

MINUTES

HIGHER EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE  
OF THE  
HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Friday, October 28, 2011  
10:00 A.M.  
Room 171, State Capitol  
Little Rock, Arkansas

Representative Tommy Wren, the Chair of the Higher Education Subcommittee of the House Interim Committee on Education, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

**MEMBERS OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE:** Representative Tommy Wren, Chair; Representative Randy Stewart, Vice-Chair; Representative Duncan Baird; Representative Jody Dickinson; Representative Jane English; Representative Johnnie Roebuck, Ex Officio; and Representative Tracy Steele.

**OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE:** Senator David Wyatt; Representative Tommy Lee Baker; Representative Nate Bell; Representative Robert Dale; Representative Billy Gaskill; Representative Jeremy Gillam; Representative Clark Hall; Representative Sheilla Lampkin; Representative Buddy Lovell; Representative Betty Overbey; Representative Mike Patterson; Representative Garry Smith; and Representative Jeff Wardlaw.

Representative Wren called for the recognition of a youth leadership group from Johnson County who was attending the meeting as guests of Senator Randy Laverty and Representative Betty Overbey. He asked for the group to stand up, and said the Subcommittee was proud to have them at the meeting.

Representative Wren introduced **Ms. Heather Tackett**, Legislative Analyst, Bureau of Legislative Research, and thanked her for her hard work in organizing this meeting.

Initial Discussion of Interim Study Proposal (ISP) 2011-119 by Representative Stewart, TO REQUIRE FOREIGN LANGUAGE AS A REQUIREMENT FOR ELIGIBILITY FOR AN ARKANSAS ACADEMIC CHALLENGE SCHOLARSHIP.

**The Honorable Randy Stewart**, State Representative, District 23, and Vice-Chair of the Higher Education Subcommittee of the House Interim Committee on Education, was recognized. Representative Stewart commented that having a foreign language as an eligibility requirement for an Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship has turned out to be a more complex policy issue than originally thought. He said the purpose of this interim study proposal is to look at ways to increase the level of foreign language instruction in the K-12 curriculum and at having a requirement for credit hours in a foreign language either for graduation or for securing an Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship for post-secondary education.

### Discussion of the Importance of Foreign Language as a Curriculum Offering

**Mr. John F. Miller**, Senior Manager, Training & Education Liaison, Dassault Falcon Jet, was recognized, and spoke from a PowerPoint presentation, "Multiple Languages in the Work Place." Mr. Miller explained that times have changed and there is an advantage to having multi-lingual training for living and working in this multi-lingual environment. He said that the Dassault Falcon Jet Corporation (DFJC) facility in Little Rock, Arkansas has about 1,700 employees who speak about twenty-three (23) different foreign languages, sometimes on a daily basis. Mr. Miller stated that from 1980 through 2000, the continental United States constituted 80% of DFJC's market share, but that today the customer base has dramatically changed. DFJC's sales are now all over the world: Asia constitutes 52% of the marketplace, Latin America 13%, and Europe/Africa/Middle East/India 19%. The U.S. market share is down to 16%. He added that over the next ten years DFJC anticipates it will deliver 1,000 corporate jets to China, followed by additional deliveries to Brazil, Russia, and India.

Mr. Miller remarked that industry is very interested in supporting foreign language education, and DFJC partners with various colleges and universities to share its training knowledge to ensure a pool of competent employees for the future. He mentioned that DFJC is important to Arkansas, annually contributing approximately \$1 million in taxes and \$129 million in gross wages. In order for young people to compete in today's society and for Little Rock and Arkansas to continue these revenue streams, Arkansas's youth must extend their skills beyond reading, writing, and arithmetic. Mr. Miller concluded that from a business standpoint, without foreign language skills, graduates are at a distinct disadvantage in today's global marketplace.

Following Mr. Miller's presentation there was a brief discussion about the drop in U.S. market share for DFJC, and the percentage of the DFJC job force with U.S. citizenship.

Representative Wren thanked Mr. Miller for sharing the enlightening presentation with the Subcommittee and for DFJC's partnership with Arkansas.

**Ms. Jennifer Deacon**, Arkansas Chapter, American Association of Teachers of French, was recognized. Ms. Deacon spoke from a PowerPoint presentation, "Foreign Language is an essential for college-bound students." The presentation centered on The Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills (P21), a national organization brought about in 2002 by the U.S. Department of Education, various successful corporations, and key individuals. The P21 mission is to serve as a catalyst to position 21<sup>st</sup> century readiness at the center of U.S. K-12 education by building collaborative partnerships among education, business, and community and government leaders. Ms. Deacon said P21 identified a list of core subjects that included foreign language, the mastery of which is essential for students to be successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. P21 also identified interdisciplinary themes that needed to be woven into these core subjects to promote a higher level of understanding of academic content. One of the themes identified was global awareness, which is covered in foreign language classes. There are sixteen (16) states that are P21 states, but Arkansas is not one of them. Ms. Deacon went on to speak about higher academic performance, including higher ACT scores and success in college, that results from the study of a foreign language.

