

MEETING SUMMARY

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

ADEQUACY

Tuesday, April 15, 2014

9:00 A.M.

Room 171, State Capitol

Little Rock, Arkansas

Senator Joyce Elliott, the Vice Chair of the Senate Interim Committee on Education, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

MEMBERS OF THE SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE: Senator Joyce Elliott, Vice Chair; Senator Eddie Cheatham; Senator Jim Hendren; Senator Uvalde Lindsey; and Senator Jason Rapert.

MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE: Representative Charles L. Armstrong; Representative Les Carnine; Representative Robert Dale; Representative Jody Dickinson; Representative Charlotte Vining Douglas; Representative Jon Eubanks; Representative Sheilla Lampkin; Representative Homer Lenderman; and Representative Brent Talley.

NON-VOTING MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE: Representative Randy Alexander; and Representative Chris Richey.

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE: Senator Jonathan Dismang; Senator David Wyatt; Representative Andy Davis; Representative Nate Bell; Representative David Branscum; Representative Jeremy Gillam; Representative Bill Gossage; Representative Hank Wilkins, IV; Representative Andrea Lea; Representative Stephanie Malone; Representative Walls McCrary; Representative Betty Overbey; Representative Mary Slinkard; and Representative Tommy Thompson.

Discussion of Research Report, *Efficiency of School Districts in Arkansas Based on Per Pupil Expenditures and Student Achievement*

Presenter & Synopsis:

Dr. Brent Benda, Senior Research Specialist, Policy Analysis and Research, Bureau of Legislative Research, was recognized. Dr. Benda, in an introduction to a PowerPoint presentation, stated that efficiency is one of the pillars of school finance along with adequacy and equity. He said efficiency is based on the assumption that there's a linear relationship between inputs, *e.g.*, expenditures, and outcomes, *e.g.*, achievement. He said that a goal of efficiency is to see how far districts are from that linear relationship. He clarified that examining efficiency is important to ferreting out inefficient districts, identifying lighthouse districts to serve as models for less efficient districts, and measuring statewide efficiency. He said the measure of student achievement used in this study was a district's average percentage of students who scored proficient or advanced on six Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment and Accountability Program (ACTAAP), or Benchmark, tests in 3rd grade and 8th grade math and literacy, and geometry, and 11th grade literacy. He said the predictor, or the input, is comprised of federal, state, and local funding sources. He noted the 2013 ACTAAP data were provided by the Arkansas Research Center, in Conway, and the expenditure and demographic data used was from the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE). Dr. Benda described the concepts behind efficiency that would be discussed in today's presentation, and walked the Committees through the report, including the findings.

Contributor to the Discussion:

Ms. Nell Smith, Administrator, Policy Analysis and Research, Bureau of Legislative Research

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- explaining the alignment of school districts on scatter charts,
- making comparisons relative to other states,
- using national scores, such as National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores, as performance indicators,
- impact of communities and families on the performance of school districts, and
- clarification of the quadriform chart on page 7.

PowerPoint Presentation:

Efficiency of School Districts in Arkansas Based on Per Pupil Expenditures and Student Achievement

Handout:

Efficiency of School Districts in Arkansas Based on Per Pupil Expenditures and Student Achievement

Discussion of Alternative Learning Environment (ALE) Categorical Funding

Presenter & Synopsis:

Ms. Nell Smith, Administrator, Policy Analysis and Research, Bureau of Legislative Research, was recognized. Ms. Smith stated that three of four categoricals would be discussed this morning: Alternative Learning Environment (ALE), English Language Learners (ELL), and Professional Development (PD). She noted that the fourth categorical, National School Lunch (NSL) state funding, had previously been discussed. Ms. Smith walked the Committees through the ALE report. She provided historical background, program requirements, student demographics, funding, expenditures, fund balances, and program effectiveness and student achievement.

