



## ARKANSAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### ARKANSAS BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION ON PUBLIC EDUCATION

**Robert "Bob" McGinnis**  
**Co-Chair**

**Stacy Pittman**  
**Co-Chair**

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Mr. Bob McGinnis, Co-Chair  
Ms. Stacy Pittman, Co-Chair  
Arkansas Blue Ribbon Commission on Public Education

SUBJECT: Initial Key Findings of the Subcommittees of the Arkansas  
Blue Ribbon Commission on Public Education

DATE: March 28, 2002

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At its meeting on March 20<sup>th</sup>, the Arkansas Blue Ribbon Commission on Public Education heard reports from each of the Commission's subcommittees regarding the initial key findings developed by each subcommittee. Copies of each subcommittee's report are attached. As you review these documents, please keep in mind that the initial key findings are the starting point for the development of each subcommittee's recommendation. **They are not, nor should they be construed as being, recommendations of either the subcommittees or the Arkansas Blue Ribbon Commission on Public Education.**

We hope this information is helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact the chairs of the subcommittees or either of us if you have questions or need additional assistance.

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**Initial Key Findings**  
**Curriculum and Early Childhood Education Subcommittee**  
**Revised May 7, 2002**

**Charge to the Curriculum and Early Childhood Education Subcommittee**

The Curriculum and Early Childhood Education Subcommittee of the Arkansas Blue Ribbon Commission was appointed to focus on issues associated with these areas. Members include Dr. Benny L. Gooden, Chair, Ms. Patricia Harris, Ms. Shelby Hillman, Dr. Don Love, and Ms. Kathy McFetridge.

The subcommittee was charged with evaluating the manner in which the school curriculum available to all Arkansas students addresses their diverse needs and prepares them to be competitive in a global society. The subcommittee was also charged with considering the needs of Arkansas children before they enter kindergarten and ways in which these needs may be addressed.

**Background**

Judge Collins Kilgore included more than 60 findings of fact relative to curriculum and early childhood education in his lengthy ruling issued in Lake View School District, et. al. v. Mike Huckabee, et. al. These findings included specific references to:

- disparities in course availability between different school districts;
- assessment results on various parts of the ACTAAP;
- programs provided by the Arkansas Department of Education and various schools to address educational deficits;
- services provided to students prior to their entry into kindergarten;
- necessary services for children with special needs;
- state standards for academic distress;
- the college remediation rate of Arkansas high school graduates;
- needed remediation for students in order for them to succeed; and
- variations in available teaching materials, equipment, and supplies in various schools.

In one of Judge Kilgore's strongest findings, he noted that an adequate educational system would require the following elements:

1. A statement of clear expectations for student achievement;

2. An effective accountability system that holds schools accountable for results; and
3. Adequate funding to allow a program to be developed to produce expected outcomes.

He further noted that Arkansas has two of three in place: curriculum frameworks and an accountability system.

In his conclusions of law relative to curriculum, Judge Kilgore found in Lake View that:

- “Variations in curriculum between Fort Smith, Holly Grove, Lake View, and Lee County are so great as to provide a clear example of students being deprived of their rights of equal protection. School districts throughout the state must provide substantially equal educational opportunities for their children.
- Since a substantial number of children enter kindergarten and first grade significantly behind their peers and require subsequent remediation, it is imperative for them to perform at grade level – especially in reading – by grade three. To achieve this goal, the state must provide programs that will allow preschool children to compete academically with their peers.
- The reality of nineteen graduating classes since the Dupree decision and nine classes since Lake View was filed, reveals that some of the best students are not being adequately educated – much less those who are least advantaged. An adequacy study is essential before equity issues can be addressed.”

### **Preliminary Findings by the Subcommittee on Curriculum and Early Childhood Education**

The subcommittee heard testimony by a number of state officials, local school personnel, and out-of-state experts regarding the status of education in Arkansas relative to curriculum and early childhood education. Preliminary findings include the following:

#### **Curriculum**

**A comprehensive curriculum designed to meet the needs of all students is necessary to meet the “adequacy” standard described in the Lake View decision. After reviewing numerous documents and hearing testimony from a number of individuals, it appears that such**

**a comprehensive curriculum is not available to all Arkansas students. Specifically:**

- The required 38 units of high school credit comply with the Rose Standards cited by Judge Collins Kilgore in Lake View.
- Every Arkansas high school is not required to offer all 38 units every year.

