

**The Arkansas Education Association's  
Presentation to  
The Joint Adequacy  
Evaluation Oversight Subcommittee  
(REVISED April 26, 2010)**

The Arkansas Education Association is pleased to provide the following testimony to the Joint Adequacy Evaluation Oversight Subcommittee. The Association will also provide additional testimony at a later date, as the Subcommittee develops the 2010 Adequacy Plan. The Association also would like to take this opportunity to commend the co-chairs and members of the subcommittee, as well as the staff of the Bureau of Legislative Research and the Arkansas Department of Education, for their diligence in pursuing the important work of the subcommittee.

**Teacher Quality, Recruitment and Retention**

Teacher quality is arguably the most important component of educational adequacy. The Association believes that the Subcommittee should look at:

- Providing financial and other incentives to encourage more teachers to seek graduate degrees.
- Raising teacher salary and benefits to make them more competitive.

In addition, the state must:

- Ensure that school administrators are trained to provide the kind of instructional and disciplinary support that teachers need, and make sure that our current school administrators are providing this kind of leadership.
- Determine whether the new teacher and new administrator programs need additional resources, support and direction.

The state has a wealth of data that can be used to help determine whether the state's various programs successfully recruit and retain teachers who are effective in the classroom. The state needs to evaluate that data to make that determination and follow through on providing the necessary resources for those programs that succeed.

The Association is pleased to be a part of an effort to address this critical issue. The Arkansas Education Association and the Arkansas Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, using data from the Arkansas Department of Education, the Department of Career Education and the Department of

Higher Education, are conducting a research study to help determine the effectiveness of the state's teacher preparation programs. The study will include an assessment of teacher perceptions of the effectiveness of their preparation programs, as well as an analysis of the relationship of teacher preparation programs to student achievement, teacher retention and placement.

Based upon the overwhelming evidence that National Board Certification leads to better teaching, the state needs to provide additional resources and incentives to encourage more teachers, particularly minority teachers and teachers in high priority (high needs) schools, to apply for and complete National Board Certification.

The National Education Association has worked to recruit National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) for priority schools and grow them from within. In a series of six state policy summits, over 2,000 NBCTs made clear the conditions they believe will attract and keep effective teachers in our most challenging schools:

- Good principals who both know how to lead and support teacher leadership.
- A commitment to creative teaching and inquiry learning not scripted instruction.
- The opportunity to collaborate with a critical mass of highly skilled teachers who share responsibility for every student's success.
- Sufficient resources to get the job done, including new technologies, classroom libraries and instructional supplies, as well as access to and connections to social and health services.

The NBCTs agree that teachers need to be paid more when they teach in high-needs schools, but that the right working conditions matter the most.

The Association believes that a successful strategy for improving schools must have a systemic focus, rather than focusing on teachers and administrators as individuals. Staffing weak and dysfunctional schools with high-quality teachers and administrators may help in the short run, but it will not strengthen schools in the long run.

Research shows that effective schools are places where multiple instructional leaders, the principal and teachers collaborate as a part of learning communities.

The 2009 MetLife Survey of the American Teacher examines the views of teachers, principals and students on current practice, priorities, and respective roles and responsibilities. One of the major findings of Part One of

the report is that two-thirds of the teachers and three-quarters of the principals believe that more collaboration between teachers and school leaders would have a greater impact on improving student achievement.

In an article for the October 2009 *Phi Delta Kappan*, Tom Carroll of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future says that cross-generational learning teams that bring together novice and veteran teachers would address problems at both ends of the teacher pipeline and improve student learning at the same time. Such teams would recognize that quality teaching is not an individual accomplishment and would surround teachers and students with the teamwork that is at the heart of high-performing organizations.

Relevant, high-quality professional development is an essential ingredient for providing quality education to all children. The Association believes that the state must address some serious problems with the existing professional development in many schools. There needs to be more meaningful teacher involvement in planning, presenting and evaluating professional development, greater access to online professional development, and adequate notice of required professional development.

The Association believes that we must look at ways to restructure the school day to provide teachers and others who work with students with professional development embedded in the school day, as well as more time for individual and collaborative planning.

In 2006, the Educational Adequacy Subcommittee chose to refer the concept of establishing a teacher support system for additional study. The Association calls on the Subcommittee to address this issue.

