

1 State of Arkansas  
2 84th General Assembly  
3 Second Extraordinary Session, 2003  
4

As Engrossed: S1/20/04  
**A Bill**

Call Item 4

SENATE BILL 69

5 By: Senators Steele, Brown, Higginbotham, G. Jeffress, Malone, Salmon, Wilkins  
6  
7

8 **For An Act To Be Entitled**

9 AN ACT TO CREATE A COMMITTEE ON OPPORTUNITY,  
10 EQUITY, AND FAIRNESS WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF  
11 EDUCATION; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.  
12

13 **Subtitle**

14 AN ACT TO CREATE A COMMITTEE ON  
15 OPPORTUNITY, EQUITY, AND FAIRNESS WITHIN  
16 THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.  
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18

19 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:  
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21 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 25, Chapter 6, Subchapter 1 is amended  
22 to add an additional section to read as follows:

23 25-6-107. Committee on Opportunity, Equity, and Fairness.

24 (a) As used in this section, "clearinghouse" means an office that:

25 (1) Mediates between the State Board of Education or the  
26 Department of Education and school districts concerning opportunity, equity,  
27 and fairness in the public schools; and

28 (2) In matters concerning opportunity, equity, and  
29 fairness in public schools, ensures that:

30 (A) All proper procedures and protocols are followed  
31 in handling the mediation;

32 (B) Information related to the mediation is  
33 disseminated efficiently and effectively to all parties; and

34 (C) All parties clearly and fully understand the  
35 process, the law, and their rights under the law.  
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1           (b) There is created the Committee on Opportunity, Equity, and  
2 Fairness in Education to be housed within the department.

3           (c) The committee shall:

4                   (1) Advise that decisions by the state board and the department  
5 include a concern for impacts on all populations;

6                   (2) Serve as an advocate for all schools, students, parents, and  
7 communities;

8                   (3) Review grant-making, rule-making, and enforcement actions to  
9 ensure that state board and department decisions are made without bias  
10 towards race, socioeconomic class, gender, geography, or religion;

11                   (4) Serve as a clearinghouse for grievances, conflicts, and  
12 disputes between the state board or the department and school districts and  
13 between local school districts and parents or students if the local grievance  
14 procedure did not resolve an issue on opportunity, equity, and fairness  
15 issues;

16                   (5) Ensure that each school district in the state has a well-  
17 publicized local grievance procedure for opportunity, equity, and fairness  
18 complaints between parents or students and the school or school district;

19                   (6) Review teacher hiring practices statewide to ensure good-  
20 faith efforts of schools statewide to hire teachers from the same demographic  
21 groups as their students; and

22                   (7) Review the development and maintenance by the state board  
23 and the department of programs to recruit and retain all teachers.

24           (d) The state board and the department shall cooperate with the  
25 committee in carrying out the purposes of this section.

26           (e) The committee shall be composed of the following members:

27                   (1) Three (3) members appointed by the Governor, with no more  
28 than one (1) member residing in the same congressional district and with at  
29 least one (1) member being a parent or guardian of a child currently enrolled  
30 in an Arkansas public school;

31                   (2) Three (3) members appointed by the Speaker of the House of  
32 Representatives, with no more than one (1) member residing in the same  
33 congressional district and with at least one (1) member being a parent or  
34 guardian of a child currently enrolled in an Arkansas public school;

35                   (3) Three (3) members appointed by the President Pro Tempore of  
36 the Senate, with no more than one (1) member residing in the same

1 congressional district and with at least one (1) member being a parent or  
2 guardian of a child currently enrolled in an Arkansas public school; and

3 (4) A nonvoting member representing the office of the Attorney  
4 General.

5 (f) The Director of the Department of Education shall call the first  
6 meeting of the committee no more than sixty (60) days after the effective  
7 date of this section.

8 (g) At the first meeting, the members shall elect a chair who shall  
9 serve a one-year term.

10 (h) A majority of the members of the committee shall constitute a  
11 quorum to transact the business of the committee.

12 (i)(1) The committee shall meet at least semi-annually in the offices  
13 of the department or at such other locations as the committee shall  
14 determine.

15 (2) The department shall provide services and office space for  
16 the committee.

17 (j) Each member of the committee may receive expense reimbursement and  
18 stipends in accordance with § 25-16-902.

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20 /s/ Steele  
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