

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

Monday, September 10, 2012
10:00 A.M.
Room 171, State Capitol
Little Rock, Arkansas

Representative Eddie Cheatham, 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 Jimmy Jeffress, Chair; Senator Mary Anne Salmon, Vice Chair; Senator Gilbert Baker; Senator Joyce Elliott; Senator Gene Jeffress; and Senator Johnny Key.

MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE: Representative Eddie Cheatham, Chair; Representative Johnnie Roebuck, Vice Chair; Representative Duncan Baird; Representative Toni Bradford; Representative Les Carnine; Representative Ann Clemmer; Representative Jane English; Representative Debra Hobbs; Representative Karen Hopper; Representative Bobby Pierce; Representative Randy Stewart; Representative Tim Summers; and Representative Tommy Wren.

NON-VOTING MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE: Representative John Catlett; Representative Jeremy Gillam; Representative Andrea Lea; Representative Homer Lenderman; Representative Kelley Linck; and Representative Tiffany Rogers.

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE: Senator Stephanie Flowers; Senator Randy Laverty; Senator Jim Luker; Senator Eddie Joe Williams; Representative Tommy Lee Baker; Representative Nate Bell; Representative John Burris; Representative Sheilla Lampkin; Representative Uvalde Lindsey; Representative Walls McCrary; Representative James Ratliff; Representative Terry Rice; Representative Mary Slinkard; and Representative Jeff Wardlaw.

Without objection, the minutes of August 13, 2012, and August 14, 2012, were approved as written.

Morning Session

The Honorable Johnnie Roebuck, State Representative, District 20, was recognized. Representative Roebuck made a motion that Interim Study Proposal (ISP) 2011-221, REQUESTING THAT THE INTERIM HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION STUDY THE IMPACT OF FOR-PROFIT INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION ON ARKANSAS STUDENTS, be sent to the Higher Education Subcommittee of the Arkansas Legislative Council. The motion was seconded by Senator Jimmy Jeffress. Pursuant to the motion of Representative Roebuck, and without objection, the motion was carried.

Representative Cheatham thanked Representative Roebuck.

Reports from Members Who Attended Recent Meetings Concerning Public or Higher Education

The Honorable Joyce Elliott, State Senator, District 33, was recognized, and discussed the education meetings that she and other legislators had attended at the recent National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) annual

meeting. She noted several things coming out of these meetings struck her as important for the Committees to think about in a visionary fashion:

1. The commonality between the United States and other industrialized nations.
2. Countries that have successful education systems take care of the underpinnings necessary for kids to be prepared when they get to school, like having good healthcare systems, good childcare systems, good support for parents, and community responsibility for making sure everybody has a stake in the education of a child.
3. The process of education reform tends to focus on discrete policy changes rather than systemic reforms.

Senator Elliott said the point is to decide what school is and just have school, because 94% or so of kids are still going to be educated in traditional public schools; and we need to find a way to do it well. Senator Elliott commented that this was the most visionary of all the NCSL education meetings she has attended.

Representative Cheatham thanked Senator Elliott.

Representative Cheatham announced that the agenda had been revised at the request of Representative Kim Hammer, and Item E, Discussion of an Alternative Structure for Arkansas's System of Adult Education, would be discussed at a future meeting.

Representative Cheatham announced that there would be a deviation from the agenda, and Item F and Item G would be taken up in the afternoon session. He said the Committees would start with Item H on the agenda.

Discussion of the Annual Report of the School Leadership Coordinating Council

Dr. Mary Gunter, Chair, School Leadership Coordinating Council, was recognized. Dr. Gunter delivered the required Annual Report on Act 222 of 2009 in a PowerPoint presentation, *A Report to the Arkansas Joint Education Committee*. She noted this is the third report that has been made to the Committees. Dr. Gunter said that Act 222 has two focuses, to strengthen Arkansas educational leadership development, and to strengthen school support. The first section of the Act establishes the School Leadership Coordinating Council, giving that Council the express purpose of coordinating leadership development activities and providing a systemic approach to leadership throughout the state. The second part of the Act specifically gives the Arkansas Leadership Academy a framework by which to provide schools with the support needed for improving student achievement. She explained that this report is divided into two sections. She said she would provide an overall view of the work of the School Leadership Coordinating Council, and **Dr. Debbie Davis**, Director, Arkansas Leadership Academy, **Ms. Belinda Akin**, School Support Leader, Arkansas Leadership Academy, and **Dr. Denise Airola**, Research Specialist, Arkansas Leadership Academy, would provide a report on the second section.

