

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

**ADEQUACY**

**Tuesday, January 7, 2014**  
**9:00 A.M.**  
**Room 171, State Capitol**  
**Little Rock, Arkansas**

Senator Johnny Key, the 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 Johnny Key, Chair; Senator Joyce Elliott, Vice Chair; Senator Eddie Cheatham; Senator Alan Clark; 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 John Catlett; Representative Bruce Cozart; Representative Robert Dale; Representative Charlotte Vining Douglas; Representative Debra Hobbs; Representative Sheilla Lampkin; Representative Homer Lenderman; Representative James Ratliff; and Representative Brent Talley.

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

**OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE:** Senator Eddie Joe Williams; Representative Denny Altes; Representative Charlene Fite; Representative Bill Gossage; Representative John Hutchison; Representative Stephanie Malone; Representative Walls McCrary; Representative Mark McElroy; Representative David Meeks; Representative Betty Overbey; Representative Sue Scott; Representative Mary Slinkard; Representative Butch Wilkins; Representative Henry "Hank" Wilkins, IV; and Representative Tommy Wren.

**The Honorable Stephen Meeks**, State Representative, District 67, was recognized. Representative Meeks introduced two of his constituents who were welcomed by the Committees.

Discussion of Issues Related to NSLA (National School Lunch Act) Funding

*Presenter & Synopsis:*

**Ms. Nell Smith**, Administrator, Policy Analysis and Research Section, Bureau of Legislative Research, was recognized. Ms. Smith referred to highlighted items on a handout of Adequacy Study responsibilities, and commented that the following presentations would include a review of expenditures from National School Lunch (NSL) state funding and a discussion of required items in Act 1467 of 2013. Ms. Smith covered information contained in a memorandum on NSL State Categorical Funding that was illustrated by charts, graphs and maps. She discussed the funding provided to districts, the number of low-income students in Arkansas, data on the performance of these students on state and national tests, and information about districts' use of state NSL funding.

*Contributors to the Discussion:*

**Dr. Richard Abernathy**, Executive Director, Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators (AAEA)

**Ms. Jerri Derlikowski**, Director of Education Policy and Finance, Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families (AACF)

**Dr. Tom Kimbrell**, Commissioner, Arkansas Department of Education (ADE)

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- not thinking of transitional funding as a loss in funding, but as an adjustment to a rate,
- crunching numbers to give schools flat rates instead of using percentages per student,
- “mission creep” for what is in the Matrix being designated to be paid for by NSL funds,
- understanding the perception that the money is intended to raise the achievement of all students,
- most of the money not being used for the purpose for which it was intended,
- gap in achievement between low-income and other students,
- determining trends in order to evaluate the effectiveness of districts’ spending in high-poverty areas,
- ADE contracting for data with the Arkansas Research Center (ARC),
- calculation methodology for funding,
- purpose, original intent, and creation of flexibility in use of NSL funds to close the achievement gap,
- building up fund balances due to restrictions; Helena-West Helena School District as an example,
- creating programs, but having a manpower issue,
- Mr. Andrew Tolbert and the ADE’s State Office of Intensive Support,
- National Office for Research on Measurement and Evaluation Systems (NORMES) retaining intellectual property rights to all calculations and formulas when its contract with the ADE ran out,
- Arkansas Comprehensive School Improvement Plans (ACSIPs) and the process in place for approval of deviations from spending recommendations,
- passing of statutes that provide flexibility in the use of NSL funds,
- examples of use of Title 1 federal funds,
- meaning of “highly-qualified” teachers, and
- clarification of *teacher bonuses*, *parent education*, and *transfers to other funds* on page 11 chart in the memo.

