

MEETING SUMMARY

JOINT MEETING
OF THE
HOUSE AND SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEES ON EDUCATION

Monday, January 6, 2020
1:30 P.M.
Room A, MAC
Little Rock, 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; Eddie Cheatham, Linda Chesterfield, Lance Eads, Mark Johnson, and James Sturch

MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE: *Representatives:* Reginald Murdock, Vice Chair; Fred Allen, Rick Beck, LeAnne Burch, Frances Cavanaugh, Gary Deffenbaugh, Jim Dotson, Jon S. Eubanks, Brian Evans, Denise Garner, Grant Hodges, Mark Lowery, Stephen Meeks, Nelda Speaks, and DeAnn Vaught

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE: *Senator:* Trent Garner.
Representatives: Ken Bragg, Harlan Breaux, Vivian Flowers, Lane Jean, Jack Ladyman, Milton Nicks, Jr., Keith Slape, Stu Smith, James Sorvillo, Dwight Tosh, and Carlton Wing

Minutes:

Without objection, the minutes of the November 4, 2019, November 5, 2019, November 21, 2019, and December 16, 2019, meetings were approved.

Exhibits:

Exhibit C1 – 11/04/2019 Minutes
Exhibit C2 - 11/05/2019 Minutes
Exhibit C3 – 11/21/2019 Minutes
Exhibit C4 – 12/16/2019 Minutes

Presentation Concerning the Arkansas Imagination Library

Presenter:

Dr. Charlotte Green, Assistant Professor, College of Education, University of Central Arkansas, and Executive Director, Arkansas Imagination Library, was recognized. Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, Dr. Green discussed the Arkansas Imagination Library (ARIL), which is a state partner to Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (DPIL), the world's preeminent early childhood book-gifting program. She stated ARIL supports Arkansas children and provides resources to ARIL affiliates across Arkansas. She said the program delivers approximately 39,000 books each month to Arkansas children enrolled in the program, at no cost to families. Dr. Green stated the program aims to impact the home in a strategic way and to promote literacy in the state. She discussed beneficial outcomes of having books in the home.

Contributor to the Discussion:

Mr. Jerry Adams, Board Chair, Arkansas Imagination Library

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- teaching the science of reading,
- providing reading materials at an early age; working with screening for dyslexia,
- tracking utilization of books provided in the home,
- initiatives provided for distribution of books,
- enrolling children in the program,
- number of underperforming elementary school districts enrolled in the program,
- auto-enrolling children in the program at birth,
- partnering with pediatricians, clinics, etc., to enroll children, and
- partnership with the Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS).

PowerPoint Presentation:

Update on Arkansas Imagination Library

Handouts:

Handout D1 – Update on Arkansas Imagination Library, PowerPoint

Handout D2 – 2019 Progress Report, Arkansas Imagination Library

Presentation Concerning Teach for America

Presenters:

Mr. Ron Nurnberg, Co-Leader, Teach for America, Greater Delta: Mississippi & Arkansas, was recognized. Mr. Nurnberg referred members to Handout E, and briefly discussed the history of Teach for America (TFA), the impact of the network in Arkansas, and current corps members. He noted a chart on Handout E lists the number of TFA alumni in each Arkansas Legislative District. Mr. Nurnberg discussed the current competitive disadvantage that Arkansas has, when compared to contiguous states, in getting TFA teachers into high needs districts, and ways this disparity might be remedied by the legislature in the upcoming budget session.

Ms. Mia Meadows, Chief Impact Officer, Teach for America, Greater Delta: Mississippi & Arkansas, was recognized, and discussed current corps members and alumni.

Mayor Kevin Smith, Helena-West Helena, and former State Senator, was recognized, and discussed the need for financial support of the TFA program, which has proved transformative for his community.

Dr. Billy Adams, Superintendent, Lakeside School District, was recognized, and appeared on video. Dr. Adams discussed ways TFA has impacted Lakeside School District.

Ms. Joyce L. Vaught, Administrative Assistant, and Former Superintendent, Lakeside School District, was recognized. Ms. Vaught shared stories about measurable results from having TFA teachers in Lakeside School District.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- clarification of the steps in TFA operations,
- clarification of the funding for TFA teachers; outcomes of students in classes; longevity of teachers in the classroom,
- number of TFA teachers from Arkansas,
- TFA teacher retention,
- TFA working in partnership with the Division of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE),
- annual cost to train TFA teachers,
- licensing of TFA teachers,
- demographic data of students primarily served by TFA,
- necessity of fixing the “systems” in Arkansas,
- amount received from fundraising for Arkansas; portion going to administrative and fundraising fees,

- solving funding and stability issues to help TFA do a better job and to grow,
- high-water mark for teachers in Arkansas, and
- strategies employed by the State of Mississippi to enhance teacher retention in TFA.

