

EXHIBIT B

MINUTES

LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON BEST PRACTICES FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

Meeting

Monday, August 17, 2015

The Legislative Task Force on Best Practices for Special Education met on Monday, August 17, 2015 at 1:00 p.m., in Room 130 of the State Capitol Building, in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Members in Attendance

The following legislators attended: Senators Blake Johnson and Uvalde Lindsey. Representatives Sheilla Lampkin and Tim Lemons. Ms. Carla Brainard, Ms. Jessica Dewitt, Ms. Lisa Haley, Ms. Vicki Holt, Ms. Barbara Hunter-Cox, Ms. Sarah Moore, Ms. Bailey Perkins, Ms. Debra Poulin, Ms. Shirley Ann Renix, Ms. Lisa Tisdale-Parker, Ms. Tina Vineyard, Ms. Cindy Marie Weathers, Ms. Angela Winfield, and Mr. Samuel Young.

Opening Remarks

Ms. Sarah Moore, Governor's appointee to the task force called the meeting to order and recognized task force members for introductions. Ms. Moore said Act 839 developed a comprehensive list of issues for the task force to examine and to comprise best practices to share across the state.

Election of Task Force Officers

Representative Lampkin nominated Senator Lindsey as chairman. By acclamation of the task force and without objection, Senator Lindsey was elected chairman. Ms. Weathers nominated Representative Lemons as vice-chairman. By acclamation of the task force and without objection, Representative Lemons was elected vice-chairman.

Consideration of a Motion to Authorize Chairs to Approve Special Expenses Incurred by the Task Force

Representative Lampkin made a motion to adopt Legislative Council Rule 24a which concerns the expenditure of legislative council funds for special expenses. Without objection, the motion was approved.

Adopt Task Force Rules of Procedure [EXHIBIT F]

Representative Lampkin made a motion to adopt the rules of procedure. The motion was seconded by Ms. Perkins and approved by the Task Force.

Senator Lindsey reminded task force members of their duties, responsibilities, and the tasks that must be completed in accordance with Act 839 by September 2016. He added that review of financial data will also be an important task.

According to the Resource Allocation of Foundation Funding for Arkansas School Districts Open-Enrollment Charter Schools Report, Arkansas uses a specific formula, known as the matrix, to arrive at the per-student funding amount. The matrix calculates the per-student funding based on the cost of personnel and other resources needed to operate a prototypical school of 500 students. Every year legislators' involved in the adequacy study determine the dollar amount needed to fund each line item of

the matrix, based on the money needed to adequately fund school districts' educational needs. The matrix is used as a tool to set the foundation funding rate. The matrix is divided into two basic sections, 1) the number of people needed for the prototypical school of 500 students, and 2) the cost of all needed resources.

Senator Lindsey noted that there is a line item specifically for special education.

Ms. Nell Smith, Administrator, Policy and Review, Bureau of Legislative Research discussed the matrix funding for special education and the resource allocation report. The resource allocation report shows what funding is provided and how those funds are spent. She said there are 2.9 special education teachers' aides that are funded per 500 students. In response to a question, Ms. Smith will investigate whether the 2.9 special education teachers' aides are included in the recommendations. Mr. Samuel Young noted that special education aides would be very helpful in the classroom. Ms. Smith reported that the special education funding report is due in October and the resource allocation report is due in March. She is interested in knowing whether the task force has any specific issues that they want to have studied. Senator Lindsey said that if the task force is to have financial recommendations, research and discussions must be completed to determine the costs before the March deadline.

Next Meeting Dates

Tentative meeting dates are as follows: **September 16, October 7, November 4, and December 9** all meetings are scheduled for 1:00 p.m. in Room 130 of the State Capitol Building.

Next Meeting Agenda Items

- Ms. Nell Smith - discussion of reports from the last adequacy study to include the matrix and special education funding
- Ms. Lisa Haley
 - discussion of ADE-Press Release (State Personnel Development Grant from the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education)
 - Annual State Determination
 - discussion of the duties and responsibilities as outlined in Act 839; short-term financial goals for 2016; prioritize task force responsibilities

Senator Lindsey asked that task force members review Act 839 and prioritize financial responsibilities and submit their recommendations to committee staff.

Other Business

Task Force members will receive a copy of the membership roster and the link to the Arkansas State Legislature website where the meeting schedule can be located. Staff will also provide links to reports from the last adequacy study and resource allocation information as well as the report by Picus Odden and Associates commissioned by the Arkansas House and Senate Education Committees.

Senator Lindsey recognized task force members for comments: Representative Lampkin said that after the financial priorities are established, subcommittees can be created to tackle the priorities. Ms. Cox suggested that each task force member decide on which subcommittee to serve and bring this information to the next meeting. Senator Lindsey said the discussion of subcommittees can be the first item of discussion at the next meeting, noting that subcommittees have a greater burden and he personally does not care for them. Ms. Haley will send the link for the State Personnel Development Grant from the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education, to be shared with the members as well as information about the annual state determination. Ms. Winfield reminded task force

members of the different quadrants across the state and the specific needs of those areas; and the need to investigate what is being done in early childhood programs. Senator Lindsey said this is a statewide initiative, no matter the zip code/location. Regarding disability rights, Ms. Poulin said there is a huge need for self-advocacy as people do not know their rights. She hopes that the task force can discuss ways to keep more kids with disabilities in schools. Ms. Perkins said that Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families (AACF) is interested in seeing a state-by-state comparison of special education programs; AACF will help to gather data and do the research. Senator Lindsey instructed Ms. Perkins to inform Mr. Rich Huddleston, Director, Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families that the task force will need the resources of AACF to investigate the spectrum of special education and that the timeframe is tight. Senator Lindsey added that Mr. Huddleston and Ms. Perkins will be presenters on a future agenda. According to Ms. Johnson, the retention rate for special education teachers is horrible and her biggest concern is professional development, ongoing training and support. She asked, if Arkansas has a plan for the \$888,000 grant that is designated for training. Ms. Haley stated that she will include this information in her report to the task force.

Ms. Ann Clemmer, Senior Associate Director, Academic Affairs, Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE), was recognized for comments. She said ADHE is responsible for teacher training and wants to ensure that teachers are prepared for special education classrooms. Senator Lindsey noted that ADE is developing a new way to license special education teachers.

Senator Lindsey concluded by encouraging task force members to be active members. Representative Lemons advised task force members to visit the Arkansas General Assembly website at www.arkleg.state.ar.us to locate their legislator's email addresses and to submit their ideas.

The next committee meeting will be held on **Wednesday, September 16, 2015 at 1:00 pm in Room 130 of the State Capitol Building.**

With no further business, the task force adjourned at 2:38 PM.