Contributor to the Discussion:

Dr. Tom Kimbrell, Commissioner, Arkansas Department of Education

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- ◆ percentage of African-American males in the demographics on the chart, ALE Student Population by Gender,
- ◆ additional activities and services needed by ALE students,
- ◆ rationale for assigning separate LEA (Local Education Agency) numbers to eight ALE schools and resulting consequences,
- ◆ measuring effectiveness of ALE programs,
- ◆ testing and scores for ALE students,
- ◆ building a separate system for ALE students so as not to lose them in the system,
- ◆ transiency of the ALE student population,
- ◆ looking at pre-tests and/or post-tests,
- ◆ use of End-Of-Course (EOC) and Benchmark assessments required by legislation; possibility of fair and reasonable additions,
- ◆ Act 1118 of 2011 and developing a new student action plan, and its relationship with the Individualized Education Program (IEP) that is used with special education students; interventions in place to ensure screenings and opportunities are available for disruptive students,
- ◆ requiring a school district to provide an ALE program to all who qualify, and
- ◆ data on having an ALE program in a separate environment vs. within a school.

Handouts:

Adequacy Study Statutory Responsibilities
ALE Programs Funding Chart
Alternative Learning Environments (ALE), Bureau Brief
State Categorical Funding Review Alternative Learning Environments (ALE)

Senator Elliott announced that there would be a deviation from the agenda, and that Ms. Nell Smith would continue with Item F in the presentation.

Discussion of Professional Development (PD) Categorical Funding

Presenter & Synopsis:

Ms. Nell Smith, Administrator, Policy Analysis and Research, Bureau of Legislative Research, was recognized. Ms. Smith related that, unlike the other three categorical funds, PD is not targeting any particular student population, but is actually targeting teachers and the provision of continuing education for teachers. She said that PD is considered a categorical because, like the other categoricals, the use of the funding is restricted to just PD expenditures. She said that PD is a program of continuing education activities for teachers, administrators, and some classified staff aimed at improving teaching skills and increasing knowledge. Ms. Smith discussed the PD report, including background, program requirements, funding, expenditures, fund balances, and the Teacher Evaluation and Support System (TESS).

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- reductions in funding to school districts,
- giving teachers the opportunity to answer questions in a future report,
- requiring teachers with multiple certifications to fill out a separate evaluation form for each discipline,
- online training vs. traditional training,
- funding going to AETN (Arkansas Educational Television Network) and others,
- importance of collaboration,
- training teachers to keep them in the classroom; person-to-person intensive training, and
- breaking down travel costs.

Handouts:

AR Teacher Excellence Support System (TESS) Summative Evaluation Form
Professional Development (PD), Bureau Brief
State Categorical Funding Review (PD)

Senator Elliott announced that the Committees would return to Item E on the agenda.

Discussion of English Language Learners (ELL) Categorical Funding

Presenter & Synopsis:

Dr. Mandy Gillip, Legislative Analyst, Policy Analysis and Research, Bureau of Legislative Research, was recognized. Dr. Gillip said that ELL funding is the Arkansas categorical funding program that supports students who are not proficient in English. She stated that in 2012-13, there were about 34,272 ELL students in Arkansas, or roughly 7.46% of the total student population, and that the growth in ELL enrollment has risen about 95% since 2005. Dr. Gillip discussed background, program overview, funding, and achievement.

Contributor to the Discussion:

Dr. Andre Guerrero, Director, Programs for Language Minority Students, Arkansas Department of Education

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- variables of fluency and setting standards of fluency for ELL students,
- five domains of fluency,
- distinguishing between social language and academic language in proficiency,
- making choices in instruction and consideration of nuances in reaching efficiency, and
- handling issues concerning the intake model for newcomers.

Handouts:

English Language Learners (ELL), Bureau Brief
State Categorical Funding Review English Language Learners (ELL)

Other Handouts:

Categorical Fund Balances, Memo
NSL-related Responses to District and School Survey, Memo

Next Scheduled Meetings:

Wednesday, April 16, 2014, at 8:00 a.m. at the Little Rock Marriott Hotel, *State & Public School Life & Health Insurance Program Legislative Task Force*

Tuesday, April 22, 2014, at 11:00 a.m. at Mary Mae Jones Elementary School, Bentonville, *Joint Education*

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 11:43 a.m.