In her presentation, Dr. Gunter described the three (3) purposes of the School Leadership Coordinating Council, its membership, its vision, its core beliefs, its work to date, and its focus of work for 2011-12, which included:

- o Principal Evaluation Model and Pilot School Support
- o Superintendent Mentoring Program Development and Implementation
- o Review of Recruitment Issues and Needs for Leadership

Dr. Gunter gave a detailed report on Principal Evaluation, the Arkansas School Superintendent Mentoring Program, Program Assessment, and Future Plans of the School Leadership Coordinating Council.

Mr. Mike Mertens, Assistant Executive Director, Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators (AAEA), and **Dr. Peggy Doss**, Dean, School of Education, University of Arkansas at Monticello, were recognized, and participated, as necessary, in the discussion that followed the report. Topics included:

- the number of nationally accredited programs for superintendent licensure in Arkansas,
- the number of hours of mentoring the programs provide to new superintendents,
- choosing of the mentor,
- payment of tuition and fees for mentoring,
- concern about duplication of services and costs of mentoring,
- funding for mentoring programs,
- the necessity of enrolling a superintendent, who has graduated from a nationally accredited program in the last five years, in a second program,
- different levels of mentoring programs,
- peculiarities of mentoring requirements in Arkansas,
- participation of AAEA in mentoring legislation,
- professional development for “sitting” superintendents,
- training superintendents in communications and relationships,
- role and responsibility of universities and colleges in superintendent training,
- mentoring programs for principals and school business officials, and
- training superintendents to meet the needs of a diverse student population.

Representative Cheatham thanked Dr. Gunter for her presentation on Section 1 of the Annual Report.

Dr. Debbie Davis, Director, Arkansas Leadership Academy, **Ms. Belinda Akin**, School Support Leader, Arkansas Leadership Academy, and **Dr. Denise Airola**, Research Specialist, Arkansas Leadership Academy, were recognized, and continued the presentation with Section 2 of the Annual Report. Dr. Davis said it would be a pleasure to present an update on the work of the School Support Program (SSP) and thanked the Committees for their continued support. She announced there was positive news to share, and was excited about the progress that schools were making. Dr. Davis introduced Ms. Belinda Akin to discuss the SSP.

Ms. Belinda Akin, School Support Leader, Arkansas Leadership Academy, was recognized. Ms. Akin said the SSP is currently serving twenty-three (23) schools, of which twelve (12) are high schools. She said it provides support through school visits, institutes, school board training, and working with schools to help get a system in place. She commented that, while it is very challenging work, it is also very rewarding, because a difference can be seen in these schools as they begin to understand the importance of having a true system and leadership in place. Ms. Akin said the SSP provides a unique opportunity. She recalled the Master Principal Program, and said that, when it was originally created, its intent was to train principals for three years and at the end of that time, have those principals move into schools needing improvement. She said that happened in some cases. She said the SSP was not in place at that time. However, as people were being hired to work for the newly created SSP, those with a strong background in the Master Principal Program were being sought. Ms. Akin said that almost all of the people who work for the SSP are either Master Principals or have three (3) years of Master Principal training. Ms. Akin introduced Dr. Denise Airola to share some of the successes the SSP has had this year.

