approximately 60% of Arkansans participate in the workforce. She stated the underemployed, those who have never worked before, those without a high school diploma, veterans, and others have to be incorporated into the workforce development system. Senator English stated the Task Force would be engaging in more conversations and meetings in different parts of the state; and will provide an opportunity for industry to come to the table.

Contributor to the Discussion:

**Ms. Nell Smith**, Administrator, Policy Analysis and Research Section, Bureau of Legislative Research

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- clarifying Arkansas's cost-of-living rank in the nation,
- clarifying the workforce participation, underemployment, and unemployment rates,
- achieving success by focusing on a solution and not the problem,
- breakdown between public education and the workforce,
- enticing students to participate in workforce development programs to fill supply chain needs,
- appropriate grade level to begin discussing different career paths with young people,
- enabling a student to experience the culture of a company,
- making a vocational career "cool" again,
- providing students with more "success stories" about vocational careers,
- having a better broadcast network to deliver industry's message,
- inviting representatives of industry to visit classrooms,
- encouraging students to think about a "future story,"
- transforming students' perception of industry,
- helping students understand the cost of living,
- changing economic incentives that keep people out of the workforce,

- taking another look at simple solutions that are “inside the box,”
- training to provide support for technology-enabled autonomous vehicles and other heavy equipment,
- redefining job expectations,
- expanding involvement of industry in finding a solution to workforce development systems, and
- coordinating state activities to create workforce development programs.

Exhibit:

Exhibit F – Act 951

Handouts:

Packets of information, each containing 22 documents relevant to workforce education

Representative Cozart recognized the **Honorable Ken Bragg**, State Representative, District 15, and thanked him for his interest and involvement with the Task Force.

Next Scheduled Meetings:

Wednesday, September 20, 2017, at 10:00 a.m. in Room 207 of the State Capitol, Little Rock

Wednesday, November 1, 2017, in Bentonville

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 3:22 p.m.

*Approved: 09/20/17*