## **Fund Balances**

The state has obtained the necessary information on school district fund balances. However, that information is of little value if it is simply filed somewhere at the Arkansas Department of Education and forgotten. As we pointed out in our testimony to the 2008 Adequacy Subcommittee, the Association believes that the state must make balance information more readily accessible by putting the information online.

In addition, the state must use the information to determine what policy decisions need to be made to ensure that districts are not growing fund balances at the expense of improving student achievement.

## **Evaluation Research**

The state needs to follow through on recommendations made in the October 2007 Evaluation Research report. The report recommends that the state evaluate existing curriculum audits to confirm their effects on student achievement and graduation rates and add program evaluation to auditing procedures to assess program effectiveness.

## **Closing the Achievement Gap and Class Size**

While we can be proud of the fact that there continues to be significant improvement in student achievement in Arkansas, the serious problem of the achievement gap remains.

As we pointed out in earlier testimony to the 2008 Education Committee and Adequacy Subcommittee, the Association believes that the state has an obligation to ensure that Arkansas' public schools are making the needed efforts and are provided the resources necessary to close the achievement gap. At the same time, the evidence is clear that schools alone cannot completely resolve this problem. Dr. Richard Rothstein, in his book *Class and Schools: Using Social, Economic and Educational Reform to Close the Black-White Achievement Gap* identifies five categories that influence the achievement of poor and minority students: (1) language development, (2) literacy development, (3) self-confidence, (4) health, and (5) housing. The state must also address the circumstances that create disadvantages for low-income and minority students. While other legislative committees may more properly address some of these issues, we believe that the Subcommittee should consider making recommendations to those committees.

There is ample evidence that the achievement gap was being closed in the 1970s and early 1980s, when federal funds were targeted for low-income and minority students, when students were attending increasingly integrated schools, and when significant federal programs existed to reduce poverty and inequality in the nation.

Dr. Gary Orfield, Director of the Civil Rights Project at the University of California – Los Angeles, has pointed out that we have become a nation that accepts separate and unequal schools as if nothing can be done about them. Orfield argues that reforming education while ignoring the fundamental divisions in our society is profoundly counterproductive. He says that we will likely fail if we don't have a plan for racial and ethnic equality everywhere, and integration where possible.

The Association continues to support the recommendations listed below from the 2008 report by Jay Barth and Keith Nitta. While the 2009 legislative session began to address some of these issues, much work remains to be done:

- Reintroduce state funding for health clinics for underserved students or promote their development through the Coordinated School Health Initiative.
- Aggressively implement recommendations to provide high quality after-school and summer programs in the schools.
- Reduce class size in grades K-3.

As we pointed out to the 2008 Subcommittee, Dr. Lawrence Picus and Dr. Allen Odden, in their *Evidence-Based Approach to School Finance Adequacy in Arkansas*, recommended that the state implement a class size of one to 15 for grades K-3. They based this recommendation on the overwhelming research that shows small classes of 15 in kindergarten through grade 3 have significant, positive impacts on student achievement in mathematics and reading, and that the impact is even greater for students from low-income and minority backgrounds.

According to Picus and Odden, research in the late 1980s and early 1990s provided new evidence of the impact of class size on achievement. The “gold” standard of educational (or any other impact) research is randomized experiments, which provide scientific evidence on the impact of a certain treatment (Mosteller, 1995). The primary evidence on the impact of small classes today is the Tennessee STAR study, which was a large scale, randomized experiment on class sizes of 15 for grades K-3 (Achilles, 1999; Finn, 2002; Grissmer, 1999; Krueger, 2002). The results showed that students in the small classes achieved at a significantly higher level than those in regular class sizes.

Unfortunately, the state has made no serious effort to address either the Barth/Nietta recommendation or the earlier recommendation by Picus and Odden. Certainly such a change could not be effectively implemented overnight because of its implications for facilities, teacher supply and other issues. However, the Association continues to believe that Arkansas would be in a significantly better position with regard to student achievement and the achievement gap if we had made a commitment to implement this recommendation over a period of time.

