

MEETING SUMMARY

ACADEMIC FACILITIES OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Thursday, October 9, 2014

2:30 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 2:30 p.m.

SENATE MEMBERS OF THE ACADEMIC FACILITIES OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE IN ATTENDANCE:

Senator Joyce Elliott, Co-Chair; Senator Alan Clark; and Senator Bobby Pierce.

HOUSE MEMBERS OF THE ACADEMIC FACILITIES OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE IN ATTENDANCE:

Representative Scott Baltz; and Representative Charlotte Vining Douglas.

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE:

Senator Jane English; Representative Randy Alexander; Representative Jon Eubanks; Representative Mark Lowery; and Representative Betty Overbey.

Review of Statutorily Required Reports

Presenter:

Dr. Charles Stein, Director, Division of Public School Academic Facilities and Transportation, was recognized. Dr. Stein presented two reports. Dr. Stein first discussed the annual report, *State of Condition of Academic Facilities Statewide*, indicating that \$2.75 billion has been spent on projects over the past nine (9) years to satisfy the state's school facilities needs. He commented that progress is being made to address these needs. Dr. Stein next discussed the biennial report, *Academic Facilities Master Plan Program – State Plan*, indicating that tables on pages 6-23 show listings of all projects for which school districts have submitted Master Plans. He stated these plans have been submitted but not all have been approved.

Contributors to the Discussion:

Mr. Mark Hudson, Senior Legislative Analyst, Bureau of Legislative Research

Mr. Scott Richardson, Senior Assistant Attorney General, Office of the Attorney General

Mr. Tony Wood, Commissioner, Arkansas Department of Education

Issues Included in the Discussion:

State of Condition of Academic Facilities Statewide

- ≈ clarification of numbers shown in the chart on page 6,
- ≈ clarification of whether Broadband is included in the “technology” facility system, and
- ≈ whether past discussions have included delivery via Broadband.

Academic Facilities Master Plan Program – State Plan

- ≈ outcome of a school district not meeting its partnership percentage,
- ≈ clarification of how the *wealth index* is figured,
- ≈ definition of *wealth index* tied to the wealth of the district,
- ≈ clarification of the development of the *wealth index*,
- ≈ how the *wealth index* differs among school systems,
- ≈ the part Average Daily Membership (ADM) plays in the formula,

- ≈ the part bond indebtedness plays in the *wealth index*,
- ≈ funding for charter facilities, and
- ≈ sorting and ranking projects in the review process.

PowerPoint Presentation:

DPSAFT Statewide State of Condition of Academic Facilities, 10/01/14

Exhibits:

Exhibit C1 – DPSAFT Academic Facilities Master Plan Program - State Plan, 10/01/14

Exhibit C2 – DPSAFT Statewide State of Condition of Academic Facilities, 10/01/14

Discussion of Facilities Issues Related to Educational Adequacy

Presenter:

Ms. Nell Smith, Administrator, Policy Analysis and Research Section, Bureau of Legislative Research, was recognized. Ms. Smith provided information about facilities as it pertains to the educational Adequacy Study. She stated that as part of the state's responsibilities to provide an adequate education, the Education Committees are required to study the entire spectrum of education every two years; this is done through the Adequacy Study. She said the Policy and Research Section of the Bureau of Legislative Research (BLR) facilitates this study and provides some of the research that is presented to the Committees. She noted the information that must be reviewed in the Adequacy Study is spelled out in statute, which doesn't specifically require academic facilities to be addressed; but, the condition of school facilities was such a large part of the Lakeview School District lawsuit that the Education Committees have typically elected to include a review of the facilities funding program. Ms. Smith said the Adequacy Study reviewed the Partnership Program in October 2013, and, after sixteen (16) months of study, the Education Committees are now facing a November 1, 2014 deadline for developing recommendations and submitting a final report. She said that to help with the task, the BLR was asked to put together a list of issues that had surfaced during that time. She reviewed *Adequacy Issues Related to Educational Facilities* which describes three of the issues: 1) the \$65 million funding shortfall for the 2015-17 funding cycle, 2) disparities in the condition of school facilities from one district to another, and 3) ineligibility of open-enrollment charter schools for Partnership Program funds. Ms. Smith said the Education Committees are meeting on Tuesday, October 14, to continue to discuss what to include in the final recommendations.

Contributors to the Discussion:

Dr. Charles Stein, Director, Division of Public School Academic Facilities and Transportation

Mr. Scott Richardson, Senior Assistant Attorney General, Office of the Attorney General

Mr. Tony Wood, Commissioner, Arkansas Department of Education

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- ≡ return of \$16 million redirected to public school employees health insurance,
- ≡ one-time funding of \$5 million for open-enrollment charter school facilities,
- ≡ addressing the issue of unused school buildings,
- ≡ whether KIPP Delta and charter schools should be eligible for Partnership Program funds,
- ≡ developing recommendations for the Partnership Program model, and
- ≡ ownership of buildings of schools that have been closed.

Senator Elliott stated that the Committee needs to make a generic recommendation to the full Education Committees on how facilities issues should be handled to fully fund the needs of adequacy. She said specific details will get worked out with legislation during the General Session.

Members of the Committee had a brief discussion to clarify the meaning of meeting the Committee's obligations for fulfilling requirements of meeting adequacy for facilities.

Relevant Actions:

The Honorable Scott Baltz, State Representative, District 61, was recognized, and made a motion to combine and recommend to the House and Senate Education Committees that they finalize the adequacy obligation after a review.

The motion died because of lack of a second.

The Honorable Scott Baltz, State Representative, District 61, was recognized, and made a motion to refer all three issues related to facilities to the House and Senate Education Committees for further discussion.

The Honorable Bobby Pierce, State Senator, District 27, was recognized, and seconded the motion.

Pursuant to the motion by Representative Baltz, and without objection, the motion was carried.

The Honorable Bobby Pierce, State Senator, District 27, was recognized, and made a motion to recommend the facilities study to legislature for consideration.

The Honorable Scott Baltz, State Representative, District 61, was recognized, and seconded the motion.

Pursuant to the motion by Senator Pierce, and without objection, the motion was carried.

Handouts:

A Report on Legislative Hearings for the 2014 Interim Study on Educational Adequacy, Volume I, DRAFT Adequacy Issues Related to Educational Facilities

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 4:07 p.m.

Approved: 01/23/2018