

**DRAFT MINUTES**  
**WHOLE CHILD – WHOLE COMMUNITY RECOGNITION**  
**WORKING GROUP**  
**JANUARY 10, 2014**

The Whole Child – Whole Community Recognition Working Group met Friday, January 10, 2014, at 10:00 a.m., in Room 171 of the State Capitol, Little Rock, Arkansas.

Whole Child – Whole Community Recognition Working Group members present were Senator Joyce Elliott and Matt McClure, co-chairs, Sarah Argue, Cheryl Carpenter, Nancy Eddy, Don L. Ernst, Andrew Ford, Jennifer Garner (*via conference call*), Lavina Grandon, Pamela Hoover, Melinda Kinnison, Matt McClure, Andrew Parker, Amanda Roberts, Beth White, and Tony Wood.

Senator Johnny Key and Representative Randy Alexander were also in attendance.

Senator Elliott called the meeting to order. The minutes from the September 6, 2013, Whole Child-Whole Community Recognition Program were approved by acclamation.

**Presentation of Issues Related to Education of Arkansas Students Living in Poverty**

Dr. Brent Benda, Senior Research Specialist, Policy Analysis and Research Services, Bureau of Legislative Research, was recognized to give a PowerPoint presentation entitled “*Success in High Poverty Schools: Uncovering the Secrets of Student Achievement in Schools with High Concentrations of Poverty*.” Dr. Benda stated that although many factors influence the maximum effectiveness regarding student achievement, research indicated poverty levels played an important role on how well a child learns in school. Dr. Benda explained that according to the 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading and math exams, research indicates regardless of the school grade level, children who live below the poverty line and receive free lunches scored below children who receive reduced priced lunches, and children who receive reduced price lunches scored below children who pay full price lunch. He also noted that research confirmed low income 8<sup>th</sup> grade children who live in high poverty states scored lower on Benchmark exams compared to low income children who live in high income states. Dr. Benda said studies have revealed that minority grade school students living in low income areas are frequently taught by unlicensed, out-of-field, and inexperienced teachers who often did not have a record of strong academic performance in their college years. Also, teachers who attend single-session workshops with no follow-up or opportunity to practice skills are not effective in raising student achievement. He said studies show one-to-one tutoring by grade school teachers or trained tutors enhanced by an emphasis on phonics, is considerably more effective than volunteers or teaching assistants. Dr. Benda concluded depending on the quality of staff and programs, after-school programs can positively affect the academic, social-emotional, and physical well-being of grade school students.

**Presentation and Discussion of the Arkansas Opportunity to Learn Campaign**

Mr. Richard Hutchinson, Co-Chair, Arkansas Opportunity to Learn Campaign (OLC), was recognized to present his PowerPoint presentation. Mr. Hutchinson explained OLC is a coalition of statewide organizations, community leaders, parents, students, educators, policymakers and others committed to public education in Arkansas. Arkansas OLC's priority and goals are to increase access to high-quality pre-K programs and work towards universal access; expand quality afterschool and summer programs; improve teacher and administrator preparation and development; increase parent, student, community, and school partnerships; implement the Arkansas DREAM Act; and modernizing career and technical education. Mr. Hutchinson noted that children who participate in pre-K programs score higher in Kindergarten language and 1<sup>st</sup> grade language and math. Students who participate in pre-K programs are less likely to receive special education services, less likely to repeat a grade, and more likely to read on grade level. Research shows that family and community engagement in public schools correlates with higher student achievement and school improvement. When schools, families and the broader community work together to support learning, students earn higher grades, attend school more regularly, stay in school longer and enroll in higher level learning opportunities. Mr. Hutchinson noted according to the Southern Education Foundation, in 2011, 60% of public school students in the United States were from low-income families. OLC is working to ensure children living in poverty are receiving high quality pre-K programs.

Meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.