## **Educational Excellence Trust Fund Requirements**

The Educational Excellence Trust Fund was established in 1991 by the Arkansas General Assembly and signed into law as Act 10 by Governor Bill Clinton. The primary purpose of the act was to improve the salary schedules

for teachers, and it raised them significantly. Just before the passage of Act 10 of 1991, Arkansas ranked 50th out of the 50 states and the District of Columbia in average teacher salaries for the 1990-1991 school year. One year later, the average Arkansas teacher's salary ranked 42nd out of the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The average teacher salary in Arkansas rose by more than \$3,400, or 14.6%. It is the largest raise ever provided to the teachers of the state.

Governor Jim Guy Tucker wanted to equalize the distribution of the Trust Funds, and Governor Mike Huckabee wanted the Trust Fund increases to be available for bonus payments and raises under the "Educator Compensation Act of 2001." The legislature agreed to both sets of these proposals.

We have reviewed Acts 2121 and 2165 of the 2005 Regular Session of the Arkansas General Assembly. Act 2121 of the 2005 Regular Session (SB 383 by Senator Shane Broadway) made several technical changes to outdated provisions of the Trust Fund and restored some of the Act's original intent. In sections relevant to the issues at hand, this Act removed the use of increases in the Trust Fund for salary bonuses and "The Educator Compensation Act of 2001." In addition, it restored the provision that Trust Fund increases must be used for salary increases, including social security and retirement payments, for current certified personnel positions and "for no other purpose."

Like Act 2121, Act 2165 of the 2005 Regular Session (SB 1179 by Senator Jimmy Jeffress) made changes in the Trust Fund consistent with its original intent to improve salary schedules for teachers. It restored the provision that Trust Fund increases could not be used for increments.

The Arkansas Education Association encourages the House and Senate Committees on Education to consider several important points in evaluating the impact of the recent changes in the Educational Excellence Trust Fund on school districts and teacher salaries.

First, the Educational Excellence Trust Fund was established to improve teacher salary schedules, and it should continue to do so.

Next, the salary increases required by the Trust Fund in 2005-2006 were very modest. In the Rogers School District, the \$449 salary schedule increase is less than 1% for the average teacher there. The Educational Excellence Trust Fund per pupil amounts to only 7% of the \$5,400, and the increase in it is no more than 0.5 % of the per pupil allocation, or \$29 for 2005-2006. If it contributes to salary disparities, its contribution is minimal.

Finally, the Association supports the retention and improvement of the Educational Excellence Trust Fund. It is a very efficient vehicle for raising teacher salaries. Every dollar placed into the Trust Fund must be spent on the salaries and may be spent on retirement and social security matching amounts. By contrast, the current system of raising salaries by way of the minimum salary schedule is not efficient. If an increase of \$50 million were placed into the Educational Excellence Trust Fund, it would raise the average salary for certified personnel in the state by \$1,050 and pay for the retirement and social security matching. Nothing would be left on the table for discretionary spending. If an increase of \$50 million were placed into foundation funding along with a 1.85% increase in the minimum salary schedule for teachers, the *required* amount to be paid would raise the average salary for certified personnel in the state by about \$14. Nearly \$44 million would be left for discretionary spending.

## Teacher Salaries

The amended December 29, 2008 Report on Legislative Hearings for the Interim Study on Educational Adequacy contained the following information:

- In 2005-2006, Arkansas ranked 1<sup>st</sup> in average teacher pay in a group including Arkansas and the surrounding states.
- In 2005-2006, Arkansas ranked 8<sup>th</sup> in average teacher pay in a group of 16 states belonging to the Southern Region Education Board.
- In 2005-2006, Arkansas ranked 30<sup>th</sup> of all 50 states.
- In 2006-2007, Arkansas ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in average teacher pay (\$44,009) in a group including the surrounding states.
- In 2006-2007, Arkansas ranked 9<sup>th</sup> in average teacher pay (\$44,009) in a group of 16 states belonging to the Southern Region Education Board.
- In 2006-2007, Arkansas ranked 31<sup>st</sup> of all 50 states (\$44,009).

On December 14, 2009, the Adequacy Oversight Committee received a report on average teacher salaries that contained the following information:

- In 2008-2009, Arkansas ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in average teacher pay (\$47,472) in a group including Arkansas and the surrounding states.
- In 2008-2009, Arkansas ranked 11<sup>th</sup> in average teacher pay (\$47,472) in a group of 16 states belonging to the Southern Region Education Board.

