

MINUTES

ARKANSAS BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION ON PUBLIC EDUCATION

Wednesday, August 22, 2001

10:00 a.m.

Room 171, State Capitol
Little Rock, Arkansas

Ms. Stacy Pittman, the Co-Chair of the Blue Ribbon Commission, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

ARKANSAS BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION ON PUBLIC EDUCATION

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Mr. Robert McGinnis, Co-Chair; Ms. Stacy Pittman, Co-Chair; Mr. Frank Anthony; Ms. Charlie Cole Chaffin; Ms. Judy Donovan; Dr. Charles Dunn; Dr. Benny Gooden; Dr. Reed Greenwood; Mr. Gene Gregory; Ms. Pat Harris; Mr. Randy Hughes; Mr. Phil Jones, Sr.; Dr. Don Love; Mr. Hugh McDonald; Ms. Kathy McFetridge; Dr. Martha McNair; Mr. David Matthews; Mr. Kevin Moore; Mr. Ulicious Reed; Mr. Larry Ross; and Mr. Keith Stokes. Ms. Tot Barnes represented Ms. Johnettee Walker.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT: Representative M. Olin Cook; Representative George French; Senator Jim Hill; Senator Cliff Hoofman; and Representative Larry Teague.

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY PRESENT: Senator David Bisbee; Representative Shane Broadway, Speaker; Representative Ken Cowling; Representative Joyce Dees; Representative Dean Elliott; Senator Jimmy Jeffress; Representative Calvin Johnson; Senator Jodie Mahony; Representative Thomas Moore; Senator John Riggs, Representative Bobby Lee Trammel; and Representative Lindbergh Thomas.

Approval of the Minutes of the July 19, 2001 meeting of the Blue Ribbon Commission

Without objection, the minutes of July 19, 2001, meeting of the Blue Ribbon Commission were approved as written.

Discussion of the System for Funding Public Education in Arkansas

Mr. John Kunkel, Associate Director for Finance Management, Department of Education, was recognized. Mr. Kunkel made a presentation to the Commission concerning the methodology used to fund public education in Arkansas. Mr. Kunkel discussed the budgetary process at the state level as it relates to public education as well as the operation of the formulation for the distribution of aid to school districts.

Mr. Tristan Green, Special Assistant to the Director, Arkansas Department of Education, was recognized. Mr. Green provided additional information to the Commission concerning the legal and historical development of the state's system of funding public education.

Discussion of the Student Transportation System in Arkansas

Mr. Mike Simmons, Coordinator, School Transportation/Driver Education, Arkansas Department of Education, was recognized. Mr. Simmons provided the Commission with an overview of the transportation system for public education.

Discussion of Debt Service Funding for School Districts

Ms. Cindy Chaney, Coordinator, School Loans and Bonds, Arkansas Department of Education, was recognized. Ms. Chaney discussed the use of debt funding by school districts to finance facilities and other long-term capital needs.

The Commission recessed for lunch at 11:45 a.m. and reconvened at 12:20 p.m.

Discussion of School District Facilities

Mr. Dave Floyd, Coordinator School Plant Services, Department of Education was recognized. Mr. Floyd provided the Commission with an overview of the state's school facilities. His presentation included a written report on facilities that was distributed to members of the Commission.

Ms. Pittman thanked the presenters for sharing their information with the Commission.

Initial Discussion Concerning Establishment of Subcommittees

Mr. Bob McGinnis, the Co-Chair, Arkansas Blue Ribbon Commission on Public Education, was recognized. Mr. McGinnis discussed with the members of the Commission the formation of five (5) subcommittees, consisting of five (5) members each, that would cover the following areas: funding,

facilities, teacher salaries/professional development, curriculum/preschool, and organizational structure. It was envisioned that the Commission would meet as a whole, break into subcommittees that would meet for the majority of the day and reconvene as a whole to hear status reports from the subcommittees. Commission members were provided with a form requesting them to list their preference of subcommittees. They were asked to return the form to the Commission's staff.

A discussion about future meeting dates of the Commission and its subcommittees ensued. Ms. Pittman informed the members of the Commission that September would be the last informational meeting. Following discussion by members of the Commission, **a motion was adopted that the first and third Wednesday of each month will be reserved for the meeting dates until the Commission finishes its work.** The next meeting date was set for 10:00 a.m. on September 26, 2001, in Room 151 of the State Capitol in Little Rock.

There being no further business, the Commission adjourned at 1:55 p.m.