

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

ADEQUACY

Tuesday, October 8, 2019
9:00 A.M.
Room A, MAC
Little Rock, Arkansas

Representative Bruce Cozart, the Chair of the House Committee on Education, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.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; Reginald Murdock, Vice Chair; Fred Allen; Rick Beck; LeAnne Burch; Gary Deffenbaugh; Jana Della Rosa; Jim Dotson; Brian Evans; Denise Garner; Grant Hodges; Mark Lowery; Stephen Meeks; Nelda Speaks; DeAnn Vaught; and John W. Walker.

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE: *Senators:* Jonathan Dismang; Trent Garner; and David Wallace. *Representatives:* Stan Berry; Carol Dalby; Kenneth B. Ferguson; Lanny Fite; Jasen Kelly; Fredrick J. Love; Roger D. Lynch; Julie Mayberry; Tippi McCullough; Aaron Pilkington; Johnny Rye; and Stu Smith.

Opening Remarks

Representative Cozart announced each vendor would be allowed one hour for a presentation and to answer questions.

Contributor to Today's Discussion:

Ms. Jillian Thayer, Counsel to the Director, Bureau of Legislative Research

Oral Presentation by Shuls and Associates Regarding RFP for Education Adequacy Consulting Services

Presenters:

Dr. James Shuls, Ph.D., Managing Member, Shuls and Associates, and **Dr. Joshua B. McGee, Ph.D.**, Associate Director and Research Assistant Professor, Department of Education Reform, University of Arkansas, were recognized. Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, Dr. Shuls discussed the team assembled for this project and their experience pertinent to the proposal. He provided an overview of an analysis plan, detailed research strategies, and answered questions.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- rationale for forming a team to bid on the proposal,
- previous relationships with the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE),
- clarification of conclusion made about diversity/quality of teachers in current Maryland study,
- point from which to start working towards improving Arkansas's schools,
- gleaning information about school finance from EdBuild to help Arkansas,
- result of any violation of the RFP rules,

- qualifications for conducting a state Adequacy Study with no experience at the state level,
- use of interviews, focus groups, and surveys to get feedback from schools,
- correlation between experience with pension systems and qualifications to conduct an Adequacy Study,
- performing research in underperforming, high-poverty school districts,
- imminent closing of EdBuild; diversity of funders,
- knowledge and background in educating students with special needs,
- experience with differences in funding schools in southeast Arkansas and other rural communities,
- privatizing public education,
- vendor understanding of what ADE has done through its initiatives, other than to try to hold districts accountable to promote aims and outcomes of *Lake View*,
- views on privatizing public education,
- specific source of funding for Shuls and Associates/OEP, and
- meaning of *bipartisan* team.

PowerPoint Presentation:

Proposal in Regards to RFP BLR - 190003

Handouts:

Proposal in Regards to RFP BLR – 190003
Shuls & Associates/OEP Follow-Up

Oral Presentation by APA Consulting Regarding RFP for Education Adequacy Consulting Services

Presenters:

Ms. Amanda Brown, APA Consulting | Augenblick, Palaich and Associates, and **Mr. Jason Willis**, Director of Strategy & Performance, WestEd, were recognized. Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, Ms. Brown reviewed the study team’s experience and qualifications; provided a study overview, including key changes to approach since the first proposal; discussed research strategies and how they relate to each of the areas of the RFP; and answered questions.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- whether APA Consulting contacted any member of these Committees or the Bureau of Legislative Research (BLR) regarding this RFP, or the vendor selection process, from RFP posting to the intent to award,
- approach to what the *Lake View* case was; and correlating it to what *Lake View* should be now,
- strategy for approaching underperforming districts,
- scope of participant involvement,
- understanding recommendations for best policies, without regard to cost, in research,
- whether educator panels would be open or closed,
- whether the team has Arkansas-based experience; whether an economist is on the team,
- plan for alleviating Arkansas’s struggle with achieving adequate, equitable, and equal schools, and
- addressing “pull-out” programs in Arkansas, and the impact on achievement of adequacy, equity, and equality.

PowerPoint Presentation:

Response to RFP BLR – 190003

Handouts:

APA/WestEd Follow-up Information
Response to RFP BLR – 190003

Discussion by Members of the Senate and House Committees on Education

Relevant Actions:

Senator Jane English was recognized, and made the motion, “I move that any action taken by the House and Senate Education Committees regarding the hiring of a consultant be taken jointly meaning that the committees shall not make separate decisions regarding the hiring of a consultant for education adequacy consulting services, and all actions shall require an affirmative vote of at least a majority of the members of the House committee and a majority of the members of the Senate committee.” The motion was seconded by Senator Lance Eads.

A lengthy discussion ensued about the rules of procedure for voting pertinent to the motion.

Pursuant to the motion by Senator English, the motion was carried on a voice vote.

Additional discussion followed on the pros and cons of each the vendors.

Representative Mark Lowery was recognized, and made a motion to accept the proposal from Shuls and Associates. The motion was seconded by Representative Jim Dotson. There was no discussion on the motion.

Senator Joyce Elliott was recognized, and made a substitute motion to hire APA Consulting. The motion was seconded by Senator Linda Chesterfield.

Representative Grant Hodges was recognized, and made a substitute to the substitute motion to not hire a consultant. The motion was seconded by Senator Mark Johnson.

Additional discussion ensued.

Pursuant to the substitute to the substitute motion by Representative Hodges to not hire a consultant, the motion failed on a voice vote. A roll call was requested by Senator Mark Johnson, and seconded by Representative Rick Beck. The motion failed in the Senate roll call—2 ayes, 4 nays, and 2 not voting.

Pursuant to the substitute motion by Senator Elliott to hire APA Consulting, the motion passed on a voice vote. A roll call was requested, and received 11 ayes on the House side; but, failed on the Senate side—4 ayes, 2 nays, and 2 not voting.

Pursuant to the original motion by Representative Lowery to accept the proposal from Shuls and Associates, the motion failed on a voice vote.

Representative Cozart announced “we do not have a consultant.”

Additional Handout:

Price Comparison Table – Education Adequacy Consulting Services

Next Scheduled Meetings:

Monday, November 4, 2019, at 1:30 p.m. in MAC, Room A, Little Rock (Adequacy)

Tuesday, November 5, 2019, at 9:00 a.m. in MAC, Room A, Little Rock (Adequacy)

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m.