[Note: If the states were ranked in 2008-2009 according to estimated average teacher salary of \$47,472 contained in NEA's Rankings and Estimates, Arkansas would rank 35<sup>th</sup> of all 50 states.]

The AEA is very pleased to report that since December of 2009, the AEA has been working with the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) on an actual Arkansas average teacher salary as defined and used by the National Education Association. Kathleen Crain with the ADE has provided the AEA with an average teacher salary as defined by NEA for 2007-2008 as \$45,238 and for 2008-2009 as \$45,738. You will note that this amount is \$1,734 or nearly 3.65% less than the amount reported to the Committee in December of 2009.

The AEA believes that the recently reported average teacher salary amounts for the above years more accurately reflect the average salary of teachers than the amounts reported to the Committee last December.

The AEA has used the information for comparisons with the average teacher salaries for the surrounding states and the states belonging to the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB States). The report is attached file named Adequacy ATS and SREB and SS 2007-2008 and 2008-2009. As the comparison report shows the following information:

- In 2007-2008, Arkansas ranks 3rd in average teacher pay (\$45,238) in a group of 7 states including Arkansas and the surrounding states.
- In 2007-2008, Arkansas ranks 12<sup>th</sup> in average teacher pay (\$45,238) in a group of the 16 states belonging to the SREB.
- In 2007-2008, Arkansas ranks 38<sup>th</sup> in average teacher pay (\$45,238) out of the 50 states and the District of Columbia.
  
- In 2008-2009, Arkansas ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> – not 2<sup>nd</sup> – in average teacher pay (\$45,738) in a group of 7 states including Arkansas and the surrounding states.
- In 2008-2009, Arkansas ranks 12<sup>th</sup> – not 11<sup>th</sup> – in average teacher pay (\$45,738) in a group of 16 states belonging to the SREB.
- In 2008-2009, Arkansas ranks 40<sup>th</sup> – not 35<sup>th</sup> – in average teacher pay (\$45,738) out of the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Arkansas' average teacher salary is trending downward towards inadequacy as the surrounding states and the SREB states are providing larger improvements in salaries for teachers. Additionally, for the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 school years, the average salary for Arkansas teachers is below the average salary for the surrounding and SREB states.

## **Additional Adequacy Related Topics Requiring Further Review**

The AEA believes that there are additional adequacy related topics that warrant further review. These include:

- increasing the contribution to the Public School Employee Health Insurance Program
- reviewing the adequacy of school support staffing and salaries provided in the Matrix and improving where necessary
- conducting a comprehensive survey of the teaching and learning conditions in all Arkansas public schools
- determining whether the teacher salaries in delta and rural schools are adequate to ensure an ample supply of highly qualified teachers
- determining whether pupil support services are adequate to meet the needs of the many children of poverty and special needs

The AEA will continue to work with the Governor, State Board of Education, Department of Education, other education associations and the Arkansas General Assembly to fulfill the promise of a great public school for every student.

### **Links To Research Reports And Other Information:**

Learning Teams

[Http://Nctaf.Org/Documents/Nctaflearningteamspolicybrieffinal.Pdf](http://Nctaf.Org/Documents/Nctaflearningteamspolicybrieffinal.Pdf)

Professional Development

[Http://Www.Nsdc.Org/News/Jsd/Dufour252.Cfm](http://Www.Nsdc.Org/News/Jsd/Dufour252.Cfm)

National Board Certification

[Http://Www.Nap.Edu/Catalog.Php?Record\\_Id=12224](http://Www.Nap.Edu/Catalog.Php?Record_Id=12224)

Children Of Poverty Deserve Great Teachers

[Http://Www.Nea.Org/Assets/Docs/Children\\_Of\\_Poverty\\_09.Pdf](http://Www.Nea.Org/Assets/Docs/Children_Of_Poverty_09.Pdf)