Alternating-year courses deprive some students of access to curriculum and the opportunities it represents. Courses most often lacking include Chemistry, Physics, Algebra II, pre-Calculus/Trigonometry, Journalism, and selected fine arts offerings.

Vocational-technical courses are not available to all students due to the lack of local course offerings or access to area technical centers serving several schools. The nine required vocational-technical courses are not available in every high school.

- Monitoring of individual school curricular offerings is often inconsistent or lacking.
- There is no apparent limit to the ability of local schools to satisfy curriculum requirements through available distance education formats.
- Curriculum content in courses that carry the same title varies widely from school-to-school and teacher-to-teacher.
- A significant number of students fail to pursue a rigorous curriculum during the senior year of high school.

**Students who require special programs to allow them to maximize their achievement and attain their potential may not be provided with the necessary courses tailored to meet their needs. Curriculum needs of special populations are not adequately met in many communities. These special needs include:**

- Limited English Proficient (LEP) – Students whose home language is other than English require special instruction in order to succeed in the academic program as well as to become part of the school and community through social interaction.
- Alternative Learning Environments, which have been required in Arkansas schools for more than a decade. However, it is evident that many schools have not provided the necessary program to address the needs of

students who remain inadequately served in the regular educational program.

- Advanced Placement (AP) students/Gifted and Talented students require services and a specialized curriculum to help them develop their potential. While the number of Arkansas students enrolled in AP courses has increased during the past decade, a majority of high schools do not provide access to AP courses tailored to meet college board standards and therefore deprive their students of these opportunities.

**The measurement of student achievement with appropriate assessment tools and the proper use of test results is one of three elements cited in Lake View as essential if the state is to provide an adequate educational program. In this area it is found that:**

- Achievement by students in grades 4, 6, and 8 demonstrates a lack of comprehensive literacy skills as measured by the Benchmark Exams.
- Benchmark and End-of-Course Exams lack a system of individual student accountability.
- Multiple measures of achievement should be used to determine student, school, or statewide academic performance.
- Data-driven school improvement initiatives will provide the basis for establishing learning goals and priorities for each student, teacher, and school.

**In order for the public educational system to adequately prepare students for their futures as productive citizens in a global economy, it is necessary for other areas to be addressed which may not be clearly defined in curriculum frameworks or measured in state assessments, but which may define students and adults as good citizens and employees who build a better tomorrow. These findings include:**

- A consistent age-appropriate program to foster character and citizenship development is essential to maintain the strength of our free Democratic society.
- The life skills of parenting, consumer finance, career planning, and other essential learning opportunities are often lacking in the school curriculum pursued by many students.

- Learning is enhanced when schools create an environment in which schools assist parents in obtaining the skills necessary to help their children.
- Helping students assume some control of and responsibility for developing their personal learning goals and monitoring progress toward their achievement will result in the acquisition of skills which are found desirable by future employers.

**A paramount issue which concerns the schools and their ability to adequately provide the experiences students need is defined in an underlying finding:**

- There is an insufficient supply of fully-licensed teachers to support the required curriculum.

### **Early Childhood Education**

**The point in time that marks the beginning of a child's education is frequently defined as his or her entrance into kindergarten. However, it is well known that the acquisition of knowledge and skills that help children succeed in life are acquired beginning shortly after birth. Findings relative to this fact include:**

- As many as one-half of Arkansas children enter kindergarten significantly below expected developmental levels.
- Only 30 percent of Arkansas children receive formal preschool educational experiences.
- A research-based early childhood curriculum has been developed for use in approved preschool programs.
- Adequate pre-K programs are not accessible geographically to serve all children in need.
- Access to pre-K programs will require transportation.
- Current services are provided by a variety of agencies in a delivery system that must be coordinated and expanded.
- Appropriate training for early childhood service providers is essential for program success.

