

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

Monday, July 18, 2016
1:30 P.M.
Room 171, State Capitol
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: Senator Jane English, Chair; Senator Uvalde Lindsey, Vice Chair; Senator Alan Clark; Senator Blake Johnson; and Senator Bobby J. Pierce.

MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE: Representative Bruce Cozart, Chair; Representative Charles L. Armstrong; Representative Scott Baltz; Representative Nate Bell; Representative Gary Deffenbaugh; Representative Charlotte Vining Douglas; Representative Jon Eubanks; Representative Bill Gossage; Representative Michael John Gray; Representative Mark Lowery; Representative Mark McElroy; Representative Reginald Murdock; Representative James Ratliff; and Representative John W. Walker.

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE: Senator Scott Flippo; Senator Jon Woods; Representative Ken Bragg; Representative Jana Della Rosa; Representative Jim Dotson; Representative Charlene Fite; Representative Vivian Flowers; Representative Lane Jean; Representative Stephen Meeks; Representative Betty Overbey; Representative Sue Scott; Representative James Sorvillo; Representative Nelda Speaks; Representative Dan Sullivan; Representative Dwight Tosh; and Representative Marshall Wright.

Minutes:

Without objection, the minutes of June 22, 2016 were approved as written.

Exhibit:

Exhibit C – 06/22/16 Minutes

Reports from Members Who Attended Recent Meetings Concerning Public or Higher Education

The Honorable Bruce Cozart, State Representative, District 24, and Co- Chair of the House and Senate Interim Committees on Education, was recognized. Representative Cozart reported on a National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) meeting in Denver, Colorado, at which issues pertinent to principals in rural areas were explored.

The Honorable Mark Lowery, State Representative, District 39, was recognized. Representative Lowery discussed research presented at a one-day conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota on the “15 to Finish” campaign, which encourages college students to graduate on time by completing at least 15 hours a semester.

Senator English discussed the SREB conference in Little Rock, at which K-12, higher education, and adult education were all discussed in a seamless fashion. She said the discussion prompted thinking about ways to encourage students in elementary school to connect with their future by learning about options for a career and/or college.

The Honorable Charles L. Armstrong, State Representative, District 30, was recognized, and concurred with Senator English on the value of the SREB conference. He said meetings encompassed building a foundation for the future in early childhood.

Update on [Closing the Gap 2020](#): A Master Plan for Arkansas Higher Education

Presenter:

Dr. Brett Powell, Director, Arkansas Department of Higher Education, was recognized. Dr. Powell discussed efforts by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) to improve educational attainment in Arkansas, which is the primary objective of the Closing the Gap 2020 Master Plan. Utilizing charts and graphs in a PowerPoint presentation, Dr. Powell covered three (3) related topics pertinent to improving the number of Arkansans who have the right postsecondary credentials to be employed in Arkansas. He addressed: 1) Regional Workforce Grants, 2) Closing the Gap/Implementation Plan, related to the Master Plan, and 3) a specific implementation strategy of adopting an Outcomes-Based Funding Model for the way public institutions of higher education are funded in the state. Specific to Closing the Gap 2020, Mr. Powell stated there are two (2) overarching objectives that are a part of the Master Plan. He said the long-term objective is to be prepared for the workforce by 2025, at which time 60% of jobs in Arkansas will require some postsecondary credential. If jobs are created as projected, 60% of Arkansans will need to have some education beyond high school. He said if progress is to be made toward that 2025 objective, ADHE is projecting a need to increase the number of credentials awarded each year by 40% over the short term. He said gaps in credentials awarded are at every level, Career & Technical Certificates, Associates Degrees, and Bachelor's Degrees, with the largest gap being in Career and Technical Certificates. Mr. Powell stated there are four (4) goals that support the objectives: 1) raising the completion and graduation rates of colleges and universities by 10%; 2) increasing the enrollment of adult students, age 25 to 54, by 50% by fall 2018; 3) raising the attainment rates of underserved student groups in the state by 10%; and 4) improving college affordability through effective resource allocation. He said all four (4) goals are an important part of the overall objective of increasing attainment rates. He commented that charts are ways to keep track of the goals and ensure that progress is being made toward the eventual objective. He discussed implementation plan workgroups, active from November, 2015 through the end of May, 2016, and strategies they have identified that work. Mr. Powell concluded with a discussion of the outcomes-based funding strategy, including process, principles, measures, and model considerations.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- submission of proposals in each phase of grant applications,
- institutions' eligibility to apply for grants,
- letters of commitment to projects from employer partners,
- necessity of having flexibility to fully implement partnerships,
- whether the waiver program is working; moving away from the waiver program,
- co-requisite approach to remediation,
- weight given to grade point average (GPA),
- outcomes of students completing early college credit,
- strategies for college dropouts to reenter college and earn a credential,
- tracking students' scores through college,
- dropping algebra as a requirement for getting a college degree,
- getting students in the math course appropriate to their educational goals,
- effectiveness of the mentorship component of the Donaldson Program strategy in helping prepare underprepared students before they leave high school, and
- recommendation for legislation to adopt and fund the college readiness program across the state.

