

State of Arkansas
90th General Assembly
Regular Session, 2015

As Engrossed: H3/4/15
A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1485

By: Representative Lampkin

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON THE BEST PRACTICES FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION; FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF TASK FORCE MEMBERS; TO DESCRIBE THE PURPOSE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE TASK FORCE; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO ESTABLISH THE LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON THE BEST PRACTICES FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION.

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

SECTION 1. DO NOT CODIFY. TEMPORARY LANGUAGE.

(a) There is created the Legislative Task Force on the Best Practices for Special Education.

(b) The task force shall consist of the following *twenty-two (22)* members:

(1) The Governor or his or her designee;

(2) One (1) member of the General Assembly from the First Congressional District, appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate;

(3) One (1) member of the General Assembly from the Second Congressional District, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

(4) One (1) member of the General Assembly from the Third Congressional District, appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate;



(5) One (1) member of the General Assembly from the Fourth Congressional District, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

(6) One (1) representative from Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families;

(7) One (1) representative from the Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators;

(8) One (1) representative from the Arkansas Education Association who is a teacher specializing in special education;

(9) One (1) representative from the Arkansas Public Policy Panel;

(10) One (1) representative from the Arkansas School Boards Association;

(11) One (1) representative from the Department of Education;

(12) One (1) representative from the Disability Rights Association;

(13) One (1) representative from the Arkansas Association of Special Education Administrators;

(14) One (1) representative from a charter school origination or support group for charter schools;

(15) One (1) representative from an institution of higher education who works in a teacher preparation program specializing in special education;

(16) One (1) special education teacher appointed by the Department of Education;

(17) Four (4) parents of special education students with one (1) parent to be appointed by each legislative member of the task force; and

(18) Two (2) special education students with one (1) student to be appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and one (1) student to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

(c)(1) The Governor or his or her designee shall call the first meeting of the task force within sixty (60) days of the effective date of this act and shall serve as the chair of the task force at the first meeting.

(2) At the first meeting of the task force, the members of the task force shall elect from its membership a chair and other officers as needed for the transaction of business.

(3)(A) The task force shall conduct its meetings at the State Capitol or another site selected by the chair.

(B) Meetings of the task force shall be held at least one (1) time every three (3) months but may occur more often at the call of the chair.

(4) The task force shall establish rules and procedures for conducting its business.

(5) If a vacancy occurs on the task force, the vacancy shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

(6)(A) Legislative members of the task force shall be paid per diem and mileage as authorized by law for attendance at meetings of interim committees of the General Assembly.

(B) Non-legislative members of the task force shall serve without compensation but may receive reimbursement under § 25-16-902.

(7)(A) A majority of the members of the task force shall constitute a quorum for transacting business of the task force.

(B) No action may be taken by the task force except by a majority vote at a meeting at which a quorum is present.

(8) The task force may expend funds and resources in carrying out its purpose and responsibilities that are appropriated or funded to the commission by the General Assembly or a third party.

(9) The Bureau of Legislative Research shall provide staff for the task force.

(d)(1) The task force shall study and research ways to improve special education and how special education can positively impact student education and achievement outcomes.

(2) In executing the duties and responsibilities of the task force, the task force shall:

(A) Review the current practice for identifying students for special education services and programs in public schools in Arkansas and other states;

(B) Compare outcomes of students participating in special education services in programs in Arkansas with those in other states;

(C) Review the requirements for teacher preparation and licensure of special education teachers in Arkansas and other states;

(D) Review the requirements for professional development

related to special education, including anticipated changes to professional development in Arkansas and other states;

(E) Review support staff and staffing ratios for special education services and programs, including nurses, teacher aides, and personal student aids;

(F) Review discipline practices for students in special education programs in Arkansas and other states;

(G) Review Response to Intervention (RTI) practices in Arkansas, including identifying RTI programs in public schools that are successful and can be identified as best practices;

(H) Review the current practice for screening students for learning disabilities and the services provided for students with learning disabilities;

(I) Review the availability of support services for special education programs, students, and families, including without limitation behavioral health services and social services with an effort made to identify best practices;

(J) Review the practices of school districts regarding self-contained classrooms, inclusion programs, and resource rooms, including model policies and programs in Arkansas and other states;

(K) Review the use of outside services and organizations by school districts that provide the best level of support for students receiving special education services or participating in special education programs;

(L) Review the facilities, equipment, and materials available in school districts for special education services and programs;

(M) Compare the amount of academic instruction with the training time for independent function and career development;

(N) Review special education services and programs currently in Arkansas public charter schools and public charter schools outside of Arkansas;

(O) Identify exemplary school district special education programs in Arkansas and other states; and

(P) Review the research and findings of national organizations that support students receiving special education services or students participating in special education programs.

(3) For each item under subdivision (d)(2) of this section, the task force shall consider the separate strengths and challenges for children who:

- (A) Are developmentally delayed;
- (B) Have severe behavioral challenges; or
- (C) Have severe physical disabilities.

(4)(A) The task force also shall review the financial support provided for special education services and programs, including whether or not the financial support provided is adequate to meet the needs of the students in special education programs or receiving special education services.

(B) The review under subdivision (d)(4)(A) shall include a review of the financial practices of school districts in Arkansas for the support of special education services and programs.

(e)(1) On or before February 1, 2016, the task force shall file with the Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, and the chairs of the House and Senate Committees on Education a written, preliminary report of the task force's activities, findings, and recommendations.

(2)(A) On or before September 1, 2016, the task force shall file with the Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, and the chairs of the House Committee on Education and Senate Committee on Education a written, final report of the task force's activities, findings, and recommendations.

(B) The task force may file an updated final report on or before July 1, 2017.

(f) The task force expires on July 1, 2017.

/s/Lampkin

APPROVED: 03/31/2015