- Many parents fail to distinguish between child care/babysitting and early childhood education for their children.
- Parent education is an essential component in successful early learning for children.
- A program of incentives is necessary to encourage participation by parents and children.

## **Initial Key Findings Funding/Facilities Subcommittee**

The Subcommittee, chaired by Larry Ross, identified the Subcommittee's first Key Finding in the Final Order issued by Judge Kilgore in the Lake View lawsuit. Judge Kilgore ruled that the public schools of the State of Arkansas are not adequately funded, thus the work of the Funding and Facilities Subcommittee is to recommend what would be adequate funding for an equitable education for the children of Arkansas.

The members of the Subcommittee were asked to prepare a list of the key issues for further consideration as a recommendation of the Subcommittee to the full Blue Ribbon Commission. The following KEY ISSUES were unanimously agreed to by the members of the Subcommittee. The items listed as "Discussions topics" were taken from the Subcommittee discussions and from written comments submitted by the members.

### **KEY ISSUE:**

There should be a four-year old program with minimum required standards.

Discussion topics:

- Attendance requirements
- Uniform curriculum standards
- Curriculum standards set by BRC or ADE?
- State funding
- Use of existing infrastructure

Key Findings:

- There should be uniform curriculum standards for all four-year old programs.
- Adequate State funding must be provided for the success of the programs.

### **KEY ISSUE:**

Workforce education should be uniformly available across the state.

Discussion topics:

- Adequate and equitable locations
- Minimum state-wide curriculum standards

Key Findings: Same as above

**KEY ISSUE:**

Funding of facilities is a key issue.

## Discussion topics:

- Define adequate facilities to support the necessary curriculum
- Define minimum facilities standards
- Determine the relevance of this issue as it relates to the Supreme Court ruling
- Determine the role of local community participation
- Identify the extent of the State's financial responsibility for facilities; such as, the State is responsible for academic facilities and local resources are responsible for extra-curricular facilities
- Consider the impact on State funding
- Decide who is responsible for deciding changes to the funding formula
- Determine the appropriate treatment of existing debt
- Define facility needs: clean, safe, and economical

## Key Findings:

- Determine the appropriate treatment of existing debt
- Decide which entity of state government is responsible for deciding changes to the funding formula
- Define adequate facilities to support necessary curriculum
- Identify the extent of the State's financial responsibility for facilities; (such as, Is the State responsible for academic facilities and local resources responsible for extra-curricular facilities?)
- Determine the role of local community participation

**KEY ISSUE:**

Teacher Salaries are a key issue.

## Discussion topics:

- Salaries should not be contingent on student performance alone
- In order to meet minimum standards, the state should increase teacher salaries to the regional average, including consideration of special needs students
- Teachers should receive technology training
- Overall quality of teaching must be improved
- Scholarships should be made available
- Make teacher salaries uniform across the state
- Pay an incentive or a stipend for specialized curriculum
- Pay stipend for certain geographical areas of the state

- Pay a stipend to successful principals and administrators for relocating to a failing school
- Require a quality certified teacher in every classroom
- Require high quality/relevant staff development that meets district/school and individual teacher needs
- Provide in depth in-service prior to the beginning of the school year
- Mandate smaller classes for student remediation
- Extend teacher contracts (more days and 8 hours per day) and increase salaries
- Require a minimum and maximum student/teacher ratio that is appropriate to grade level and discipline

#### Key Findings:

- Make teacher salaries uniform across the state
- Pay an incentive or a stipend for specialized curriculum teacher
- Pay a stipend for certain geographical areas of the state for teachers
- Pay a stipend to successful principals and administrators for relocating to a failing school and/or district
- Require a quality certified teacher in every classroom
- Require high quality/relevant staff development the meets the district/school and individual teacher needs
- Require a minimum and maximum student/teacher ratio that is appropriate to grade level and discipline
- Extend teacher contracts (more days and 8 hours per day) with increased pay

