

MEETING SUMMARY

JOINT MEETING
OF THE
HOUSE AND SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEES ON EDUCATION

Monday, August 20, 2018
1:30 P.M.
Room 151, State Capitol
Little Rock, Arkansas

Senator Jane English, the Chair of the Senate Interim Committee on Education, called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

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

MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE: *Representatives:* Bruce Cozart, Chair; Charlotte V. Douglas, Vice Chair; Rick Beck; Andy Davis; Gary Deffenbaugh; Jon S. Eubanks; Mark D. McElroy; Stephen Meeks; James Sturch; and Dan Sullivan.

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE: *Senators:* Jonathan Dismang; and Jason Rapert. *Representatives:* Charles Blake; Bruce Coleman; Jim Dotson; Dan M. Douglas; Les Eaves; Vivian Flowers; Jack Fortner; Ken Henderson; Steve Hollowell; Fredrick J. Love; Ron McNair; Josh Miller; Reginald Murdock; Clint Penzo; Aaron Pilkington; Donald Ragland; Chris Richey; Laurie Rushing; Johnny Rye; Matthew J. Shepherd; James Sorvillo; Dwight Tosh; Les Warren; and Carlton Wing.

Minutes:

Without objection, the minutes of June 18, 2018, June 19, 2018, July 12, 2018, and July 13, 2018, were approved as written.

Exhibits:

Exhibit C1 – 06/18/2018 Minutes
Exhibit C2 – 06/19/2018 Minutes
Exhibit C3 – 07/12/2018 Minutes
Exhibit C4 – 07/13/2018 Minutes

Consideration and Adoption of Interim Study Proposal (ISP) 2017-129 by Senator English, TO REQUIRE A REVIEW BY THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS AVAILABLE FOR RESIDENTS OF THIS STATE

Representative Mark D. McElroy was recognized, and made a motion to adopt ISP 2017 129.

Pursuant to the motion by Representative McElroy, the motion was carried on a voice vote.

Exhibit:

Exhibit D – ISP 2017-129

Update on the Excel Center at Goodwill

Senator English stated that Act 1200 of 2015 allowed for the implementation of an adult charter high school in Arkansas to give adults, who do not have a GED or a high school diploma, the opportunity to earn a full high school diploma. She said the next presenters would give an update on this very successful school.

Presenters:

Mr. Brian Marsh, President and CEO, Goodwill Industries of Arkansas, Inc., was recognized. Mr. Marsh stated the Excel Center has been in operation since October 2017; it operates year-round with eight-week terms. He said students average in age from 19 to the late-50s. He said each student is tested when enrolled; students are coming in with roughly a fifth- to seventh-grade level of education. He said an education plan is developed with each student to encourage progress toward the achievement of a high school diploma. Mr. Marsh said the Excel Center has 98 students in the current session with 14 staff to support those students. He noted every student is assigned a life coach to help with challenges faced daily from going back to school as an adult. He stated the Excel Center is fully funded and operated by Goodwill Arkansas Education Initiatives, the non-profit created by Goodwill Industries of Arkansas.

Ms. Cindy Varner, Vice President of Workforce Development, Goodwill Industries of Arkansas, Inc., was recognized. Ms. Varner called members' attention to *Handout 3*, and discussed its contents, which included data on school-wide demographics; employment status at enrollment; barriers, including childcare and transportation; public assistance; family life; and history of the Excel Center.

Contributors to the Discussion:

Dr. Charisse Childers, Director, Arkansas Department of Career Education

Mr. Johnny Key, Commissioner, Arkansas Department of Education

Mr. Isaac Linam, Staff Attorney, Bureau of Legislative Research

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- availability of public access to the Internet in career centers at 33 of 44 Goodwill stores across the state,
- functioning of the Excel Center as a licensed public charter school without the use of public school funds,
- life coaches facilitating students through barriers to success,
- qualifications for life coaches,
- using the Excel Center model in junior and senior high schools,
- availability of pre- and post-graduation data to inform the tracking of those who are able to get off public assistance following graduation,
- earning industry-recognized certificates; partnering with colleges for concurrent college credit; building business partnerships,
- requirements for providing funding for education,
- inability to transfer funds provided for a high school student who drops out and attends adult education, and
- increasing funding for adult education.

