

# EXHIBIT C2

**MINUTES**  
**SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND**  
**HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**  
**MEETING JOINTLY**  
**MAC, Room A**  
**Little Rock, Arkansas**

**Tuesday, July 7, 2020**

Senator Jane English, the Chair of the Senate 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; Eddie Cheatham, 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, Jana Della Rosa, Jim Dotson, Jon S. Eubanks, Brian S. Evans, Denise Garner, Grant Hodges, Richard McGrew, Nelda Speaks, Joy Springer, Dan Sullivan, and DeAnn Vaught

**OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE:** *Senator:* Kim Hammer. *Representatives:* Stan Berry, Les Eaves, Megan Godfrey, Lane Jean, Tippi McCullough, Johnny Rye, Brandt Smith, and Stuart A. Smith

## **DISCUSSION OF ARKANSAS READY FOR LEARNING**

**Secretary Johnny Key, Commissioner, Arkansas Department of Education (ADE)**, introduced Dr. Kiffany Pride, the new Assistant Commissioner of Learning Services. He recapped preparations for overcoming issues in 2020 and gave plans for restarting 2021. **[EXHIBITS C1, C2, C3]**

- Series of decision making processes at the beginning of the pandemic emergency condition spring of 2020
- Decision made to end 2020 on-site instruction and continue with digital learning; an extended Alternative Methods of Instruction (AMI) with the assistance of AETN (Arkansas Educational Television Network)
- Meal service programs continued by 90% of Arkansas school districts
- Realigned resources for 2021 for 'Arkansas Ready for Learning'
- Addressed interrupted learning by creating the 'Arkansas Play Book' a resource for teachers
- Addressed starting school safely in 2021 by working with Health Department for on-site instruction
- Allow districts flexibility to respond with policies to health conditions through planning and resource availability so there is no interruption in learning
- Developed appropriate policy for child/adolescent developmental stages when addressing public health risks
- Blended learning developed to include in-class and online instruction, needs assessment, access to devices, and supports for students and teachers
- Requiring districts to have a Ready for Learning Plan for state board waivers, to allow flexibility
- Financial resources being utilized to provide digital options
- Assess the impact of interrupted learning in every district
- Issue additional detailed information as it comes available due to changes caused by the pandemic

Mr. Key noted the guidance for wearing masks in public schools has been age 10 and up; it is recommended to wear masks but it is not mandated. ADE has not issued that mandate. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be made available to all teachers.

He said districts determine in the spring which teachers will return and if a district is affected severely, ADE would help to fill the gaps with qualified people. He is not aware of a rush of teachers filing to retire. He noted there are teams such as Public School Accountability Group and others, which work to support the districts as well as monitor schools at the local level. Funding is not expected to be an issue, but if the districts encounter funding situations they would let ADE know and would be assisted. Arkansas has state funding, carryover federal funding, and ESSER Fund (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund) available to be used for substitute teachers and substitute bus drivers.

ADE has issued guidance on school bus transportation and is not making recommendations. Arkansas considers

CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) and ADH guidelines, and must include practicality, and feasibility. Centralized direction does not recognize the differentiation between the districts and districts have wide latitude of how they implement standards.

**Dr. Ivy Pfeffer, Deputy Commissioner, ADE**, noted the planning process of each district will allow it to make decisions effecting its local community. The most important a standard viable curriculum. Blended learning needs assessment data will determine which districts need extra support. There are new teachers this year and ADE ensures focus and support for them through mentoring supports which is in place for all teachers throughout the year. The Play Book takes into account a number of concerns including academics, special needs, social, emotional, and mental health issues through telehealth or allows mental health providers to work on-site. Guidelines for mental health services are provided.

ADE has given guidance and encourages local areas within a region to work together. Agreement within a region to implement certain procedures would be powerful if done at the local level and in multiple communities. A school district's policies are enforced at the local level, it is not practical to enforce those policies from the state level.

**Mr. Don Adams, Director, Center for Local Public Health, Arkansas Department of Health (ADH)**, noted the ADH team worked closely with the ADE team to guide and develop ADE plans. Currently it is strongly recommended students wear masks and the districts have the option of requiring masks to be worn. There are accepted guidelines to sanitize, disinfect frequently touched services, but close contact and breathing one another's air is the primary way COVID-19 is transmitted.

One who is symptomatic would need to be tested and isolated until tests results are back or symptoms cleared. There would be an investigation and assessments. ADH has criteria for 'close contact' and any close contact to a positive case of COVID-19 would be required to be quarantined for 14 days from the last date of contact with that positive case.

Representative Murdock asked Mr. Adams to take the suggestion back for consideration that required testing be done of all athletes and staff before participation in full contact sports.

#### **DISCUSSION OF DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENTS: ACTIONAL DATA AND RESOURCES TO HELP MITIGATE POTENTIAL ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT LOSS DURING COVID-19 [EXHIBIT D]**

**Dr. Debbie Smith Vice President of Governmental Relations – Curriculum Associates**, noted more than half of the school districts in Arkansas have been using Curriculum Associates' materials and resources since 2017. It publishes high quality diagnostic assessment as well as curriculum and resource material. It is on Arkansas' approved list for science and reading and for interim diagnostic assessment.

Diagnostic assessments for grades K through 8 provide support through understanding of where students are. The data reveals learning loss for each student normally experienced by students going into fall, but this year the gap will be larger. A school year is roughly 178 days. This school year the challenge for students and professional development for educators will be more than one year of growth. Curriculum Associates has an assessment, I-Ready Assessment, which looks at typical average growth for a student at a given level then makes comparisons about where they are and what they need. Stretch growth helps teachers have a road map and plan of action to get to grade level proficiency.

Educators will have to figure out the prerequisite skills students need for the current school year core standards, as well as core standards for the previous year. Curriculum Associates can support this for teachers in professional development by providing districts with materials and products like the I-Ready Assessment product which focuses on prerequisite skills needed for core standards.

Curriculum Associates provide programs that tightly integrate with assessment and instruction and places focus on grade level standards, and state standards. The integrated curriculum and assessment program includes blended learning experience for students and the assessment data will point teachers where they need to go. There are 178 days to get everything in:

- growth to grade level
- regular growth to stretch growth
- planning for the stretch growth without losing students

Curriculum Associates' professional development for teachers is hands on instruction for how to use the materials in their classroom. They are shown:

- how to deliver instruction in a blended learning format
- how to manage situations arising from blended learning format and
- how to set up blended learning using tools, such as direct instruction versus independent study, and paper versus on line

**Dr. Charity Smith-Allen, Educational Consultant - Curriculum Associates,** noted assessments show how to mitigate loss during COVID-19. The summer slide is where students regress for a month, but the COVID-19 slide is expected to be several months. A clear diagnostic assessment done early to reveal the gap for each student is important. Once the gap is identified Curriculum Associates materials are on online and ready to go to help with the learning loss.