#### **Addendum Items**

- Additional resources need to be committed to remediation, transportation and child nutrition
- A responsibility component for students, teachers, and administrators should be determined
- An accountability component for teachers and administrators should be determined
- Responsible efficiencies should be attained in every district so that public education funds are effectively used
- The Commission should identify an adequate and equitable education system that prepares students to intelligently choose and pursue life's work, regardless of where they live
- A quality curriculum should be available to every child

- A state-wide minimum curriculum for every level should be determined
- Additional resources should be committed to remediating children who are not proficient, such as transportation, after school nutrition programs, and tutoring.
- Consider a system of P-8 and 9-12 districts
- Need additional ESL teachers
- Per pupil expenditures should be at or above the regional/national average

## **Initial Key Findings** **Organizational Structure Subcommittee**

### **I. Mission of the Organization Structure Subcommittee**

Members of the Organization Structure Subcommittee are: Subcommittee Chair, Ms. Charlie Cole Chaffin, Mr. Gene Gregory, Mr. Hugh McDonald, Mr. Kevin Moore and Mr. Keith Stokes. The subcommittee was charged to review and recommend the most appropriate organizational structure to ensure the educational opportunities for Arkansas children are adequate, equitable, and delivered in the most efficient manner. The subcommittee was also charged to review and recommend additional measures to improve the efficiency of the Arkansas education system, including year round school, and strengthen elements of the existing accountability process. The subcommittee has been presented with, discussed and analyzed various relevant information, points of view, and recommendations related to its mission.

### **II. Lakeview vs. State of Arkansas Findings of Fact**

FOF 3. Making an accurate determination as to how much of the revenues distributed by the State actually reach the classroom is more difficult than measuring how much revenue the State provides the schools and school districts. However, under the Constitution the State is solely responsible for the education of its citizens. Its duty does not end upon disbursement of revenues to the school districts. Moreover, the best measure of whether available funds are being efficiently applied to the education of the State's children is by an accurate accounting of the expenditures.

FOF 22. Facilities, materials, teachers and other resources affect a student's opportunity and ability to learn. The State suggests that disparity in the way funds are spent accounts for the many alleged inequities at the local level; i.e. mismanagement and not inequitable distributions of funds is because of unconstitutional educational disparities. There is some evidence of mismanagement at the local level, but it is not sufficient to fully support the State's position. Further, even if it were, under the Constitution, the State bears the ultimate burden of educating its children, no matter where the blame is cast.

FOF 85. Present technology would suggest that the appropriate way for a state to exercise its responsibilities is not through detailed spending control but close observation of student performance. The Standard Assurance Unit of the Department of Education is available for that role. It has three responsibilities: accreditation of schools, standards review, and assistance to schools in academic distress.

FOF 87. IF a school district is found to be not in compliance with one or more of the standards of accreditation, the district can suffer various consequences. These range from a citation, which is a minor violation, to probation, which if not corrected could lead to a loss of accreditation. If a school loses accreditation after going through probationary status for two consecutive years, then it would be subject to a number of penalties including annexation, consolidation and other remedies.

FOF 124. As previously found by this court, the Arkansas Constitution, Article 14, §1 requires that the State provide a “general, suitable and efficient system of free public schools” and Article 2, §§2, 3, and 18 requires that the schools be equally available to all the people. Article 14, §1 also permits the State and the school districts to “spend public funds for the education of persons over twenty-one (21) years of age and under six (6) years of age...”

### III. **Governance: What are the various governance structures?**

A. There are four primary models of state-level K-12 education governance in place across the country.<sup>1</sup>

1. **Model One:** Within this model, the governor appoints the state board of education. Also, the state board of education appoints the chief state school officer. There are 12 Model One states: Alaska, **Arkansas**, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont and West Virginia.
2. **Model Two:** Within this model, the state board of education is elected, and appoints the chief state school officer. There are eight Model Two states: Alabama, Colorado, Hawaii, Kansas, Michigan, Nebraska, Nevada and Utah.

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<sup>1</sup> August 30, 2002 Memorandum of Mr. Todd Ziebarth, RE: State Education Governance Structures.