**Ms. Janet Lawrence**, General Counsel, Arkansas Department of Higher Education, was recognized, and participated in the discussion that followed the presentation. Topics included:

- Required or elective units in foreign language as part of the curriculum,
- Data on the correlation of ACT scores and college retention as a result of a foreign language requirement,
- Necessity for research as applied to Arkansas,
- Partnering the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) with the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) to retrieve research data on foreign language, and
- Researching original data on the foreign language requirement for the Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship from 2006, 2007, and 2008, to track student retention and remediation as it applies to Arkansas.

Representative Wren thanked Ms. Deacon for the presentation, and Ms. Lawrence for her information.

**Ms. Barbara Culpepper**, Unit Coordinator, Office of Teacher Quality, Arkansas Department of Education, was recognized. Ms. Culpepper spoke from a PowerPoint presentation about the partnership that the state has with China to teach Mandarin Chinese in Arkansas. She said that since no teachers of Mandarin Chinese are readily found in Arkansas, either because of being hired away by large international companies or inadequate teacher salaries, it has been necessary to bring teachers in from China. Ms. Culpepper stated that Arkansas needs to give its students an edge in the marketplace and prepare them for a global workforce by training them to be fluent in Mandarin Chinese, and went on to explain why the choice of Mandarin Chinese. She then detailed the relationship of the University of Central Arkansas (UCA), the Office of Chinese Language Council International (Hanban) under the Chinese Ministry of Education, and the ADE, including the responsibilities and commitments of each. Ms. Culpepper showed a graph illustrating that in 2008 there were approximately 300 students taking Mandarin Chinese; she said the number is now up to 1,600. Other graphs showed Students Taking Chinese by School Level (2008-2011), Possible New School Districts for 2012/2013, and Additional Requests and Replacements. She described additional materials contained in a handout given to Subcommittee members.

After the presentation, questions for Ms. Culpepper included those on the following topics:

- The number of teachers of Mandarin Chinese needed now and in the future,
- The necessity of a foreign language experience, and
- UCA and the Confucius Institute for Arkansas (*Founded in 2007, the UCA Confucius Institute is part of a global network of more than 300 Confucius Institutes in nearly 100 countries dedicated to the promotion and development of culture, language, and business exchange with the People's Republic of China. UCA has exclusive rights to the Confucius Institute in Arkansas.*)

Representative Wren thanked Ms. Culpepper for the information.

**Dr. Gary Ritter**, Director, Office for Education Policy, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, was recognized. Dr. Ritter spoke from a PowerPoint presentation, "Foreign Language in Arkansas," and stated that the goal of the Office for Education Policy (OEP) is to bring evidence, *i.e.*, research, with respect to this question from an academic, unbiased perspective to inform policymakers and practitioners in decision-making. He commented that in many areas of K-12 and higher education, there is not a lot of hard scientific evidence to provide guidance, which holds true in this case, so logic and theory prevail. He said that suggested evidence points to it being a good idea to encourage kids to take

part in foreign language and second language learning and cited as an example the *New Orleans Study* in which students in classrooms who received foreign language instruction outperformed peers on both the state assessment and national assessments. Dr. Ritter detailed the potential cultural, cognitive, and economic benefits for considering second languages. He noted that relative to other elective courses, a second language has the most potential to be synergistic with core subjects. He commented that second language acquisition is best done at a young age, particularly in the elementary and secondary years. In conclusion, Dr. Ritter, stated that the view of the OEP is that: 1) it is a great idea to make foreign language a requirement in high school or earlier, 2) teacher training needs to be considered, and 3) ways to embrace technology to share language learning need to be considered.

Following his presentation, Dr. Ritter briefly discussed the need for coherent efforts to encourage or mandate students to study foreign languages.

Representative Wren thanked Dr. Ritter for his commentary.

**Ms. Pamela Reynolds**, President, Arkansas Foreign Language Teachers Association, was recognized. Ms. Reynolds stated the ultimate goal of the Arkansas Foreign Language Teachers Association (AFLTA), which represents all languages, is to have comprehensive foreign language education for every student in Arkansas. She said it would make students more competitive and give them a better chance in the global market. She continued that since these are tough economic times, the feasibility of what can be done right now to help students have an edge needs to be considered. She stated the most feasible option is to put the foreign language requirement at the secondary level back into the scholarship lottery. Ms. Reynolds said the resources are there. It would require hiring the fewest teachers, having the fewest administrative problems, and be best for students at this time.

