

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

ADEQUACY

Wednesday, November 29, 2017

10:00 A.M.

Room 171, State Capitol

Little Rock, Arkansas

Representative Bruce Cozart, the Chair of the House Interim Committee on Education, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

MEMBERS OF THE SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE: Senator Jane English, Chair; Senator Joyce Elliott, Vice Chair; Senator Linda Chesterfield; Senator Alan Clark; Senator Bart Hester; Senator Blake Johnson; and Senator Uvalde Lindsey.

MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE: Representative Bruce Cozart, Chair; Representative Charlotte V. Douglas, Vice Chair; Representative Andy Davis; Representative Gary Deffenbaugh; Representative Jana Della Rosa; Representative Jon S. Eubanks; Representative Mickey Gates; Representative Mark Lowery; Representative Mark D. McElroy; Representative George B. McGill; Representative James Sturch; and Representative DeAnn Vaught.

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE: Senator Eddie Cheatham; Senator Jonathan Dismang; Senator Trent Garner; Senator Jimmy Hickey, Jr.; Senator Missy Irvin; Senator Bruce Maloch; Senator Larry Teague; Representative Scott Baltz; Representative Carol Dalby; Representative Jim Dotson; Representative Trevor Drown; Representative Kenneth B. Ferguson; Representative Charlene Fite; Representative Jimmy Gazaway; Representative Michael John Gray; Representative Joe Jett; Representative Roger Lynch; Representative Austin McCollum; Representative Reginald Murdock; Representative Aaron Pilkington; Representative Mathew W. Pitsch; Representative Marcus E. Richmond; Representative Matthew J. Shepherd; Representative Dwight Tosh; Representative Jeff Wardlaw; and Representative Danny Watson.

Discussion of Issues Related to Alternative Learning Environment (ALE) Categorical Funding

Presenter:

Ms. Julie Holt, Legislative Analyst, Policy Analysis and Research Section, Bureau of Legislative Research, was recognized. Ms. Holt said Alternative Learning Environments (ALEs) are programs that school districts are required to offer for those students who do not thrive in a regular classroom environment. She noted three (3) things would be included in today's presentation which have not been discussed in previous reports: 1) concerns about "parking" students in ALE, 2) increase in districts participating in consortia, and 3) drop-out rates as an outcome measure. Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation that included charts and graphs, Ms. Holt discussed the definition of ALE, student characteristics and demographics, programs, teachers and staff, funding, expenditures, consortia, ALE programs run by the Arch Ford Education Service Cooperative (ESC), and accountability and outcomes.

Contributors to the Discussion:

Mr. Johnny Key, Commissioner, Arkansas Department of Education

Ms. Stacy Smith, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Learning Services, Arkansas Department of Education

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- solutions that consortia provide with regard to funding,
- helping ALE students along the job path,
- concern over how money is spent; hiring additional staff,
- number of staff working on ALE at Arkansas Department of Education (ADE),
- ALE Careers Hub and Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG),
- number of school districts having a separate ALE campus,
- explanation of credit recovery at Bronze level of Hub,
- size of digital instruction component used in credit recovery,
- whether pathways considered for ALE students might be too narrow,
- effect of Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) on ALE programs,
- decreasing number of students needing credit recovery in next ten (10) years,
- ALE environment offering students a non-traditional way to find career pathways,
- influence of partnership aspect on ALE students and their career pathways, and
- getting help in funding to address mental health issues on school campuses.

PowerPoint Presentation:

Alternative Learning Environments, 2018 Adequacy Study

Handouts:

Adequacy Study Responsibilities

Alternative Learning Environments, Bureau Brief

State Categorical Funding Review, Alternative Learning Environments (ALE), Report

Discussion of the Academic Facilities Partnership Program/Facilities Distress

Presenter:

Ms. Nell Smith, Administrator, Policy Analysis and Research Section, Bureau of Legislative Research, was recognized. Ms. Smith stated that an analysis of facilities funding is not required by the Adequacy Study statute; however, the topic will be addressed since it was a major part of the *Lake View* lawsuit. She initially presented a historical overview of the facilities program; and said the Academic Facilities Partnership Program, created by Act 2206 of 2005, is the state's main school facilities funding program for ongoing facilities construction needs. Utilizing charts and graphs, Ms. Smith said the Partnership Program provides funding for districts to pay for the following types of facilities projects: 1) warm, safe and dry, 2) new facilities, 3) add-ons or conversions, and 4) projects resulting from district consolidation or annexation. She went on to cover facilities funding, sources and expenditures, prioritization, current funding cycle, historical project numbers and funding, and regional analysis of partnership funding. She commented that since the program began, it has contributed more than \$930 million in state funding and completed more than 1,400 projects. Ms. Smith then shared results of a principal online survey that was designed to help assess the quality of school buildings in the state; followed by a discussion of millages and the facilities wealth index. She concluded with a statutorily-required review of the facilities distress program.

Contributor to the Discussion:

Mr. Brad Montgomery, Director, Public School Academic Facilities and Transportation

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- ❖ revising the current wealth index,
- ❖ Advisory Committee reviewing wealth index construct, ranking of approved projects, and prioritization of state's funding,
- ❖ timeline of the Advisory Committee report; submission to the Commission for Arkansas Public School Academic Facilities and Transportation by July 31, 2018,
- ❖ Partnership Program funding state has paid as a *per-student* amount (map on page 11),
- ❖ Nevada School District not receiving partnership funds,
- ❖ capping warm, safe, and dry systems projects,
- ❖ effect of wealth index on school districts that are not wealthy, but have managed to put funds aside,
- ❖ districts that have benefitted from rescinded funds,
- ❖ components used to calculate the wealth index of a school district, and
- ❖ clarifying responsibility of the Division of Public School Academic Facilities and Transportation.

Handouts:

Academic Facilities Funding, Expenditures and Distress, Report
Partnership Program and Facilities Distress, Bureau Brief

Discussion of Student Achievement Statistics

Presenter:

Ms. Adrienne Beck, Legislative Analyst, Policy Analysis and Research Section, Bureau of Legislative Research, was recognized. Ms. Beck, utilizing charts and tables, presented the Committees with a summary of the report, *Student Achievement*. She discussed ACT Aspire, NAEP, Advanced Placement (AP), ACT, High School Graduation Rates, Higher Education Attainment, and Education Week's Quality Counts.

Handout:

Student Achievement, Report

Next Scheduled Meetings:

Monday, December 18, 2017 at 1:30 p.m. in Room 171, State Capitol, Little Rock
Tuesday, December 19, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. in Room 171, State Capitol, Little Rock

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

Approved: 12/18/2017