

MEETING SUMMARY
JOINT MEETING
OF THE
HOUSE AND SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEES ON EDUCATION

ADEQUACY

Monday, October 7, 2019
1:30 P.M.
Room A, MAC
Little Rock, Arkansas

Representative Bruce Cozart, the Chair of the House Committee on Education, called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

MEMBERS OF THE SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE: *Senators:* Joyce Elliott, Vice Chair; Eddie Cheatham; Linda Chesterfield; and James Sturch.

MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE: *Representatives:* Bruce Cozart, Chair; Fred Allen; Rick Beck; LeAnne Burch; Jana Della Rosa; Jim Dotson; Brian Evans; Denise Garner; Grant Hodges; Mark Lowery; Stephen Meeks; Nelda Speaks; and DeAnn Vaught.

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE: *Senators:* Breanne Davis and Jonathan Dismang. *Representatives:* Stan Berry; Kenneth B. Ferguson; Steve Hollowell; Lane Jean; Austin McCollum; Tippi McCullough; Aaron Pilkington; Jamie Scott; Keith Slape; Stu Smith; James Sorvillo; and Vivian Flowers.

Minutes:

Without objection, the minutes of the September 9, 2019, September 10, 2019, and September 30, 2019 meetings were approved as written.

Exhibits:

Exhibit C1 - 09/09/2019 Minutes

Exhibit C2 - 09/10/2019 Minutes

Exhibit C3 - 09/30/2019 Minutes

Discussion of the Academic Facilities Partnership Program/Facilities Distress

Presenter:

Ms. Lori Bowen, Legislative Analyst, Policy Analysis and Research Section, Bureau of Legislative Research, was recognized. Ms. Bowen presented a comprehensive report on the state's efforts to address the responsibility for adequate and substantially equal educational facilities across the state. In her review, she included: *Partnership Program Funding, Sources and Expenditures; Partnership Program Projects; Partnership Program Prioritization; Facilities Wealth Index (FWI); Current & Historical Partnership Program Funding; School Districts' Facilities Condition; District Facility & Bonded Indebtedness Expenditures; Millages; Other Possible Funding Sources; District Surveys; Facilities Funding for Open-Enrollment Charter Schools; School Safety; and Facilities Distress.*

Contributors to the Discussion:

Mr. Murray Britton, Assistant Director, Public School Academic Facilities and Transportation, Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)

Mr. Tim Cain, Director, Public School Academic Facilities and Transportation, DESE

Ms. Lori Freno, Legal Counsel, Office of Legal Services, DESE

Mr. Greg Rogers, Assistant Commissioner, Fiscal and Administrative Services, DESE

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- ✓ recommended changes for distribution of funding,
- ✓ clarification of the base level for facilities funding,
- ✓ building fund balance not being factored into determining a school district's wealth index,
- ✓ clarification of "...the court released the state from court supervision" of facilities funding on page 40 of the report,
- ✓ use of *equal* funding (*Advisory Committee*) vs. *equitable* funding (*Lake View*) on page 7,
- ✓ whether "increasing the cost factor" for construction has a base or is arbitrary,
- ✓ clarification of what is involved in school inspections,
- ✓ reviewing plans for new buildings to ensure design/funding is proper and suitable,
- ✓ funding of Consolidation/Annexation Projects in the Partnership Program Project Categories and Prioritization chart on page 5,
- ✓ clarification of Charter Schools' Expenditures from Facilities Funding Aid Program chart on page 29,
- ✓ paying salaries out of facilities funding,
- ✓ rules for public vs. charter schools,
- ✓ whether there has been discussion, while promulgating rules for safety in buildings, about how to weigh ideas about safety, about safety as a part of adequacy, and about the impact it will have,
- ✓ timeline for unfunded projects to receive funding, and
- ✓ reasons school districts have excess debt service millage.

Handouts:

Handout D1 – Partnership Program and Facilities Distress Highlights

Handout D2 – Review of Facilities Partnership Program and Facilities Distress Report

Discussion of Issues Related to Isolated Funding

Presenter:

Ms. Adrienne Beck, Legislative Analyst, Policy Analysis and Research Section, Bureau of Legislative Research, was recognized, and stated the review of expenditures from isolated school funding is required by the Adequacy Study. In a detailed discussion of her report, Ms. Beck included: *Isolated and Special Needs Isolated Funding; Characteristics of Isolated Schools; and Expenditures.*

Handouts:

Handout E1 – Isolated and Special Needs Isolated Funding and Expenditures Highlights

Handout E2 – Isolated and Special Needs Isolated Funding and Expenditures Report

Other Handouts:

Adequacy Tracking Sheet

Next Scheduled Meetings:

Tuesday, October 8, 2019, at 9:00 a.m. in MAC, Room A, Little Rock (*Vendor Presentations*)

Monday, November 4, 2019, at 1:30 p.m. in MAC, Room A, Little Rock (*Adequacy*)

Tuesday, November 5, 2019, at 9:00 a.m. in MAC, Room A, Little Rock (*Adequacy*)

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.