3. **Model Three:** Within this model, the governor appoints the state board of education. Also, the general public elects the chief state school officers. There are 11 Model Three states: Arizona, California, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Montana, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon and Wyoming.
4. **Model Four:** Within this model, the governor appoints the state board of education and the chief state school officer. There are eight Model Four states: Delaware, Iowa, Maine, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee and Virginia.

The remaining eleven states have governance structures that do not conform to any of the above four models.

- B. States are also taking a variety of approaches to alter their existing K-12 education governance structure.
- C. Although the subcommittee believes there is no correlation between the type of governance structure and academic performance, the specific regression analysis has not been performed.
- D. General Governance Statistics by State – See Summary Table 1 (see link under the link to this document on the website)

IV. **Comparative Public Education Data:** How does Arkansas compare to U.S. and SREB states?

A. Arkansas Demographic Data

1. Arkansas also has a significant portion of its children in poverty at 22%, higher than the US average of 21%. However, Arkansas' poverty ranking is lower than the SREB average of 24%.<sup>2</sup> Arkansas is also among the leaders across the nation in the percentage of rural students in poverty (25.9%) and leads the nation in the percentage of student attending small rural schools (29.4%).<sup>3</sup>
2. There is no clear agreement among researchers and educators about what constitutes a “small” school or a “large” school.

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<sup>2</sup> Toward the New Century, Educational Policy Recommendation for Consideration by the 82<sup>nd</sup> Arkansas General Assembly of the State of Arkansas, October 1, 1998

<sup>3</sup> Why Rural Matters, A Report of the Rural School and Community Trust Policy Program, August 2002

Many researchers, however, indicate that an appropriate and effective size is 300-400 students for an elementary school and 400-800 students for a secondary school.<sup>4</sup>

3. On the other hand, research conducted on behalf of the State Board of Education of Arkansas Advisory Committee indicates a low correlation between district size and % proficiency.<sup>5</sup>
4. According to information compiled by the Education Commission of the States:

Arkansas has 310 districts. Georgia has 181 districts  
Arkansas has 15 co-ops. Georgia has 13 co-ops.  
Georgia generally is around or below the national average in terms of proficiency on the NAEP.

Arkansas has 310 districts. Florida has 67 districts.  
Florida generally is below the national average.

Arkansas has 310 districts. Kentucky has 176 districts.  
Kentucky generally is below the national average and even dropped 12% and 8% between 1998 and 2000.

Arkansas has 310 districts. Wisconsin has 426 districts.  
Wisconsin generally scores higher than the national average in proficiency in both reading and math.

## B. Arkansas Student Academic Achievement

1. Arkansas student academic achievement, on average, trailed the nation in National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and ACT scores. Eighth grade science NAEP scores for Arkansas were also below the average of the sixteen SREB states with only Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina consistently scoring lower. Fourth grade science and 8<sup>th</sup> grade writing NAEP scores for Arkansas were also below the SREB average and U.S. average. On the other hand, Arkansas ACT combined scores of 20.3 were above SREB average of 20.1 and Arkansas SAT combined scores of 1117 were higher than both the SREB average (1002) and U.S. average (1019).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Excerpted from Kathleen Cotton, *School Size, School Climate, and Student Performance* (Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory), 1996, pp.10-11. <http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/sirs/10/c020.html>

<sup>5</sup> State Board of Education Advisory Committee – Summary of School District Data Correlation Studies

<sup>6</sup> Status of Arkansas Schools in Relation to SREB states, February 2002

