

MINUTES

ARKANSAS BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION ON PUBLIC EDUCATION

October 3, 2001

10:00 a.m.

Room 138, 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: 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. Wayne Hartsfield; Ms. Shelby Hillman; 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; Ms. Alisia Ramirez-Hartz; Mr. Larry Ross; and Mr. Keith Stokes.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Representative George French; Senator Jim Hill; and Representative Larry Teague.

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE:

Representative Ken Cowling; Senator Jimmy Jeffress; Representative Jim Milligan; Representative Steve Oglesby; Representative Charles Ormond; Representative Marvin Parks; Representative Tommy Roebuck; Representative Roger Smith; Representative Robert White; and Representative Shawn A. Womack.

Approval of the Minutes of the September 26, 2001 Meeting of the Blue Ribbon Commission [Exhibit C]

Without objection, the minutes of the September 26, 2001, meeting of the Blue Ribbon Commission were approved as written.

Discussion of Issues Related to Accountability

Dr. Charity Smith, Associate Director for Accountability, Arkansas Department of Education was recognized. Dr. Smith made a presentation to the Commission concerning teacher licensure and certification, the process for addressing school districts in academic distress, and the benchmark examinations administered to students in grades 4 and 8.

Ms. Patricia Martin, Assistant Director for Public School Finance and Administration, Department of Education, was recognized. Ms. Martin

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provided additional information to the Commission concerning the mechanics of the program for assisting school districts in fiscal distress.

Pursuant to the motion by **Mr. David Matthews**, the staff was directed to invite Dr. Smith and Ms. Martin to a future meeting of the Commission to continue the discussion of these issues.

Meetings of the Commission's Subcommittees

The meeting recessed at 11:05 a.m. The Commission's subcommittees met for a working lunch in the various committee rooms of the Capitol.

Reports from Subcommittees

The Commission reconvened at 1:15 p.m. and heard reports concerning the meetings of the subcommittees.

Dr. Benny Gooden, Chair, Curriculum/Pre-School Subcommittee, reported that the subcommittee discussed the following items:

- Need to rename the subcommittee to the Curriculum/Early Childhood Subcommittee because it is more encompassing
- Relationship between the statewide curriculum and how the Arkansas Department of Education monitors its implementation
- General curriculum currently in place and how it relates to the Rose standards
- Special education, vocational education and other specialized curriculum
- Early childhood programs, the structure of the current delivery system and the costs associated with it
- Comparability of Arkansas's curriculum frameworks with those of other states

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

- Presentation by **Dr. Kellar Noggle**, Executive Director, Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators, on various aspects of district and school organization
- Governance structures used in other states
- Focus of the subcommittee - best organizational structure to educate the state's children

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

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- Presentation by Mr. Tim Leathers, Deputy Director, Department of Finance and Administration, concerning the state's system of taxation and its impact on public education
- Role of the Funding Subcommittee

Following Mr. Ross' presentation, the Commission engaged in a full and frank discussion of its role in reviewing and making recommendations concerning the funding of an improved educational system for the state. Pursuant to the motion of Mr. David Matthews, the Commission voted that its primary goal should be the identification of what is deemed an adequate and equitable system of public education. Upon completion of the primary goal, the Commission would then begin to explore sources of revenue to help meet these identified costs.

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

- Presentation by **Ms. Patricia Martin**, Assistant Director for Public School Finance and Administration, Department of Education, and **Ms. Janinne Riggs**, Associate Director for School Improvement and Professional Development, Arkansas Department of Education, concerning teacher salaries and professional development
- Salary schedules
- Teacher scholarships and incentives
- Professional development system, pre-service and in-service

Ms. Pittman updated the Commission on the activities of the Communications Subcommittee.

Ms. Pittman stated that the next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, October 17, 2001, at 10 a.m. in Room 151 of the Capitol.

There being no further business, the Commission adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Revised: 10-19-2001