PowerPoint Presentation:

ADHE Update to Education Committees, July 18, 2016

Handouts:

ADHE Update to Education Committees, July 18, 2016
Closing the Gap 2020, Implementation Plan
Regional Workforce Grant Programs

Update on Arkansas Public School Computer Network (APSCN) Broadband Upgrade

Presenter:

Mr. Mark Myers, Director, Arkansas Department of Information Systems, was recognized. Mr. Myers stated that, following a legislative study which found Arkansas to be woefully lacking in connectivity, the Department of Information Systems (DIS), at the direction of the Governor, embarked on a two-year program to solve the problem. Mr. Myers, utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, discussed the project timeline. He said work began in July, 2015 and upgrade completion has continued ahead of schedule. He noted that by the end of this fiscal year, July 2017, 100% of APSCN upgrades will have been completed. He said every school district in the state will have 200 kilobits per second, per user. He commented that Arkansas will be one of only three (3) states in the entire country in which every school building in the state is connected to high-speed Broadband. He showed a map illustrating what the improved APSCN network looks like and how all school districts reach the Internet. He said prior to the beginning of this upgrade, 71,549 Mbps in bandwidth were provided to school districts; now 158,500 Mbps in bandwidth are provided. He said the cost is now \$3.53 per Meg, as opposed to \$11.28 per Meg with the old connections. He stated all schools have been upgraded with fiber to facilitate high-speed Broadband access; security and content filtering solutions are in place to safeguard the public school data; all old Broadband connections have been removed; and performance monitoring is in place. Mr. Myers concluded with a discussion of some of the challenges and solutions faced during the project. Mr. Myers provided each Committee member with upgrade information pertinent to the legislator's individual school district.

Contributor to the Discussion:

Mr. Don McDaniel, DIS Division Director – Enterprise Network Services, Arkansas Department of Information Systems

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- ≈ completion date for the Broadband upgrade in two (2) Cleveland County districts,
- ≈ improved financial position brought about by the Broadband upgrade, and
- ≈ monthly vendor cost; E-Rate coverage; total cost to state.

PowerPoint Presentation:

APSCN Presentation

Handouts:

APSCN Broadband Upgrades, Individual Sheets for Members
APSCN Presentation

Discussion of Issues Related to Career and Technical Education (CTE)

Presenter:

Dr. Charisse Childers, Director, Arkansas Department of Career Education, was recognized. Dr. Childers gave a brief overview of what is going on at the Arkansas Department of Career Education (ACE). She said today's presentation related specifically to CTE vocational centers, secondary technical centers, or secondary career centers. She said the focus of ACE is on career and technical skills training throughout all its divisions, including the newly created Office of Skills Development. She said ACE is continuing a thorough assessment of all current policies and procedures to increase effectiveness of the program delivery and outcomes, with outcomes-based measures rather than just enrollment. She stated there is increased communication within the agency and with

those the agency serves around the state. She noted ACE has record-breaking numbers of students and clients being served through all of its divisions. Dr. Childers reviewed some recent successes of ACE.

Presenter:

Mr. Brian Rogers, Deputy Director, Office of Skills Development, Arkansas Department of Career Education, was recognized. Mr. Rogers provided additional information about secondary centers, looking at offering students in the state the opportunity to be prepared for a job after high school, and discussing the importance of postsecondary education. He provided a background for the development of secondary centers, and noted that career and technical education is occurring at every high school across the state. He discussed the organization of career fields, clusters, and pathways in the curricula, a map of sites across Arkansas, the funding model, themes and trends, and other highlights.

Contributor to the Discussion:

Ms. Kathi Turner, Deputy Director, Division of Career and Technical Education, Arkansas Department of Career Education

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- ≡ explanation of the 25-mile radius service areas,
- ≡ sponsoring institutions for two (2) new pilot centers,
- ≡ efficiency in funding,
- ≡ plans for expanding access to unserved or underserved areas,
- ≡ timeline for completion of expansion,
- ≡ reaching underserved persons,
- ≡ necessity of having funding to make a success of secondary centers,
- ≡ effect of current operational maintenance on funding for expansion and on accommodating those on a waiting list,
- ≡ providing high schools with additional CTE program responsibility,
- ≡ expanding service areas to include smaller, rural schools,
- ≡ mandating high school CTE programs to use data-based decision-making about program offerings,
- ≡ short-term skills-gap training,
- ≡ school districts utilizing local millage to fund career centers, and
- ≡ career centers working together with industry and others.

PowerPoint Presentation:

Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Secondary Technical Centers

Handouts:

Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Secondary Technical Centers
Career and Technical Education in High School, Fordham Institute, Flyer

Senator English requested Senator Alan Clark to address the Act 852 Economic Security Report.

The Honorable Alan Clark, State Senator, District 13, was recognized. Senator Clark stated that the Report has been well-received, and that he is pleased with it. He said it covers employment and earnings outcomes of Arkansas's graduates from state-supported institutions of higher education. He commented that it was designed with college freshmen and their parents in mind, and should prove helpful for them in determining the direction to go with their education.

Issue Included in the Discussion:

- data collection sufficient enough to say graduates are employed in the field in which they got their degree.

Handout:

Act 852 Economic Security Report

Next Scheduled Meeting:

Tuesday, July 19, 2016, at 9:00 a.m. in Room 171 of the State Capitol, Little Rock

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 3:48 p.m.

Approved: 08/22/16