### C. Comparative School District Data

1. When statistics on the average number of students per district are compared, Arkansas ranks 42<sup>nd</sup> out of 51 states and when compared with the 16 Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) states, one state, Oklahoma, has fewer students per district than Arkansas.<sup>7</sup> The North Central Association accredits Arkansas and Oklahoma, while a different accrediting association accredits the remainder of the SREB states.
2. Arkansas averages 391 students per elementary school (687 schools). Sixteen states have averages less than Arkansas. Of the 16 SREB states, Oklahoma has a student per elementary school average (341) less than Arkansas.<sup>8</sup>
3. Arkansas averages 449 students per secondary schools (417 schools). Eight states have averages less than Arkansas. Of the 16 SREB states, again only Oklahoma has a student per secondary school average (346) less than Arkansas.<sup>9 10</sup>
4. From an overall school density standpoint, Arkansas ranks 34th out of 51 states with 45 square miles per school. There are approximately 76 square miles per elementary school and 125 square miles per secondary school in the state of Arkansas.
5. School district consolidation and reorganization should not be founded on only opportunities to reduce costs. Broad scale consolidation/reorganization has the potential to also increase costs. For the smallest districts, and those where student populations are falling, costs per student will increase due to the high costs necessary to maintain standards, state standard curriculum and to provide a quality educational program.
6. School districts must meet core curriculum requirements by September 1, 2002, as defined by the State Department of Education and be taught by qualified and licensed teachers in the subject area they are teaching. Should the core

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<sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of Education

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics Table 101

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Table 102

<sup>10</sup> Arkansas Public High School Enrollments: AAA 2002-04 October 2001 classification scale (97,564 Students in Grades 10-12).

curriculum change as a result of the Blue Ribbon Commission Curriculum subcommittee recommendations, the September 1, 2002, deadline could be extended for a minimal period of time.

7. Incentive funding for district consolidation has been effective in previous consolidation efforts in Arkansas. Should consider fully funding based on the existing incentive formula, in addition to including incentive funding provision in the existing overall funding formula.
8. In certain states and situations K-6<sup>th</sup> grade districts remain intact and high schools are consolidated.<sup>11</sup>

## V. **Efficiency Measures**

Efficiency and effectiveness measures must be defined, implemented, monitored on an ongoing basis and used for effective management of the State Department of Education, Cooperatives and Districts.

## VI. **Additional Findings**

- A. Year-Round School schedule has demonstrated the linkage with improved academic performance, improved student discipline and increased student attendance. It also provides a better chance for more and better education to those in greatest need – the poorest among us and brings a broadened and enriched curriculum.<sup>12 13</sup>
- B. Distance learning provides schools the ability to provide core, and advanced courses to ensure State curriculum standards are met.
- C. Separation of service and accountability/regulatory roles within a state's department of education has proven to be more effective in other states' implementation of its school accountability requirements.

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<sup>11</sup> This has been an effective transitional structure for the state of Missouri.

<sup>12</sup> Enhanced Instructional Delivery Models Balanced Calendars and Strategies To Improve Achievement Levels. The Effects of Year-Round Education on Elementary School Students. Bob Heaberline, Ed. D Georgia Association for Year-Round Education.

<sup>13</sup> Education Week. February 13, 2002. Restructuring American Education. Lloyd H. Elliot

- D. Concern exists in the singular board makeup of school superintendents for the fifteen Arkansas Education Cooperatives. An inconsistent level of policy guidance, operational autonomy and cooperation between education cooperatives and the state department of education exists.
- E. Consideration should be given for a separate and independent Board to monitor and evaluate school districts and given the authority to reorganize and consolidate schools and districts based on pre-established standards and performance measures.

**Initial Key Findings**  
**Teacher Salary and Professional Development Subcommittee**

**INTRODUCTION**

This report provides information that was collected by the Teacher Salary and Professional Development Committee of the Blue Ribbon Commission and presented to the Commission on March 20, 2002. Although this represents the views of the Committee at this time, the Committee is open to additional findings as it moves forward toward recommendations to be submitted to the Commission.

The report is presented in the following sections:

- 1) Charge to the Committee
- 2) Background
- 3) Key Findings: Recruitment
- 4) Key Findings: Retention -- Professional Development
- 5) Key Findings: Remuneration
- 6) References

The report is presented with limited narrative followed by bulleted key findings. The key findings are presented under two headings: 1) information focused on Arkansas, listed as "Arkansas" in each of the three sections of key findings, and 2) information based on reviews of pertinent literature, listed as "Literature Review." The findings listed under the latter section are direct quotations from the references.