Handout:

Handout E – Teach for America, Greater Delta: Mississippi & Arkansas

Presentation Concerning Arkansas Leadership Academy

Presenters:

Dr. Clint Jones, Director, Arkansas Leadership Academy, was recognized. Dr. Jones stated the team would update members on the School Support Program which was established by Act 222 in 2009. He said the presentation centers on eight legislatively obligated areas in the Act, and includes general information about the program and about progress monitoring.

Dr. Tom Bennett, Associate Director, Organizational Development & School Support, Arkansas Leadership Academy, was recognized. Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, Dr. Bennett discussed what the Arkansas Leadership Academy is doing to address each of the eight legislative mandates. Additionally, he presented a brief history of the Organizational Development Program which was first implemented during the 2015-16 school year to expand the work of the School Support Program to the district level. His later coverage included Strategic Plan, OD/SSP Contracts in 2019-20, and Testimonials from School Leaders.

Ms. Jennifer Medeiros, Associate Director, Data Analysis & Research, Arkansas Leadership Academy, was recognized, and continued the PowerPoint presentation. She shared a few models used to guide the work of the School Support Program. Ms. Medeiros also covered topics of Progress Monitoring, Participation Rates, Principal Sense of Efficacy, About the Scale, Why do we measure Self-Efficacy?, and Information Dip.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- source of funding for Arkansas Leadership Academy programs,
- methods employed to review and measure effectiveness of the School Support Program,
- process in place for recruiting performance coaches and for determining their level of excellence,
- sites where leadership training sessions are held,
- times when leadership training sessions are scheduled, and
- assessing the efficacy of the performance coach team.

PowerPoint Presentation:

Arkansas Leadership Academy

Exhibit:

Exhibit F – Arkansas Leadership Academy, PowerPoint

Presentation Concerning A+ Schools Organization

Presenters:

Mr. John Brown III, Senior Advisor, Windgate Foundation, and former State Senator, was recognized. Mr. Brown stated the Arkansas A+ Schools program is about K-12 education: students, learning, curriculum, professional development of teachers, leadership, good schools, and good outcomes. He briefly discussed the history of the program. He referenced a connection made with Ms. Marva Collins's Great Expectations School Reform Program in Oklahoma, which focused on K-12 education and on how creativity and the arts can be involved in student learning and enhance the school environment. He said the program was established at the University of Arkansas, College of Education, in 1995. He said around 2004, the college

ran a parallel program incorporating Great Expectations with the A+ Schools program, originally piloted in North Carolina. When the parallel program lost momentum, he said the Thea Foundation picked up the A+ Schools program; then, in January 2018, the principal responsibility for the program moved to the University of Arkansas. He said the program is used as a resource for public schools and plans are for expansion into teacher preparation programs.

Dr. Stephen Dittmore, Assistant Dean, University of Arkansas, was recognized. Dr. Dittmore, who has oversight for the Arkansas A+ Schools program, reiterated the commitment to supporting the Arkansas A+ Schools program within the college. He said the program: 1) reaffirms the college's land grant mission and reaching out to the state; and 2) helps future educators and the State of Arkansas prepare individuals to go into school districts and be innovative with teaching.

Ms. Melanie Landrum, Executive Director, Arkansas A+ Schools, University of Arkansas, was recognized. Ms. Landrum discussed the specifics of the program, referencing documents contained in Handout G. She presented a video.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- disciplinary problems going down and attendance rates going up in Arkansas A+ Schools,
- greater teacher retention in Arkansas A+ Schools,
- helping school districts teach teachers,
- fulfilling the commitment to complete the 3-year program,
- dynamic of working with schools in distressed status, and
- sources of funding for the program.

Video:

Arkansas A+ Schools

Handout:

Handout G – Arkansas A+ Schools Packet

Discussion of Written Testimony Submitted by the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation

Presenter:

Reverend Cory Anderson, Chief Innovation Officer, Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation; Interim Executive Director, ForWARd Arkansas, was recognized. Reverend Anderson submitted written adequacy testimony, and commended the Committees on moving the adequacy conversation forward and committing to a contract. He stated the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation (WRF) changed its mission earlier this year because the old one was not helping us reach our goals fast enough. He said WRF now exists to relentlessly pursue economic, educational, social, ethnic, and racial equity for all Arkansans. He said Governor Rockefeller's vision cannot be reached without an explicit and intentional focus on equity. He discussed the following WRF recommendations regarding the upcoming Adequacy Study: 1) make a commitment to excellence, 2) invest early to ensure all students are prepared for early school success, 3) encourage adopting a formal equity analysis to strengthen policymaking, and 4) invest in a shared vision for public education.

Exhibit:

Exhibit H – WRF Written Adequacy Testimony

Next Scheduled Meeting:

Tuesday, January 7, 2020, at 9:00 a.m. in MAC, Room A, Little Rock (*Joint Education/Adequacy*)

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 5:17 p.m.