### Average Teacher Salaries in Arkansas and the Surrounding States 2007-08

Rank		ATS	# Teachers	
1	Louisiana	46,964	48,235	2,265,308,540
2	Texas	46,179	321,729	14,857,123,491
3	<b>** Arkansas</b>	<b>45,238</b>	<b>34,593</b>	<b>1,564,918,134</b>
4	Tennessee	44,820	62,282	2,791,479,240
5	Oklahoma	43,551	42,230	1,839,158,730
6	Missouri	43,206	66,640	2,879,247,840
7	* Mississippi	42,403	33,532	1,421,857,396
			609,241	27,619,093,371 \$ 45,334

### Average Teacher Salaries in the SREB States - 2007-08

Rank		ATS	# Teachers	
1	Maryland	60,069	59,857	3,595,550,133
2	Delaware	55,994	8,217	460,102,698
3	Georgia	51,520	116,595	6,006,974,400
4	N. Carolina	47,354	97,676	4,625,349,304
5	Kentucky	47,208	41,500	1,959,132,000
6	Louisiana	46,964	48,235	2,265,308,540
7	Florida	46,930	172,417	8,091,529,810
8	Virginia	46,680	105,025	4,902,567,000
9	Alabama	46,604	48,021	2,237,970,684
10	Texas	46,179	321,729	14,857,123,491
11	S. Carolina	45,758	49,197	2,251,156,326
12	<b>** Arkansas</b>	<b>45,238</b>	<b>34,593</b>	<b>1,564,918,134</b>
13	Tennessee	44,820	62,282	2,791,479,240
14	Oklahoma	43,551	42,230	1,839,158,730
15	W. Virginia	42,529	19,862	844,710,998
16	* Mississippi	42,403	33,532	1,421,857,396
			1,260,968	59,714,888,884 \$ 47,356

Source: NEA Rankings of the States 2009 and Estimates of School Statistics 2010  
Released December 2009 (2007-08 Average Salary - Revised)

Source: NEA Rankings of the States 2008 and Estimates of School Statistics 2009  
Released December 2008 (Number of Teachers)

Surrounding State and SREB Average computed by AEA Research

\*Estimated by NEA

\*\*Arkansas Average Teacher Salary provided by Arkansas Department of Education

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### Average Teacher Salaries in Arkansas and the Surrounding States - 2008-09

Rank		ATS	# Teachers	
1	Louisiana	48,627	49,002	2,382,820,254
2	Texas	47,157	327,677	15,452,264,289
<b>3 **</b>	<b>Arkansas</b>	<b>45,738</b>	<b>35,353</b>	<b>1,616,975,514</b>
4	Tennessee	45,549	63,766	2,904,477,534
5	* Missouri	44,712	67,378	3,012,605,136
6	* Mississippi	44,498	34,754	1,546,483,492
7	Oklahoma	43,846	42,063	1,844,294,298
			619,993	28,759,920,517 \$ <b>46,387</b>

### Average Teacher Salaries in the SREB States - 2008-09

Rank		ATS	# Teachers	
1	Maryland	62,849	59,790	3,757,741,710
2	Delaware	56,667	8,349	473,112,783
3	Georgia	52,879	118,979	6,291,490,541
4	N. Carolina	48,648	99,098	4,820,919,504
5	Louisiana	48,627	49,002	2,382,820,254
6	* Virginia	48,365	106,242	5,138,394,330
7	Kentucky	47,875	41,331	1,978,721,625
8	S. Carolina	47,421	49,331	2,339,325,351
9	Texas	47,157	327,677	15,452,264,289
10	Florida	46,921	169,010	7,930,118,210
11	Alabama	46,879	47,758	2,238,847,282
<b>12 **</b>	<b>Arkansas</b>	<b>45,738</b>	<b>35,353</b>	<b>1,616,975,514</b>
13	Tennessee	45,549	63,766	2,904,477,534
14	W. Virginia	44,701	19,798	884,990,398
15	* Mississippi	44,498	34,754	1,546,483,492
16	Oklahoma	43,846	42,063	1,844,294,298
			1,272,301	61,600,977,115 \$ <b>48,417</b>

Source: NEA Rankings of the States 2009 and Estimates of School Statistics 2010  
Released December 2009

Surrounding State and SREB Average computed by AEA Research

\*Estimated by NEA

\*\*Arkansas Average Teacher Salary provided by Arkansas Department of Education  
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