Dr. Denise Airola, Research Specialist, Arkansas Leadership Academy, was recognized. *Arkansas Leadership Academy, Act 222 Legislative Report School Support Program Handout* was distributed to Committee members. Dr. Airola continued the PowerPoint presentation and discussed the outcomes of the SSP’s work with teachers, leaders, and students. She stated that while the results are strictly descriptive, the most desirable pattern in the charts is a consistent movement of groups of students toward higher performance levels. She also noted new information about the composition of the school groups included in the results. She went on to discuss Results for Schools with 3 Years SSP, Results for Schools with 2 Years SSP, Results for Schools with 1 Year SSP, Why 3 Years for SSP?, Closing the “All Students” Gap, and Progress on Historic Achievement Gaps. Dr. Airola briefly commented on the members and role of the Academy Research Advisory Team. She also discussed early findings found in a study, Master Principal Program: Reflective Practice & Peer Support Networks; a paper, Principals’ Sense of Efficacy: The Influence of the Arkansas Leadership Academy; a presentation, A View from the Inside: School Turnaround Enabling Factors and Persistent Obstacles; and an additional paper, Inside School

Turnaround: Instructional Leadership Efficacy and Student Achievement. Dr. Airola concluded her presentation with Cultivating and Supporting a Culture that Fosters Innovation and the Use of Evidence.

In the discussion that followed the presentation, topics included:

- ≈ choosing the SSP or a private provider,
- ≈ the number of schools able to be included in the SSP,
- ≈ requiring private providers to follow an approved prototype for consistency of programs,
- ≈ use of Scholastic Audit in the SSP,
- ≈ cost per year of the SSP,
- ≈ unused funds returned to school districts,
- ≈ evaluations of private providers, and
- ≈ addressing requirements of special needs students; sensitivity to needs of autistic children.

Representative Cheatham thanked Dr. Davis, Ms. Akin, and Dr. Airola for the presentation on Section 2 of the Annual Report.

The Committees recessed for lunch from 11:42 a.m. until 1:30 p.m.

Afternoon Session

Representative Cheatham called the afternoon session of the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

Presentation by and Discussion of the Arkansas Political Science Association's Recommendations for Improving Civics Education in Arkansas

The Honorable Ann Clemmer, State Representative, District 29, was recognized. Representative Clemmer said she was at the meeting not only as a legislator, but also as a faculty member in the Political Science Department at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR). She said the department and other political science departments around the state are members of the Arkansas Political Science Association (ArkPSA) which replicates the national organization, the American Political Science Association (APSA). She said that several years ago, members of the ArkPSA began talking about improving civic education in Arkansas, and went so far as to make some fairly specific recommendations, but weren't in a position to do anything about them. She stated the members have renewed their commitment and welcome the opportunity to discuss the issue before the House and Senate Interim Committees on Education.

Dr. Michael Rogers, Assistant Professor of Political Science, Arkansas Tech University (ATU), Russellville, AR, was recognized. Dr. Rogers distributed a folder to the Committees which contained a hard copy of the PowerPoint presentation, Talking Points, and a copy of the research journal, *The Midsouth Political Science Review (MPSR), Special Edition: Civic Education*, Volume 13, Number 1, 2012. Dr. Rogers began with a discussion of how Arkansas approaches teaching civic education as opposed to other states, and presented the Committees with research-based recommendations for improvements. Dr. Rogers said that civic education happens in two different ways: through informal processes during life, and in formal ways through education. He discussed a combination of factors that have weakened informal civic education (ICE), and also covered formal civic education (FCE) at both the secondary and higher education levels. He provided a map of the United States showing a range of state mandates for civic education (*Dr. Rogers stated that for purposes of this presentation civic education meant taking a government course.*), and said that Arkansas seems to be in the norm with most states, requiring one semester of civics/American government at the secondary level. He additionally discussed Secondary FCE: State and Local Politics, Public Opinion on a High School Civics Exam, and, in the Recommended Additions for Secondary Education, delivered the first two of four recommendations:

1. Mandate 1 Carnegie unit (CU) of civics, and recommend adding a mandate for .5 CU of Arkansas state and local government, and
2. Move civics requirement to 12th grade only.

Dr. Sandra Stotsky, Endowed Chair in Teacher Quality, Department of Education Reform, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR, was recognized. Dr. Stotsky discussed the third and fourth recommendations:

3. Require passage of civics exam for graduation, and
4. Mandate two consecutive years of U.S. history between grades 9-11.

She then discussed the Recommendations for Teacher Preparation:

- 1) Eliminate social studies licensure for high school history and U.S. government teachers
- 2) Develop a teacher preparation program for U.S. government and U.S. history (not Social Studies)
- 3) Require all U.S. government and history teachers to participate once every five years in a five-day *We the People* summer institute.

