

## MINUTES

### ARKANSAS BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION ON PUBLIC EDUCATION

**November 7, 2001**

**10:00 a.m.**

**Room 149, State Capitol  
Little Rock, Arkansas**

Ms. Stacy Pittman, 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:** Ms. Stacy Pittman, Co-Chair; Mr. Robert McGinnis, Co-Chair; Mr. Frank Anthony; Ms. Charlie Cole Chaffin; Ms. Judy Donovan; Dr. Benny Gooden; Mr. Gene Gregory; Ms. Pat Harris; Mr. Wayne Hartsfield; Ms. Shelby Hillman; Mr. Randy Hughes; Mr. Phil Jones, Sr.; Mr. Hugh McDonald; Ms. Kathy McFetridge; Dr. Martha McNair; Mr. David Matthews; Mr. Kevin Moore; Ms. Alisia Ramirez-Hartz; Mr. Ulicious Reed; Mr. Larry Ross; Mr. Keith Stokes; and Ms. Jhannette Walker.

**EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE** Representative M. Olin Cook; Representative George French; Senator Jim Hill; and Representative Larry Teague.

#### **OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE:**

Senator David Bisbee; Representative Ken Cowling; Representative Gene Jeffress; Senator Jimmy Jeffress; Representative Thomas Moore; Representative Charles Ormond; Representative Marvin Parks; and Senator Henry "Hank" Wilkins.

#### **Approval of the Minutes of the October 17, 2001 Meeting of the Blue Ribbon Commission [Exhibit C]**

After reviewing the minutes of the October 17, 2001 meeting of the Blue Ribbon Commission, the minutes were approved as written.

#### **Meetings of the Commission's Subcommittees**

The meeting recessed at 10:15 a.m. The Commission's subcommittees met from 10:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. in the various

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committee rooms of the Capitol. The Commission recessed for lunch at 12:15 p.m. and reconvened at 12:45 p.m.

**Reports from Subcommittees**

The Commission heard reports concerning the meetings of the subcommittees.

**Salaries/Professional Development Subcommittee**

**Mr. Randy Hughes, Acting** Chair, Teacher Salaries/Professional Development Subcommittee, reported that the subcommittee discussed the following items:

- Timeline for the Subcommittee's recommendations to the full Commission;
- Presentation by the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) on the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP);
- Quality of professional development opportunities;
- Extension of teacher contracts for professional development;
- Starting salary and salary schedule for teachers;
- Optimum class size;
- Scholarship programs to attract people into the teaching profession;
- Non-traditional methods for teacher and administrator compensation; and
- Incentives to attract and retain qualified teachers in the profession and in high need school districts.

Following Mr. Hughes' presentation, the Commission also discussed the measurement of school and school district performance and the establishment of a master teacher and master administrator program, whose participants would agree to work in low performing schools and school districts.

**Organizational Structure**

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

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- Presentations concerning distance learning application by representatives from the Deer School District, the Greenbrier School District, and the Arch Ford Education Service Cooperative;
- Presentation on Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and the potential application of this technology to assist the Subcommittee in its work; and
- Future meetings of the Subcommittee will include additional discussion on various aspects of distance education, review of the organizational structure of the Arkansas Department of Education, and reports from members of the Subcommittee on meetings they have attended.

### **Curriculum\ Early Childhood Education Subcommittee**

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

- Review of Judge Kilgore's decision for issues related to curriculum and instruction;
- Classroom, building, and student accountability system used by the Springdale School District;
- Information on early childhood education complied by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) and **Ms. Janie Fletcher**, Director, Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education, Arkansas Department of Human Services;
- Scope of the current state accountability system and the lack of a student accountability component;
- Structure of the academic day in public schools;
- Definition of the term "sufficient" as it related to curriculum and instruction; and
- Initial timeline for the development of the Subcommittee's recommendations.

### **Funding/Facilities Subcommittee**

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

- Presentation by **Mr. Richard Wilson**, Administrator, Office of Economic and Tax Policy, Bureau of Legislative Research, on

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- potential sources of revenue to fund improvements to the state's education system;
- Presentations by the following individuals:
  - Dr. Glen Cochran**, Professor Emeritus, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, on a variety of school finance issues, including the impact on student\teacher ratios on the overall funding for schools and school districts;
  - Mr. Tristan Greene**, Special Assistant to the Director, Arkansas Department of Education, on a variety of school finance issues;
  - Ms. Patricia Martin**, Assistant Director, Public School Finance and Administration, Arkansas Department of Education, on issues related to changes in student enrollment and the impact on funding to school districts;
  - Mr. David Floyd**, Coordinator, School Plant Service, Arkansas Department of Education, on issues related to facilities; and
  - Ms. Janie Fletcher**, Director, Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education, Arkansas Department of Human Services, on issues related to early childhood education.
- Additional compensation for educators who agree to teach in distressed areas of the state;
- Review at its next meeting school finance models based on unit funding and the state's property tax system; and
- Need for the other subcommittees to attach a cost to their recommendations so as to assist the Funding Subcommittee.

Ms. Pittman introduced Ms. Toni Thorn, a Senior Research Assistant at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. Ms. Thorn will be assisting the Commission with the drafting of its final report. Ms. Pittman asked that any requests for assistance from Ms. Thorn by members of the Commission be routed through the subcommittee chairs to the Co-Chairs.

Ms. Pittman stated that the next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, November 21, 2001, at 10 a.m. in Room 151 of the Capitol. She asked the subcommittee chairs remain for a brief meeting with the co-chairs immediately upon adjournment.

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