

MEETING SUMMARY

JOINT MEETING
OF THE
HOUSE AND SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEES ON EDUCATION

Monday, August 19, 2019
1:30 P.M.

Arkansas Educational Television Network (AETN), 350 S. Donaghey
Conway, Arkansas

Senator Jane English, the Chair of the Senate Interim Committee on Education, called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

MEMBERS OF THE SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE: *Senators:* Jane English, Chair; Joyce Elliott, Vice Chair; Linda Chesterfield; Lance Eads; Mark Johnson; and James Sturch.

MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE: *Representatives:* Bruce Cozart, Chair; Rick Beck; LeAnne Burch; Jana Della Rosa; Jim Dotson; Jon S. Eubanks; Brian Evans; Denise Garner; Grant Hodges; Mark Lowery; Stephen Meeks; Nelda Speaks; Dan Sullivan; and DeAnn Vaught.

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE: *Representatives:* Cameron Cooper; Spencer Hawks; and Tippi McCullough.

Senator English and Representative Bruce Cozart, the Chair of the House Interim Committee on Education, thanked legislators for their concern about education as demonstrated by their attendance at the meeting.

Welcome, Introduction of Guests, and Comments

Presenter: **Ms. Courtney Pledger**, Executive Director, AETN, was recognized. Ms. Pledger expressed enthusiasm for the opportunity to host committee members and other legislators at AETN. She recognized **Ms. Stacy Smith**, Assistant Commissioner, Learning Services, Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) in attendance. She explained AETN is governed by a board of eight commissioners appointed by the governor, and recognized **Commissioner Skip Holland**, Chair; **Commissioner John Brown**, Vice-Chair; and **Commissioner Woody Freeman**. Ms. Pledger described AETN as more than a broadcast network, and commented on other enriching services it offers.

Overview of AETN and Its Operations

Presenter: **Mr. Marty Ryall**, Director of Professional Relations, AETN, was recognized. Mr. Ryall delivered a brief history of AETN. He said it is the only statewide broadcast system and currently covers about 95% of the state. Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, he presented an overview of AETN, and discussed Budget; 2019 Government Transformation; Four Networks; and More Than a TV Station, about how AETN serves public safety, partners with communities, promotes open government through ARCAN (Arkansas Citizens Access Network), and provides educational programming.

Presentation on ArkansasIDEAS, AETN's Professional Development Program, and Other Educational Initiatives

Presenter: **Mr. Bryan Fields**, Director of Education, AETN, was recognized. Mr. Fields continued the PowerPoint presentation with a discussion of ArkansasIDEAS. He explained IDEAS stands for Internet

Delivered Education for Arkansas Schools. He said IDEAS serves public K-12 schools, charter schools, and parents who homeschool. He discussed IDEAS Users, 635 Courses, and the availability of extensive subject matter. He said course content is aligned to the Arkansas Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS), and leadership courses are aligned with the Leader Excellence and Development System (LEADS). He discussed various courses pertinent to Literacy, Student Safety, Coaches' Training, Safe Schools, and Cyber Security. Mr. Fields concluded with a video on the impact of courses created by AETN. He noted the packet for legislators contains ArkansasIDEAS Year-End Report FY 2018-2019 (*Handout 1*).

Presenter: **Ms. Karen Walker**, Community Education Coordinator, AETN Foundation, was recognized. Ms. Walker reviewed other tools and resources offered at AETN including PBS Learning Media; Community and Adult Education; and Early Childhood Education. Ms. Walker noted that each year in April, AETN is home to the finals of the Governor's Quiz Bowl.

Presenter: **Ms. Julie Thomas**, Director of Marketing & Engagement, AETN, was recognized. Ms. Thomas explained the Writers Contest; Grade Level Reading; Gobbledy Book; and the Educational Digital Series. She concluded with a video on reading.

Presentation on AETN Content, Arkansas Programming, and Upcoming Features

Presenter: **Mr. Ed Leon**, Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer, AETN, was recognized. Mr. Leon focused his presentation on how AETN fulfills its mission to tell Arkansas stories. He discussed *Exploring Arkansas*; *Arkansas Week* and *Arkansans Ask*; Long-form Documentaries, including *State of the Art*; *Dream Land: Little Rock's West 9th Street*; *Make Room for Pie*; *History on the Line: Preserving County Courthouses*; and *Back Road Barns of Arkansas*. Mr. Leon stated that AETN Sports is the home of Arkansas's high school state championship finals. He said, in partnership with the Arkansas Activities Association, it broadcasts championship games in all divisions in football, basketball, softball, and baseball. He said AETN produces the Arkansas Original Digital Series; it also produces the local Arkansas story when the PBS network mounts national programming initiatives. Mr. Leon next played a video on programming.

Issues Included in the Team Discussion:

- scope of AETN's broadcast coverage in the state,
- users of AETN's professional development,
- improvements to professional development courses,
- using technology to teach the science of reading,
- providing teachers the opportunity for college credit through AETN,
- improvements in delivery capabilities for professional development, and
- ArkansasIDEAS and compliance with Professional Learning Communities (PLC).

PowerPoint Presentation: AETN, More Than 50 Years in Arkansas

Handout: Handout 1 - ArkansasIDEAS, Year-End Report FY2018-2019

Next Scheduled Meeting:

Tuesday, August 20, 2019, at 9:00 a.m. in MAC, Room A, Little Rock (*Joint Education/Adequacy*)

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.