Handouts:

Act 1467 of 2013

Adequacy Study Statutory Responsibilities - NSL

National School Lunch State Categorical Funding, Bureau Brief

NSL State Categorical Funding, Memo

Presenter & Synopsis:

**Dr. Brent Benda**, Senior Research Specialist, Policy Analysis and Research Section, Bureau of Legislative Research, was recognized. Dr. Benda discussed his report, “Success in High Poverty Schools: Uncovering the ‘Secrets’ of Student Achievement in Schools with High Concentrations of Poverty.” He noted that the purpose of the report is to identify educational interventions that rigorous research has shown to be consistently effective in contributing to student achievement gains across different methodologies, student demographics, school settings, and community characteristics. Dr. Benda’s review included findings on Effective Teaching, Professional Development (PD), Leadership, Response to Intervention (RTI) & Tutoring, After-School Programs, and Effects of Summer School.

Contributor to the Discussion:

**Dr. Tom Kimbrell**, Commissioner, Arkansas Department of Education

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- duration of programs using NSL money is insufficient to determine effectiveness within Arkansas,

- constitution of “upper quartile” of teachers and ability of these teachers to deliver quality instruction as measured by student performance on various assessments,
- enabling teachers to become “highly effective,”
- doing a comparative analysis on the effects of different measures of poverty,
- not enough parental involvement in most schools,
- whether programs in use are considered as “effective,”
- directing funds toward effective principals in high-poverty districts,
- comparing students in poverty today with students in the same circumstances fifty (50) years ago,
- determining teacher effectiveness,
- having discussions with high-poverty schools that are making gains,
- “aspiring principal” program in school districts,
- changes in role and training of principals,
- effective use of all resources to achieve student gains and performance success; Salem School District as an example,
- leadership as key to assist development of a school culture of achievement and effectiveness of instruction,
- loss of leadership in Arkansas because of a dwindling supply of opportunities; magnification of problems because of geography,
- revisiting the Odden and Picus model; developing a new model,
- level of compensation needed to get leaders to move to high-poverty districts, and
- knowing about communities before making comparisons.

PowerPoint Presentation:

Success in High Poverty Schools

Handouts:

Achievement Chart

Essential Points from Research on Effective Interventions (Strategies) for Achievement Gains

Success in High Poverty Schools, Notes Pages

Success in High Poverty Schools, Research Report

Presenter & Synopsis:

**Mr. Richard Wilson**, Assistant Director, Research Services, Bureau of Legislative Research, was recognized. Mr. Wilson discussed graphs in the handout, NSL Categorical Funding Options. The graphs included:

- A) Current Funding Structure;
- B) Example of a Smoothing Distribution, an exponential function created in order to eliminate the funding cliffs and to allow more funding to high-poverty districts;
- C) Smoothing Distribution Simplified, an example fulfilling a requirement of Act 1467 of 2013 to derive a new funding formula that distributes funding on a sliding scale, and weights the funding provision to differentiate between free and reduced; and
- D) Smoothing Distribution Simplified – Option 2.

He noted that on site visits and in discussions with superintendents, complaints are not being heard on the current NSL funding structure. He commented that what is currently being heard, primarily from small, rural school districts, is:

1. restrictions need to be relaxed,
2. unable to get additional funds because of being stuck at the 68% level without receiving verification from parents,
3. “funding cliffs” when moving between tiers, and

4. excessive NSL categorical fund balances.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- consideration of other models,
- fairness of a model for all students in Arkansas,
- number of school districts that are getting no funds,
- number of school districts that fall into “cliff” areas,
- lack of parental verification,
- *hold harmless* provisions, and
- whether models reduce overall spending.

PowerPoint Presentation:

NSL Categorical Funding Options

Handout:

NSL Categorical Funding Options

Other Handout:

Newspaper Column, Jim Davidson, A Project Everyone Can Support!

Next Scheduled Meetings:

Monday, January 13, 2014, at 1:30 p.m. in Room 171 of the State Capitol in Little Rock  
Monday, February 3, 2014, at 10:00 a.m. in Room 171 of the State Capitol in Little Rock  
Tuesday, February 4, 2014, at 9:00 a.m. in Room 171 of the State Capitol in Little Rock

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 12:28 p.m.

*Approved: 02/03/14*