Dr. Donald Gooch, Assistant Professor of Political Science, Department of Government, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, TX, and former Assistant Professor of Political Science, Arkansas Tech University (ATU), Russellville, AR, was recognized. Dr. Gooch spoke specifically on the research he has done with Dr. Rogers at ATU. He discussed Collegiate Civics Assessments in Arkansas and Nationally (ISI), a slide showing a comparison of how students at ATU, UALR, and Arkansas State University (ASU) performed on a civics test. He said the numbers are well below the 50% level. He said of the 948 students at ATU, between fall, 2008, and spring, 2011, 86.5% of students failed to score at least 60%, or a passing grade, for naturalization. He explained that the civic education test that was administered was composed of twenty-five (25) questions from those the U.S. government uses for people who want to become citizens of the United States. Dr. Gooch said that close to nine (9) out of ten (10) of ATU students would fail the civic education test and not become citizens because they lack the requisite civic knowledge. He called the state of civic knowledge at the collegiate level, *A Natural Disaster of Civic Proportions*, the title of the related article in the *MPSR* journal. Dr. Gooch went on to discuss What a .5 CU American Government Course Does, a graph of ATU Pre-Test Results and ATU-Post Test Results showing improvements students had made after taking a course in American government.

Dr. Rogers continued with a discussion of a Warner and Sebold survey of offerings in American national government at colleges and universities in Arkansas, and recommendations for higher education. He also stated that a recommendation for the State Department of Education was that it regularly review collegiate course offerings to ensure prospective teachers of U.S. history and government have had course content that addresses the *National Standards for Civics and Government*, published by the Center for Civic Education (CCE 1994). In his conclusion, Dr. Rogers said that state emphasis of civics does matter, and encouraged the passing of legislation to increase the mandate for taking U.S. government courses, particularly at the high school level.

Following the presentation, a discussion ensued that included the following topics:

- inclusion of K-12 members in ArkPSA,
- teaching to testing; context of testing,
- recommendations on teacher preparation,
- passing a 9th grade civics class,
- distinguishing between state and federal legislators and issues,
- assessment effort at UALR,
- teaching 9th grade civics in the 12th grade,
- finding the time for additional course instruction,
- improving the education of teachers at the secondary level,

- similarity of trying to increase hours in civics to past experience with trying to increase hours in Arkansas history,
- addressing the teaching of civics as part of educating the whole child in the Adequacy Study, and
- school districts breaking the law when they have seniors out of school for half a day; not doing enough to educate students with available time.

Representative Cheatham thanked Representative Clemmer, Dr. Rogers, Dr. Stotsky, and Dr. Gooch for bringing the issue before the Committees.

Discussion of the Activities of Teach For America (TFA) in Arkansas

Ms. Angela Shirey, Director of Development, Teach For America-Delta Region, was recognized, and expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to make this presentation before the Committees. She said that Helena/West Helena was one of the first placement sites for TFA across America. She spoke about the drive, dedication, and passion present in most, if not all, of the TFA core members in the Delta Region. She said that TFA is looking to expand the program throughout Arkansas and provide students with the education they deserve. Ms. Shirey recognized supporters and superintendents who were present and introduced Mr. Ron Nurnberg to continue.

Mr. Ron Nurnberg, Executive Director, Teach for America-Delta Region, was recognized. Mr. Nurnberg said that, at this point, TFA has expanded beyond the Delta Region proper and includes the Mississippi and Arkansas Greater Delta Region. He said he has been with the program for seventeen (17) years. He acknowledged Representative Hobbs' introduction, and the subsequent passing, of HB1893, AN ACT TO AMEND THE ARKANSAS TEACHER LICENSURE AND RECIPROCITY LAWS; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES, during the 2011 Regular Session. He said the Bill reduced redundancies in the licensure process for teachers in the state, enabling TFA teachers to receive standard certification after two years and remain longer in the program. Using a PowerPoint presentation and a handout, Mr. Nurnberg described the contents of the folder handout, including a list of current TFA teachers in Arkansas, and TFA's impact, corps, alumni, and supporters. He continued with a discussion of TFA's vision, mission, proof points in Arkansas, and student performance in TFA classrooms, including those in Clarendon, Lake Village, Pine Bluff, and Marvell. Mr. Nurnberg commented that, from the TFA standpoint, one of the most rewarding aspects is the partnership with schools, school districts, and communities. He thought it would be interesting to hear from some of those who are requesting more TFA teachers in Arkansas, and introduced Dr. David Rainey to talk about his perspective on TFA.