Following the presentation, a discussion ensued. Topics included:

- ▲ Clarification of lottery bill considerations,
- ▲ AFLTA recommendations to present to legislators,
- ▲ Number of teachers in the AFLTA,
- ▲ Foreign language instruction through distance education,
- ▲ Affect on remediation issues,
- ▲ Purpose of ISP is to get data to help tackle the issue,
- ▲ Inclusion of foreign language in the Arkansas Common Core State Standards, and
- ▲ Local school boards having control over requiring foreign language for an advanced diploma.

**Dr. Horst Lange**, Chair, Department of World Languages, Literatures and Cultures, University of Central Arkansas, was recognized. Dr. Lange presented an overview of the shifting global paradigm and emphasized the necessity of education in foreign languages and world cultures. In support of his view, he related that in 2003, Germany surpassed the United States and became the world's leading exporter of goods and services. Germany remained in that position until 2010 when it was replaced by China. During its time as the leading exporter, 18 million Germans were producing more goods and services for export than 300 million Americans. Dr. Lange suggested that the German advantage had to do with the fact that the country's students start learning English in the 1st grade and a second language in the 5<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> grade, and continue to study languages until graduation from high school. He also commented that Germans make it a practice to spend time abroad to experience how foreign cultures function.

Dr. Lange said that the Hewlett-Packard Company (HP) in Conway recently contacted UCA regarding language training, particularly Chinese, for its employees. He related that in a discussion with an HP Human Resources representative, it was learned that the company prefers hiring employees that have spent significant time abroad. In talking with several employees, Dr. Lange found that not a single one was a graduate of an Arkansas university and that all had been exported into Arkansas by Hewlett-Packard. Dr. Lange said this was not good either for students or for the state.

Dr. Lange asked the legislators to think about the amount of money that the government of China is spending per year on students and on funding of Confucius Institutes. They are spending \$304,000 in Arkansas alone. This amount turns into millions of dollars a year when taking into account all of the Confucius Institutes. Dr. Lange said that the Chinese understand that to successfully engage in business with the rest of the world, they need people to speak Chinese. Dr. Lange affirmed that foreign language education and time abroad is necessary for students to be competitive.

Representative Wren thanked Dr. Lange for his presentation.

**Dr. Phillip Bailey**, Professor of French, University of Central Arkansas, was recognized. He said he appreciated a comment he had heard about a state not being ashamed of having a few standards and asking more from its students and children. Dr. Bailey was responsible for starting the Chinese program at UCA and was Chair for eleven (11) years. He said UCA has the only Chinese minor in Arkansas, and is in charge of bringing Chinese to the state. Dr. Bailey related anecdotes detailing the necessity, ease, and success of teaching foreign languages and cultures to all Arkansans. He discussed the strategic use of funds to prepare students to succeed.

Representative Wren thanked Dr. Bailey and said he appreciated his presentation.

**Ms. Patricia Carlin**, Director, Foreign Language Teacher Education Program, and Director, Community Language School, University of Central Arkansas, was recognized. Ms. Carlin noted her presence and that of President-elect Dr. David McAlpine, professor of Spanish and Second Language Education and Coordinator of Graduate Studies in the International and Second Language Studies Department at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR), on the Board of Directors of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), the national professional organization for foreign language education in the U.S., which has 12,000 members. She said this is the first time that Arkansans have been on this national Board and that they are poised to do whatever it takes to make foreign language education work in Arkansas.

Ms. Carlin reminded the Subcommittee that Act 1573 was passed in 1999 and would provide for:

**6-16-127. Arkansas Foreign Language Teacher Training Program.**

**6-16-128. Arkansas Early Grades Foreign Language Pilot Program.**

The Act was passed but unfunded. Ms. Carlin distributed copies of the Act to Subcommittee members, and requested that funding be considered in the next Fiscal Session. Ms. Carlin said, should funding be realized, she would provide workshops for the training of Arkansas teachers. She said that Dr. McAlpine would work with her to light the state on fire for foreign language education in Arkansas.

Representative Wren thanked Ms. Carlin, and repeated his appreciation to all of the presenters.

Representative Wren said in closing comments that he believed in putting foreign language back in the curriculum, but noted the lack of teachers. He said he appreciated the advocacy of the Subcommittee, and requested that members talk to superintendents, schools boards, and teachers, let them know that resources are available, and get their feedback for better use of those resources.

Representative Stewart related a personal anecdote about his son and what a foreign language education has done for his career and life. Representative Stewart said that foreign language can give people the opportunity to do things that they never imagined could be done.

**The Honorable Johnnie Roebuck**, State Representative, District 20, was recognized. She clarified that at Arkadelphia High School two years of the same foreign language is required for an advanced diploma, but the basic diploma requires one year of foreign language. She wanted to impress upon legislators to talk to superintendents and get them on board, because foreign language requirements can be made locally without legislation and can make a difference. Including it in Smart Core and the Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship can also be considered.

Representative Wren announced that the next meeting of the Higher Education Subcommittee of the House Interim Committee on Education would be at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, December 7, 2011, in Room 171 of the State Capitol.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:06 p.m.