

MEETING SUMMARY

ACADEMIC FACILITIES OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Monday, September 15, 2014

1:30 P.M.

Room 171, State Capitol  
Little Rock, Arkansas

Senator Joyce Elliott, the Senate Co-Chair of the Academic Facilities Oversight Committee, called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

**SENATE MEMBERS OF THE ACADEMIC FACILITIES OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE IN ATTENDANCE:**

Senator Joyce Elliott, Co-Chair; Senator Bruce Holland; and Senator Bobby Pierce.

**HOUSE MEMBERS OF THE ACADEMIC FACILITIES OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE IN ATTENDANCE:**

Representative Scott Baltz; Representative David Branscum; Representative Charlotte Vining Douglas; Representative James Ratliff; and Representative Tommy Wren.

**OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE:** Senator Linda Chesterfield; Senator Jane English; Senator Stephanie Flowers; Senator Missy Irvin; Representative Nate Bell; Representative Ann Clemmer; Representative Bruce Cozart; Representative Andy Davis; Representative David Fielding; Representative Sheilla Lampkin; Representative Stephanie Malone; Representative Micah Neal; Representative Betty Overbey; Representative Wes Wagner; and Representative Marshall Wright.

Review of the Duties and Responsibilities of the Committee

Presenter:

**Mr. Mark Hudson**, Senior Legislative Analyst, Bureau of Legislative Research, was recognized. At the request of Senator Elliott, Mr. Hudson cited statute text to update members on the statutory powers and duties of the Committee.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- whether Broadband is considered as part of facilities, and
- concern about Jacksonville School District securing funding for facilities.

Exhibit:

Exhibit C – Academic Facilities Oversight Committee

Update on Funding for Academic Facilities

Presenter:

**Dr. Charles Stein**, Director, Division of Public School Academic Facilities and Transportation, was recognized. Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, Dr. Stein discussed timelines and funding for the Master Plan/Partnership Program, including projections for the next two-year cycle. He discussed projects, the funding prioritization process, and current status of projects. He stated anticipated needs for approved projects during 2015-2017 total \$173 million, while estimated funding is \$108 million. He said appeals were currently being processed to cover the \$65 million funding shortfall.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- number of appeals being processed,
- process for publishing rules on the website; links to the rules,
- reasons for changes to the rules,
- project approvals and project funding,
- availability of funding from the state,
- funding prioritization process and rankings,
- role played by financial limitations in prioritization,
- funding for school districts with warm, safe, and dry issues,
- utilization of the software program, *SchoolDude*, to manage all aspects of maintenance,
- recycling and reusing buildings,
- increase in the number of warm, safe, and dry projects, and
- applications review process.

PowerPoint Presentation:

Update on Funding for Academic Facilities

Handout:

Update on Funding for Academic Facilities

Senator Elliott invited Mr. Mike Mertens to make comments on Dr. Stein's presentation and to discuss any generic concerns about facilities.

Commentary:

**Mr. Mike Mertens**, Assistant Executive Director, Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators, was recognized. Mr. Mertens said several points stood out in the presentation, including: zero carryover in funding set aside almost a decade ago for school facilities, the shortfall of \$65 million for the 2015-2017 cycle, and the fact that less than \$50 million of new money a year is going into the Partnership Program. He commented that due to the drawdown in the pot of money, numerous changes have made the rules stricter for projects submitted on approval. He said that looking at the number of applications that have been filed, there are still critical facilities needs in the state that need to be addressed. Additionally, he said there is some confusion among districts regarding when the new rules went into effect and the deadlines for submitting applications for the Partnership Program. He stated when districts have to raise money for new facilities, it is an easier sell when they have a project that they can say is a "needed" project. Mr. Mertens asked, from an educational adequacy perspective, is it good for kids when an approval process ends up denying projects on issues other than whether it is really needed or not. He said he thought this is a concern we really need to be careful about. He stated he had the utmost admiration and respect for Dr. Stein and his staff because they have been put in the position of making tough decisions.

**The Honorable Charlotte Vining Douglas**, State Representative, District 75, raised the question of whether there should be an interim study to review the application process, training, timetable of events, and adequacy with regard school buildings.

Senator Elliott said it was time to take an overall look at some things to gain clarity and understanding of what is being done.

Senator Elliott announced that Item E, Review of Issues Associated with the 2015 Facilities Funding Application Process, would not be discussed by the Committees today; and that Item F, Review of Issues Related to the Utilization of Construction Managers, would be delayed until a future meeting. She stated the Committees would next take up Item G.

Discussion of Issues Concerning Facilities Regulations and School Nurses

Presenter:

**Ms. Paula Smith**, State School Nurse Consultant, Arkansas Department of Health, was recognized. Ms. Smith discussed Act 414 of 2013 which charged a nineteen (19) member committee to look at many aspects of school health. She called the Committees' attention to the health and safety standards which state that all school districts must have a health services program under the direction of a licensed nurse and provide that program with the needed facilities, equipment, and materials; and that each school shall take proper measures to ensure the safety of its students and protect against injuries which may occur. Ms. Smith discussed responses to a survey of seventy-four (74) principals in the Bureau of Legislative Research (BLR) Adequacy Study who were asked why additional nursing is needed. She additionally talked about results found in the School Nurse Survey 2013-2014. She discussed recommendations to provide school nurses with facilities and equipment to meet standards for infection control and safe care.

Contributor to the Discussion:

**Ms. Julie Mayberry**, Parent, Arkansas Public Schools Health Services Advisory Committee

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- presence of a nurse at football games,
- creating guidelines for stocking and utilization of epinephrine,
- sharps disposal guidelines in school districts, and
- monitoring violations in school nursing facilities.

PowerPoint Presentation:

Act 414, School Nursing

Handout:

Act 414 Report

Act 414, School Nursing

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

*Approved: 01/23/2018*