

MEETING SUMMARY

LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON  
WORKFORCE EDUCATION EXCELLENCE

Tuesday, March 27, 2018

9:00 A.M.

Room 207, State Capitol

Little Rock, Arkansas

Representative Bruce Cozart, the House Co-Chair of the Legislative Task Force on Workforce Education Excellence, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON WORKFORCE EDUCATION EXCELLENCE IN ATTENDANCE:** Senator Jane English, Senate Co-Chair; Representative Bruce Cozart, House Co-Chair; Senator Eddie Cheatham; Senator Lance Eads; Senator Blake Johnson; Representative Rick Beck; Representative Dan M. Douglas; and Representative Dan Sullivan.

**NON-LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON WORKFORCE EDUCATION EXCELLENCE IN ATTENDANCE:** Mr. Kenneth Calhoun; Mr. Randy Henderson; Mr. Stephen Horton; Mr. Mike Rogers; and Mr. Greg Taylor.

**OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE:** Representative Fred Allen; Representative Ken Bragg; Representative Jon S. Eubanks; Representative Kenneth B. Ferguson; Representative David Fielding; Representative Charlene Fite; Representative Vivian Flowers; Representative Jimmy Gazaway; Representative Lane Jean; Representative Austin McCollum; Representative Matthew J. Shepherd; Representative James J. Sorvillo; Representative DeAnn Vaught; and Representative Carlton Wing.

Minutes:

Without objection, the minutes of January 24, 2018, were approved as written.

Exhibit:

Exhibit C – 01/24/2018 Minutes

Remarks by the Chairs

**The Honorable Jane English**, State Senator, District 34, and Co-Chair of the Task Force, was recognized. Senator English commented on Governor Asa Hutchinson's recent announcement about a new program, the Competitive Communities Initiative. She said the goal of the Initiative is to make Arkansas's communities successful in attracting new industry when competing with other states. Senator English said an essential part the Initiative is having an educated and skilled workforce available at the local level to achieve a positive economic impact. Senator English stated that in the Task Force's charge to align career and technical education programs and workforce development programs, it has reviewed all the programs in the state. She said the conversation today will include what is being done in K-12 to support students with careers and skills that align with the needs of industry.

Discussion of the Programmatic Responsibilities of the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE)

Presenter:

**Mr. Johnny Key**, Commissioner, Arkansas Department of Education, was recognized. In a PowerPoint presentation, Commissioner Key discussed how ADE is transforming public education in Arkansas to lead the nation in student-focused education. His presentation included a discussion of ADE's Mission, Goals, Arkansas Education Continuum, Student Success, College and Career Readiness Standards and Assessments, Development of Personal Competencies, and Intentional Planning for Success. In a segment on Enrichment and Real-World Applications, Commissioner Key discussed eliminating barriers; including workforce readiness components in new accountability measures; introducing career possibilities earlier in the K-12 continuum, exposure to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics), and partnering with Learning Blade. Commissioner Key concluded with an overview College/Career/Civic Engagement 1 year after High School; Stakeholder Engagement Opportunities under the Every Student Succeeds Act; and Continuous Cycle of Inquiry.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- effect of standards on teachers in the classroom,
- moving away from compliance and coaching educators to be innovative and creative,
- relationship of opening up pathways for students and school size,
- involvement at the local and state level in tracking graduates,
- level of Learning Blade's activity across the State of Arkansas,
- presenting an overview of developing personal competencies to schools,
- importance of partnerships in enrichment and real-world applications, and
- schools as community partners.

PowerPoint Presentation:

ADE Presentation

Senator English commented that, following the previous overview of K-12, it is important to now hear about the next step in the alignment, *i.e.*, higher education.

Discussion of the Programmatic Responsibilities of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE)

Presenter:

**Dr. Maria Markham**, Director, Arkansas Department of Higher Education, was recognized. Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, Dr. Markham reviewed key workforce preparation programs for which ADHE has programmatic responsibility. She explained four major efforts: Regional Workforce Grants, which provide \$15.2 million biennially in state funding and other nonfederal funds as provided by law, and have served 8,800 students; Workforce Training at Colleges and Universities, which does not receive direct state funding, but is funded through institutional general operating budgets, and serves approximately 65,000 students annually; Carl Perkins, which provides \$2.6 million in federal funds annually, and has 25,536 Perkins-eligible students statewide; and Career Pathways Initiative, which receives \$7.15 million annually in a federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant, and serves 4,000 students annually. Dr. Markham concluded with a discussion of key partners, including Arkansas Career Education, ADE, and the Department of Workforce Services; and of moving forward by giving new initiatives time to work and focusing on messaging to students, parents, educators, and industry.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- mechanism for "marrying" technical courses in two-year colleges with those of shorter terms in industry,
- lack of communications about programs/grants,
- systemic structural inequities,

- administrative costs eating up funding,
- tracking individuals who go into the same industry, or into a high-demand job, for which they have been certified,
- differences in workforce training at two-year colleges vs. at universities, and
- reconciling skills of grant writer with the awarding of grants.

