

State of Arkansas

Call Item 4

84th General Assembly

# A Bill

Second Extraordinary Session, 2003

HOUSE BILL 1063

By: Representatives Elliott, Cleveland

## For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO CREATE THREE (3) PILOT PROGRAMS TO  
STUDY THE EFFECT OF REDUCING TEACHER-STUDENT  
RATIOS IN GRADES KINDERGARTEN THOUGH TWELVE (K-  
12); AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

## Subtitle

AN ACT TO CREATE THREE (3) PILOT  
PROGRAMS TO STUDY THE EFFECT OF REDUCING  
TEACHER-STUDENT RATIOS IN GRADES  
KINDERGARTEN THOUGH TWELVE (K-12).

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 15 Subchapter 1 is amended  
to add two additional sections to read as follows:

6-15-102. Findings -- Purpose.

(a) The General Assembly finds that:

(1) Consultants working with the Joint Committee on Educational  
Adequacy reported national research that indicates student performance is  
improved by the reduction of teacher-student ratios;

(2) A reduction in the teacher-student ratio will require a  
significant increase in funding; and

(3) Before making a decision to lower the teacher-student ratio  
in Arkansas, sufficient information should be available to allow the General  
Assembly to determine whether such a reduction would justify the added  
dollars required.

(b) The pilot program is intended to determine the impact that



reducing the teacher-student ratio would have on grades kindergarten through three (K-3), four through eight (4-8), and nine through twelve (9-12) respectively.

6-15-103. Pilot project -- Teacher-student ratios.

(a) During the 2004-2005 school year, the Department of Education shall establish three (3) pilot programs to study the educational effects of reducing teacher-student ratios in, respectively, grades:

(1) Kindergarten through three (K-3);

(2) Four through eight (4-8); and

(3) Nine through twelve (9-12).

(b)(1) The Department of Education shall select sixteen (16) elementary schools for the pilot project for grades kindergarten through three (K-3).

(2) The Department of Education shall select four (4) schools from each congressional district with the following characteristics:

(A) One (1) school in each congressional district from a school district with each of the following enrollment categories:

(i) Five thousand (5,000) or more students;

(ii) One thousand five hundred (1,500) to four thousand nine hundred ninety-nine (4,999) students;

(iii) Seven hundred fifty (750) to one thousand four hundred ninety-nine (1,499) students; and

(iv) Below seven hundred fifty (750) students;

(B) At least two (2) classes at each grade from grades kindergarten through three (K-3); and

(C) Pilot and control classes composed of substantially percentages of students who:

(i) Qualify for free or reduced-lunch fees; or

(ii) Are below two hundred percent (200%) of the federal poverty level.

(c)(1) The Department of Education shall select eight (8) schools for the pilot project for grades four through eight (4-8) to determine the impact of reducing teacher-student ratios in the areas of English and mathematics to one (1) teacher for each twenty (20) students.

(2) The Department of Education shall select four (4) schools

1 from each congressional district with the following characteristics:

2 (A) One (1) school in each congressional district from a  
3 school district with each of the following enrollment categories:

4 (i) Five thousand (5,000) or more students to one  
5 thousand five hundred (1,500); and

6 (ii) Fewer than one thousand four hundred ninety  
7 nine (1,499) students;

8 (B) At least two (2) classes at each grade from grades  
9 four through eight (4-8); and

10 (C) Pilot and control classes composed of substantially  
11 percentages of students who:

12 (i) Qualify for free or reduced-lunch fees; or

13 (ii) Are below two hundred percent (200%) of the  
14 federal poverty level.

15 (d)(1)(A) The Department of Education shall select eight (8) schools  
16 for the pilot project for grades nine through twelve (9-12) to determine the  
17 impact of reducing teacher-student ratios in the areas of English and  
18 mathematics to one (1) teacher for each twenty (20) students.

19 (B) The Department of Education shall determine the  
20 specific course and grade levels to be studied in the pilot project.

21 (2) The department shall select two (2) schools from each  
22 congressional district ratios with the following characteristics:

23 (A) One (1) school in each congressional district from a  
24 school district with each of the following enrollment categories:

25 (i) Five thousand (5,000) or more students to one  
26 thousand five hundred (1,500); and

27 (ii) Fewer than one thousand four hundred ninety  
28 nine (1,499) students;

29 (B) At least two (2) classes at each grade from grades  
30 nine through twelve (9-12); and

31 (C) Pilot and control classes composed of substantially  
32 percentages of students who:

33 (i) Qualify for free or reduced-lunch fees; or

34 (ii) Are below two hundred percent (200%) of the  
35 federal poverty level.

36 (e)(1) The Department of Education shall consult with the Department

1 of Higher Education to select one (1) Arkansas university to assist and study  
2 the pilot project schools in each congressional district.

3 (2)(A) Each selected university shall appoint a qualified  
4 faculty member or graduate student to represent the university in the pilot  
5 project.

6 (B) Each selected university shall provide the selected  
7 faculty member or graduate student with sufficient release time to assist  
8 effectively in the project.

9 (f)(1) After the pilot project schools and universities have been  
10 selected, the Department of Education shall convene a meeting of persons from  
11 each school and university to outline the pilot research project.

12 (2) The meeting shall be held during the summer of 2004 to  
13 prepare for the 2004-2005 school year.

14 (3) In consultation with the Department of Education, the  
15 research group shall outline the details of a pilot program that will meet  
16 research standards necessary to draw valid conclusions based on the outcome  
17 data from the project.

18 (4) During the project year, the research groups may meet as the  
19 members deem necessary.

20 (g)(1)(A) Each university shall prepare a report on the pilot project  
21 for the public schools under study by that university.

22 (B)(i) Early in the project year, the pilot project  
23 schools and universities shall design a format for the reports.

24 (ii) The final report from all schools shall employ  
25 the format designed under subdivision (g)(1)(B)(i) of this section.

26 (2) The Department of Education shall compile a summary report  
27 covering all the pilot project schools.

28 (h) On or before September 1, 2005, the Department of Education shall  
29 report the results of the pilot project to the Governor, the State Board of  
30 Education, the Legislative Council, and the House and Senate Interim  
31 Committees on Education.