Dr. David Rainey, Superintendent of Schools, Dumas School District, and former State Representative, was recognized, and said there were three (3) things he wanted to do today. He wanted to make sure the Committees understood that he understood the work that they do and what they have done for education in the state. He said that as we've climbed the ladder of excellence, it's been because this legislature, the Governor's office, and the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) have actually put in place the resources that public schools need in order to succeed. In making his second point, Dr. Rainey continued that the state legislature has always responded across party lines to the needs of public education, and spoke to Arkansas's shortage of highly qualified teachers, which situation is especially critical in the Delta Region. He said the Region needs all the help it can get, all the resource help it can get, and needs the help immediately. He stated that TFA is vital to maintaining a pipeline of talented teachers in that area. In his third point, Dr. Rainey said some border states have raised the stakes and are putting in more resources to compete with those resources that TFA offers. Dr. Rainey asked for the legislature's help so that Arkansas can compete on an even playing field with these other states.

Ms. Maisie Wright, School Director, KIPP Blytheville College Preparatory School, and TFA Alumna and Founding School Leader, was recognized, and spoke about joining TFA and how it prepared her for school leadership.

Ms. Abba Colbert, Student, Hendrix College, Conway, Arkansas, was recognized. She noted that as an incoming freshman in 2010, she was one of four recipients of Hendrix College's Provost Scholarships. She said

she was a member of the founding class of KIPP: Delta. Ms. Colbert spoke about how being taught by TFA corps members prepared her for college.

Mr. Nurnberg introduced a video clip, produced by teachers for Lake Village Parents' Night, embedded in the PowerPoint.

Mrs. Joyce Vaught, Superintendent, Lakeside School District, Lake Village, Arkansas, was recognized. Mrs. Vaught discussed how TFA is critical to educational reform.

Mr. Nurnberg closed out the presentation with a discussion of TFA and Arkansas working together on funding for teacher growth in order to achieve educational excellence.

Mr. Ernest Cunningham, former State Representative, **Mr. Scott Shirey**, Executive Director, KIPP: Delta Public Schools, and **Dr. Karen Cushman**, Assistant Commissioner for Human Resources/Licensure, Arkansas Department of Education, were recognized, and participated, as necessary, in the discussion that ensued. Topics included:

- ≡ number and specialty of TFA teachers in Arkansas,
- ≡ sources of TFA teacher compensation,
- ≡ uses for programmatic dollars,
- ≡ demographic breakdown of TFA teachers in Arkansas,
- ≡ sustainability of teachers working around the clock,
- ≡ rolling other schools in the community into the sustainability model,
- ≡ competitive nature of applicant selection; commonality,
- ≡ similarities and differences between students enrolled in KIPP: Delta vs. those enrolled in other schools,
- ≡ earnings of TFA teachers compared to other local teachers,
- ≡ necessity to view teacher recruitment on a statewide basis,
- ≡ replicating the TFA training model for other teachers in Arkansas,
- ≡ furnishing encouragement to those having the "call to teach,"
- ≡ average retention rate of TFA teachers,
- ≡ annual training cost for TFA teachers,
- ≡ recruitment cost for TFA teachers,
- ≡ requirement that TFA teachers pass the Praxis exam for the content area they're going to teach,
- ≡ availability of alternatives for teachers,
- ≡ impact of TFA teachers' enthusiasm on those teachers not in the program,
- ≡ maintaining a sustainable model, and
- ≡ relationship of TFA with AmeriCorps.

Mr. Nurnberg requested that the TFA superintendents present at the meeting be recognized.

Representative Cheatham thanked the participants in the TFA presentation.

Representative Cheatham announced that the next joint meeting of the Senate Interim Committee on Education and the House Interim Committee on Education would be at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, September 11, 2012, in Room A, MAC Building in Little Rock.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:14 p.m.

Approved: 10/29/12