PowerPoint Presentation:

ADHE Key Workforce Preparation Programs

Handouts:

ADHE Key Workforce Preparation Programs

ADHE Responses

Discussion of the Programmatic Responsibilities of the Arkansas Community Colleges

Presenters:

**Mr. Bill Stovall**, Executive Director, Arkansas Community Colleges, was recognized. Mr. Stovall discussed his personal experiences and how this shaped his perspective on workforce issues. He said in order to economically empower the state, the obstacles to economic development have to be torn down. He said workforce training has to include the nontraditional population. His discussion included “know your audience,” credit and non-credit workforce programs, employer expectations, critical thinking skills, addressing community needs, reasons for differences in regional programs, and the ArFuture state grant program. Mr. Stovall introduced presenters for further discussion of initiatives and efforts of community colleges.

**Dr. Margaret Ellibee**, Chancellor, University of Arkansas Pulaski Technical College (UA-PTC), was recognized. Dr. Ellibee presented an overview of one of UA-PTC’s popular and productive workforce training programs. She said outcomes and goals include: 1) training customized to business needs; 2) efficient and just-in-time training rapidly deployed and focused on what the customer wants; 3) training to accommodate the present need and use of continuous quality improvement. Dr. Ellibee discussed the challenges, successes, recognition, and future considerations of high-impact programs developed at UA-PTC.

**Dr. Randy Esters**, President, North Arkansas College, was recognized. Dr. Esters gave a snapshot of the workforce program at North Arkansas College. His discussion included aligning the major players in the region to pull in the same direction; credit and non-credit programs; industrial alliances; accreditation; associate degrees and certificates; pre K-12 partnerships and outreach; robotics camp; and adult and technical education.

**Dr. James Shemwell**, President, Arkansas Northeastern College, was recognized. Dr. Shemwell reviewed workforce preparation programs that the college offers to Arkansans. His discussion included references to The Solutions Group; partnerships; non-credit training; paid internship opportunities; clinical experiences; career placement services; the Opportunity Bus; Career Coaches; and the career readiness certificate. He furnished specific examples of partnering with industry for pre-hire and post-hire training services. Dr. Shemwell stated the most vital takeaway is that the development process for the new higher education funding formula needs to remain urgently committed to incorporating the meaningful elements needed for economic development. He elaborated and expanded on this and other points.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- ✓ completion rate at UA-PTC,
- ✓ types of technical training programs at UA-PTC,
- ✓ mobility of UA-PTC programs, and
- ✓ list of credentials offered at North Arkansas College.

PowerPoint Presentation:

Common Employability Skills

Handouts:

Arkansas Northeastern College  
Common Employability Skills  
North Arkansas College  
UAPTC Dessault Falcon Jet, Letter  
UAPTC Responses

Discussion of the Collaborative Process used by the Arkansas Department of Education, the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, Arkansas Community Colleges, and the Arkansas Department of Career Education in the Development and Implementation of Career and Technical Education Courses

Presenter:

**Dr. Charisse Childers**, Director, Arkansas Department of Career Education (Career Ed), was recognized. Dr. Childers clarified and unified the substance of today's presentations. She noted that Career Ed is developing a list of state- and industry-recognized credentials offered in Arkansas. She said credentials given to students must have value. She reviewed a diagram showing the pathway of a student from middle school up to career, and a chart of Arkansas Career Fields, Clusters, and Pathways. Dr. Childers stated that two things are missing from the overall picture: a database of what all state agencies do that everyone can access, utilize, and understand; and a system that shows where students are in the system, what services and programs they receive, and where they are now on their college and career readiness path. She said Career Ed is working with the Department of Information Services in putting this information together, keeping in mind restrictions on information required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- duplication of services among state agencies,
- need for coordination and communication among state agencies,
- adherence to Governor's request for reorganization of state agencies,
- accountability measures under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA),
- frustration which arises from complexity of the current workforce development system, and
- issue of Amendment 33.

Handouts:

Career Ed Arkansas Career Fields, Clusters, and Pathways  
Career Ed School to Work Diagram

Other Handouts:

Subchapter 11 – Council on Postsecondary Education and Career Readiness  
Workforce Development Idaho

Next Scheduled Meeting:

Wednesday, April 25, 2018, at 9:00 a.m. in Room 207 of the State Capitol, Little Rock

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 12:54 p.m.

Approved: 04/25/2018