Handout:

Handout 3 – The Excel Center

Discussion of the Arkansas Campaign for Grade-Level Reading (AR-GLR)

Presenter:

Ms. Angela Duran, Campaign Director, Arkansas Campaign for Grade-Level Reading (AR-GLR), was

recognized. Ms. Duran stated the AR-GLR is a state-wide coalition, launched in 2011, with partners that include the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE), the Department of Human Services (DHS), teachers, superintendents, early childhood groups, and parents. She said the goal of AR-GLR is to have every child in Arkansas read at grade-level by the end of third grade. Ms. Duran discussed five challenges, and the progress made, in meeting that goal. She commented on: 1) parent and community ties; 2) readiness of kindergarten students when they arrive in the classroom; 3) absenteeism of kindergarten through third graders; 4) grade-level reading of third graders; and 5) access of students to high-quality summer learning programs. Ms. Duran also shared results of a study conducted by the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS), which looked at wages and benefits, education level, professional development needs, and common barriers and supports of the early childhood workforce.

Contributors to the Discussion:

Mr. Johnny Key, Commissioner, Arkansas Department of Education

Ms. Stacy Smith, Assistant Commissioner, Learning Services, Arkansas Department of Education

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- correlation of teacher salaries in childcare and pre-K to grade-level reading,
- importance of transportation and participation in summer programs,
- relevancy of the science of reading to the coalition,
- coalition's position on having a year-round school,
- oversight responsibility for coordinating and aligning all curricula in pre-school programs,
- R.I.S.E. (Reading Initiative for Student Excellence) Arkansas,
- re-engaging coops in grade-level reading,
- engaging parents and institutions, and
- finding solutions that actually make a difference.

PowerPoint Presentation:

Arkansas Campaign for Grade-Level Reading

Handouts:

Handout 1 – Arkansas Campaign for Grade-Level Reading

Handout 2 – Moving the Needle on Grade-Level Reading in Arkansas

Discussion of the Use of Assessment Results in Statewide Efforts to Improve Student Achievement

Presenters:

Dr. Denise Airola, Director, Office of Innovation for Education, University of Arkansas

Ms. Debra Coffman, Assistant Commissioner, Division of Public School Accountability, Arkansas Department of Education

Ms. Stacy Smith, Assistant Commissioner, Division of Learning Services, Arkansas Department of Education

Ms. Hope Worsham, Director of Student Assessment, Division of Learning Services, Arkansas Department of Education

The presenters were recognized. Utilizing bar charts and graphs, their discussion centered on results of the ACT Aspire assessment and where Arkansas is positioned. The discussion included three-year trends in scores in English and Reading; R.I.S.E. Arkansas; three-year trends in scores in Math and Science; pulling Math, Science, and Computer Science together; Impact of ACT Readiness Test Scores; ACT Performance Levels; and Act 930 of 2017 and District Supports.

Contributor to the Discussion:

Mr. Johnny Key, Commissioner, Arkansas Department of Education

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- using multiple measures to determine whether a school needs support,
- restoring local control to school districts,
- importance of consistency in leadership at the building level,
- following school-level plans and district support plans to bring about stability,
- professional development opportunities for teachers,
- growth that is able to be attributed to consistency,
- number of states currently using ACT Aspire,
- whether there are issues with ACT Aspire,
- states creating their own assessments,
- ACT Aspire and its alignment to Arkansas standards,
- two equating studies made on assessments,
- providing oversight for higher education,
- correlation between reading programs and reading scores; between reading programs and other test scores, and
- struggling schools and committing to the R.I.S.E. initiative.

PowerPoint Presentation (provided to members after the meeting):

Use of Assessment Results in Statewide Efforts to Improve Student Achievement

Exhibit:

Exhibit G – Closing the Achievement Gap Program, ADE Report

Attachment:

Attachment 1 - *Engaging the Workforce of Today, Developing the Workforce of Tomorrow*, Meeting Announcement

Next Scheduled Meetings:

Tuesday, August 21, 2018, at 9:00 a.m. in Room 151 of the State Capitol, Little Rock (*Adequacy*)

Tuesday, August 21, 2018, at 1:30 p.m. in Room 151 of the State Capitol, Little Rock (*Academic Facilities*)

Wednesday, August 22, 2018, at 9:00 a.m. at the Association of Arkansas Counties Building, 1415 West 3rd Street, Little Rock (*Legislative Task Force on Workforce Education Excellence*)

Senator English announced that the Committees would be meeting next week to review Education Rules.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 3:21p.m.