

MINUTES

ARKANSAS BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION ON PUBLIC EDUCATION

November 21, 2001

10:00 a.m.

Room 151, State Capitol
Little Rock, Arkansas

Mr. Bob McGinnis, the Co-Chair of the Arkansas Blue Ribbon Commission on Public Education, 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. Benny Gooden; Dr. Reed Greenwood; Mr. Gene Gregory; Ms. Pat Harris; Mr. Wayne Hartsfield; Ms. Shelby Hillman; Mr. Randy Hughes; Mr. Phil Jones; 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.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT: Representative M. Olin Cook; Representative George French; and Representative Larry Teague.

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY PRESENT: Senator Jimmy Jeffress; Senator Jodie Mahony; Representative Travis Boyd; Representative LeRoy Dangeau; Representative Gene Jeffress; Representative Marvin Parks; and Representative Roger Smith.

Approval of the Minutes of the November 7, 2001 Meeting of the Blue Ribbon Commission [Exhibit C]

After reviewing the minutes of the November 7, 2001, meeting of the Blue Ribbon Commission, the minutes were approved as written.

Ms. Stacy Pittman, the Co-Chair of the Arkansas Blue Ribbon Commission on Public Education, was recognized. Ms. Pittman discussed a recent trip that she and other members of the Commission, as well as other interested parties, made to Lexington, Kentucky to the offices of the Pritchard Committee for Academic Excellence, an independent advocacy group for improved education in Kentucky. A discussion followed concerning how the Commission should proceed with its work while at the same time engaging the public more directly in its deliberations. **Without objection, the Commission adopted a motion to devote its December 19th meeting to a discussion of its future activities, facilitated by the staff of the Arkansas Leadership Academy. The Commission also voted to authorize the Communications Subcommittee, working in conjunction with the Arkansas School Boards Association, the Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce, and the Arkansas Educational**

Television Network, to review the feasibility of the Commission conducting a statewide town hall meeting. The meeting would be broadcast simultaneously around the state by the (AETN) on Thursday, February 28, 2002, with appropriate information concerning the topics to be discussed distributed prior to the broadcast.

Meetings of the Commission's Subcommittees

The meeting recessed at 10:30 a.m. The Commission's subcommittees met from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the various committee rooms of the Capitol. The Commission recessed for lunch at 12:30 p.m. and reconvened at 1:00 p.m.

Reports from Subcommittees

Mr. Raymond Simon, Director, Arkansas Department of Education, was recognized. Mr. Simon provided the Commission with an update on the recent funding reductions to public schools necessitated by the shortfall in state revenues and the potential impact of the reductions.

The Commission heard reports concerning the meetings of the subcommittees.

Curriculum/Education Childhood Education

Dr. Benny Gooden, Chair, Curriculum\Early Childhood Education Subcommittee, reported that the subcommittee discussed the following items:

- Presentation by **Ms. Janie Fletcher**, Director, Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education, Arkansas Department of Human Services, concerning the range of successful early childhood education options operating in Arkansas. In addition, Ms. Fletcher discussed a draft document that presented the relative costs associated with various delivery systems. She emphasized that all figures are based on projections made on behalf of the Early Childhood Commission.
- Presentation by **Ms. Karen Massey**, Early Childhood Coordinator, Southwest Arkansas Educational Service Cooperative and Chair of the Arkansas Early Childhood Commission, concerning the role of the Early Childhood Commission in the delivery of preschool programs.
- Presentation by **Ms. Judy Clay**, Coordinator, Early Childhood Special Education, Southwest Arkansas Educational Services Cooperative, concerning the special education services available to preschool children.
- Presentation by **Ms. Elaine Davis**, Director, Parents as Teachers Program, Arkansas River Educational Service Cooperative; concerning the Parents as Teachers program.

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- Presentation by **Ms. Penny Lunsford**, Coordinator, Foster Grandparents Program, DeQueen- Mena Educational Service Cooperative, concerning the Foster Grandparents Program.
- Presentation by **Mr. Frank Scott**, Director, DeQueen-Mena Educational Service Cooperative, and **Mr. Philip Young**, Director, Arch Ford Educational Services Cooperative, on the role the cooperatives play in the delivery of early childhood education.

Teacher Salaries/Professional Development

Dr. Reed Greenwood, Chair, Teacher Salaries/Professional Development Subcommittee, reported that the subcommittee discussed the following items:

- Teacher Recruitment: Teacher training academies, Career and job fairs, counseling, alternative certification programs, and scholarships.
- Teacher Retention: Administrative support, benefits, and working conditions (i.e. class size, extra duty, facilities, and safety).
- Teacher Remuneration: Salary disparities, alternative pay plans and other incentive plans.
- Professional Development Opportunities: Role of the educational service cooperatives and the structure of the state's current system of professional development.

Organizational Structure

Ms. Charlie Cole Chaffin, Chair, Organizational Structures Subcommittee, reported that the subcommittee discussed the following items:

- Presentation by **Mr. Jim Boardman**, Associate Director, Information and Technology Section, Arkansas Department of Education, on various aspects of the distance learning opportunities currently available in the state.
- Presentation by **Mr. Hugh McDonald**, a member of the Subcommittee, on his trip to Lexington, Kentucky to the offices of the Pritchard Committee for Academic Excellence.
- Presentation by **Mr. Gene Gregory**, a member of the Subcommittee, on his trip to Missouri to review the organizational structure of its public education system.
- Presentations by **Mr. Kevin Moore** and **Mr. Keith Stokes** on the report of Mr. **Todd Ziebarth**, Program Director, Governance, Education Commission of the States, to the November 19th meeting of the State Board of Education Advisory Committee.

Funding/Facilities

Mr. Larry Ross, Chair, Funding/Facilities Subcommittee, reported that the subcommittee discussed the following items:

- Presentation by **Mr. John Zimpel**, Research Development and Technical Support, Arkansas Assessment Coordination Department, concerning the

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state's system of property taxation and how it compares with the systems used by surrounding states.

- Presentation by **Dr. Kellar Noggle**, Executive Director, Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators, concerning unit-based funding methodologies used in other states. Dr. Noggle recommended that the Subcommittee carefully review the system of unit funding employed the State of Washington.
- Presentation by Mr. David Matthews, a member of the Subcommittee, recapping the information received by the Subcommittee regarding the costs associated with improving the state's system of public education.

PROGRAM OR ACTIVITY	\$ COST
Preschool Program <i>4-year olds only</i> <i>36,000 children at \$5,000/year</i>	\$180,000,000
Teacher In-Service <i>5 additional days added to current contract</i>	62,000,000
Teacher Salaries <i>Arkansas Education Association estimate</i> <i>Current teachers only; no incentive included</i>	436,000,000
Catch-up Fund	No Estimate
English as Second Language (ESL)	10,000,000
Curriculum Equalization	No Estimate
Facilities	
Preschool (New Construction)	437,000,000
Existing K-12 <i>Assumption is 25% of existing facilities must be replaced</i> <i>\$168,000,000 per year amortized over 20 years</i>	1,250,000,000
Facilities Total	1,687,000,000
TOTAL ANNUAL COST	<u>\$ 856,000,000</u>

OTHER ISSUES TO CONSIDER:

Administrative salaries

Classified employees salaries

Pre-School operating and maintenance costs

Transportation cost of preschool students

Savings from increasing the pupil/teacher ratio

Mr. McGinnis stated that the next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, December 5, 2001, at 10 a.m. in Room 149 of the Capitol.

There being no further business, the Commission adjourned at 1:40 p.m.