

MINUTES**HOUSE AND SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEES ON EDUCATION****Monday, October 19, 2020****9:00 A.M.****Room A, MAC****Little Rock, Arkansas**

Committee Members Present: Senators Jane English, Chair; Linda Chesterfield, Lance Eads, and Mark Johnson; Representatives Bruce Cozart, Chair; Reginald Murdock, Vice Chair; Fred Allen, Rick Beck, LeAnne Burch, Frances Cavanaugh, Gary Deffenbaugh, Jim Dotson, Brian Evans, Denise Garner, Mark Lowery, Stephen Meeks, Nelda Speaks, and Joy Springer

Other Members Present: Representatives Stan Berry, Denise Jones Ennett, Kenneth Ferguson, Austin McCollum, and Tippi McCullough

Senator English called the meeting to order.

Approval of Minutes of September 29, 2020, October 5, 2020, and October 6, 2020 Meetings [Exhibits C1, C2, & C3]

Without objection, the Minutes from September 29, 2020, October 5, 2020, and October 6, 2020 meetings were approved.

Review of Resources in the Matrix [Exhibits E1, E2, & E3]

Ms. Amanda Brown, Senior Associate, APA Consulting, gave a review of the resources noted in the matrix and any data not addressed that has been highlighted as being necessary. Ms. Brown discussed the full time equivalents (FTEs) per 500 students in regard to classroom teachers from grades kindergarten through 12 focusing on class. She also noted the need for funding for other FTEs, if there has been a change over time in the need for these educators, and how this would affect the funding currently provided in the matrix. Ms. Brown addressed school level salaries and benefits funded in the matrix, noting that the funding provided is higher than the average statewide salary. Arkansas has higher average salaries than three neighboring states and has consistently increased funding, but the competitiveness of salaries is still a concern. Ms. Brown discussed school level resources, including student mental health, school resource officer or security, assistant principals, and dyslexia resources. These resources are not currently funded in the matrix, but have been highlighted in the data as being necessary. She noted that these resources should be considered for additional funding in the matrix as the need for them grows, as pointed out by stakeholder data.

Methods for Routinely Reviewing Adequacy [Exhibits F1&F2]

Mr. Justin Silverstein, Co-CEO, APA Consulting, presented on the history and approach used by Arkansas to review adequacy, discussed the costing out methodologies used across the country, and provided examples of other states' use of these methods to routinely review adequacy. Following the Lake View decision, the legislature has been working to meet the review requirements which led to few changes in the major components of the matrix over time. In reviewing the costing methodologies, Mr. Silverstein noted there are four methodologies: evidence-based, professional judgment, successful schools, and cost function. Arkansas is currently using the evidence-based approach and this approach has led to few changes in the major components over time. Mr. Silverstein also discussed adequacy reviews for three other states, Maryland, Mississippi, and Wyoming, and noted that Arkansas is one of few states that have a process in place to review and set parameters of the school finance system. In comparison to Arkansas, a review of these states gives a wider scope of the approach used to review adequacy.

Other Business

Senator English discussed the handout regarding the ACT profile report for the state. She mentioned how a large number of students didn't have the chance to take the test due to ACT closing many of their testing locations across the country.

Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:25 a.m.

DRAFT