

MEETING SUMMARY

JOINT MEETING  
OF THE  
HOUSE AND SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEES ON EDUCATION

Monday, May 21, 2018  
1:30 P.M.  
Room 151, State Capitol  
Little Rock, Arkansas

Representative Bruce Cozart, the Chair of the House Interim Committee on Education, called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

**MEMBERS OF THE SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE:** Senator Jane English, Chair; Senator Joyce Elliott, Vice Chair; Senator Alan Clark; 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 Sonia Eubanks Barker; Representative Rick Beck; Representative Gary Deffenbaugh; Representative Jon S. Eubanks; Representative Grant Hodges; Representative Mark Lowery; Representative Mark D. McElroy; Representative Stephen Meeks; Representative DeAnn Vaught; and Representative John W. Walker.

**OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE:** Senator Jonathan Dismang; Senator Trent Garner; Senator Missy Irvin; Senator Larry Teague; Representative Fred Allen; Representative Karilyn Brown; Representative Trevor Drown; Representative Kenneth B. Ferguson; Representative Vivian Flowers; Representative Michael John Gray; Representative Aaron Pilkington; Representative Johnny Rye; Representative James Sorvillo; Representative Dwight Tosh; and Representative Carlton Wing.

Minutes:

Without objection, the minutes of April 23, 2018 and April 24, 2018 were approved as written.

Exhibits:

Exhibit C1 – 04/23/2018 Minutes

Exhibit C2 – 04/24/2018 Minutes

Representative Cozart announced that Adequacy will be covered in both meetings in June in order to meet the November 1, 2018 deadline for the final report.

Discussion of Proposed Arkansas Department of Education Rule Revising the Standards for Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools and School Districts

Presenters:

**Mr. Johnny Key**, Commissioner, Arkansas Department of Education (ADE), was recognized.

Commissioner Key presented the rationale behind revising the Standards for Accreditation at this time. He stated modifications have not been made in the past because of the enormity and difficulty of the task. He said the current process could take a couple of cycles to fully make the changes that need to be made.

Commissioner Key explained that the proposed revisions are a step in moving away from purely a compliance document to one that includes a measure of improving schools, improving delivery, and improving systems for education in the K-12 system. He said this is a good first step in the modernization of standards that are

thirty plus years old. He commented that the ADE has been working on this for almost two years, with a lot of stakeholder engagement in the process. He said the ADE wants this to be a collaborative process and encourages feedback. He noted that stakeholders and the public are continuing to give feedback at this time.

**Ms. Jennifer Davis**, Staff Attorney, Arkansas Department of Education, was recognized. Ms. Davis, utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, reviewed the proposed revised Standards for Accreditation. She said the six standards have been aligned to the six components of the education system that were approved in Act 930 of 2017. She explained each standard:

- Standard 1 – Academics
- Standard 2 – Student Support Services
- Standard 3 – District Operations and Fiscal Governance
- Standard 4 – Human Capital
- Standard 5 – Stakeholder Communication/Parent and Family Engagement
- Standard 6 – Facilities and Transportation

Ms. Davis continued with a discussion of timelines and tiered monitoring of the standards.

Contributor to the Discussion:

**Dr. Ivy Pfeffer**, Assistant Commissioner of Human Resources, Arkansas Department of Education

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- curriculum units and requirements for oral communication,
- embedding oral communication; need to teach oral communication as a separate course,
- handling class size and reading in the standards,
- clarification of teacher certification vs. teacher endorsement,
- clarification of “public governance and supervision,”
- clarification of “reconstitute the leadership of a public school district,”
- filing a written appeal with the office of the Commissioner of Education by a school district,
- timing for teaching civics, teaching biology, and teaching a foreign language,
- explanation of the process that monitoring standards will take,
- clearing up the codes in the electronic system,
- rules governing the background check process in the standards,
- timing for teaching physics,
- taking an Advanced Placement (AP) class vs. a regular class in a subject,
- inclusion of a non-discrimination clause in standards document, and
- ADE working with school districts who fail to meet the Standards for Accreditation.

PowerPoint Presentation:

Standards for Accreditation, 2018

Exhibit:

Exhibit F – ADE Rules Governing Standards for Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools and School Districts, DRAFT

Handouts:

Comparison Between Current Standards and Proposed Standards  
Standards for Accreditation, 2018

Discussion of Proposed Arkansas Department of Education Rule Governing Class Size and Teaching Load

Presenter:

**Ms. Jennifer Davis**, Staff Attorney, Arkansas Department of Education, was recognized. Ms. Davis gave a brief presentation on a separate set of rules, ADE Rules Governing Class Size and Teaching Load.

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- ability for a teacher to turn down a request to teach more than 150 students a day; teachers having the right of refusal vs. the actual practice in the school district,
- protecting teachers who are getting 300 or 400 students a week,
- handling compensation when class size varies through the semester,
- impact of rules on the Matrix,
- “always” providing justification for something to remain in the law,
- non-growth districts and time devoted to students,
- Response To Intervention (RTI) offers support to struggling students, including those with learning and behavioral needs, and
- background check is repeated each time a teacher’s license is renewed.

Exhibit:

Exhibit G – ADE Rules Governing Class Size and Teaching Load

Other Business:

**The Honorable Stephen Meeks**, State Representative, District 67, was recognized. Representative Meeks requested that research be conducted on situations in which students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) make threatening remarks to themselves and/or other members of a school district. He stated the Committees should review the research for knowledge and understanding.

**Ms. Courtney Salas-Ford**, Attorney Specialist, Arkansas Department of Education, was recognized. Ms. Salas-Ford stated that students with IEPs have certain rights; and there are certain steps that a school district has to follow should an incident occur which involves threats. She said she would be happy to provide general information to the Committees on this issue as needed.

Next Scheduled Meetings:

Monday, June 18, 2018, at 1:30 p.m. in Room 151 of the State Capitol, Little Rock (*Adequacy*)

Tuesday, June 19, 2018, at 9:00 a.m. in Room 151 of the State Capitol, Little Rock (*Adequacy*)

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 3:04 p.m.

*Approved: 06/18/2018*