**CHARGE TO THE COMMITTEE**

Members of the Teacher Salaries/Professional Development Committee, one of five committees of the Arkansas Blue Ribbon Commission, were announced at the fourth Commission meeting on September 26, 2001. Members include Dr. Reed Greenwood, Chair, Ms. Judith G. Donovan, Mr. Randy Hughes, Dr. Martha McNair, and Ms. Johnette Walker.

The Committee was charged with 1) evaluating the status of teacher salaries and teacher professional development in Arkansas, 2) obtaining information on salaries and professional development standards for teachers in other states, 3) reviewing methods which could lead to improvement in teacher salaries and professional development for Arkansas' teachers, and 4) making recommendations to the Commission. Presentations were made to the Committee by representative organizations and individuals in Arkansas, working with and interested in K-12 education. Based on input from the

various groups, as well as information obtained from educational resources and the Internet, literature-based findings were outlined. For ease of dealing with the issues, information was categorized into three areas: recruitment, retention, and remuneration.

Recruitment refers to activities conducted by local, regional, and state entities for the purpose of encouraging certified, quality educators to seek employment in Arkansas' schools. Two areas of particular need evident in Arkansas are 1) recruiting educators to specific geographic areas and 2) recruiting educators to specific curricular areas.

Retention refers to activities focused on maintaining Arkansas' educators in K-12 positions. Areas of particular importance in Arkansas are activities geared toward 1) encouraging faculty to continue in education as a career throughout their working years and 2) providing professional development services that continuously expand the knowledge base of educators.

Remuneration refers to compensation for the work conducted by educators. Remuneration is most frequently expressed in the form of teachers' salaries and benefits. Arkansas' teachers are paid based on years of experience and level of education. Salaries vary from district to district. Benefits also vary, and typically include insurance (health, life), retirement funds, and professional, personal, and sick days.

Findings associated with the three areas of recruitment, retention, and remuneration overlap. For example, the level of remuneration may impact whether a teacher can be recruited to a particular area, teacher retention can be influenced by the degree of remuneration, and faculty may be recruited to a particular job with retention dependent upon a variety of factors.

The initial focus of the Teacher Salary and Professional Development Committee was to investigate and explore literature-based information which impacts and defines recruitment, retention, and remuneration in Arkansas, with the goal of providing the highest possible quality education for all Arkansas' children. This report represents the Committee's efforts in obtaining information to provide the structure upon which to make recommendations to the Arkansas legislature.

## **BACKGROUND**

Several important factors that affect the issues before the Committee were identified, including the following:

- Five recent Acts in Arkansas intended to impact teacher recruitment<sup>1</sup>
  - Act 1388 – reimbursement for interviewing and moving expenses
  - Act 1521 – identification of teacher shortage areas by ADE (Arkansas Department of Education)
  - Act 1523 – creation of Arkansas Delta Leadership Academy – professional development for teachers in the Delta
  - Act 1550 – program to attract qualified individuals to pursue masters and teach in areas where there are teacher shortages - \$2000/yr for 4 years
  - Act 1731 – scholarship to increase minority participation in teaching at UAPB (University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff) - \$1500/yr
  - Act 1398 of 2001 – created the Blue Ribbon Commission
- Act 999 of 1999 authorized the State Board of Education to “establish professional development.”<sup>2</sup>
- A demographic shift in the age of teachers has occurred in the United States. The percentage of full-time teachers 45 years old or older increased from about 26% in 1975 to 43% in 1993.<sup>4</sup>
- Students in high-poverty schools are more likely to be taught by unqualified teachers.<sup>5</sup>
- Recent research provides strong evidence that teacher quality is the single most important school factor affecting student achievement.<sup>6</sup>
- Three selected measures of teacher quality: degree in subject, performance on standardized exams, selectivity of college attended.<sup>6</sup>
- Recommendations from *What Matters Most: Teaching for America’s Future* (1996):
  - 1 – Get serious about standards, for both students and teachers.
  - 2 – Reinvent teacher preparation and professional development.
  - 3 – Overhaul teacher recruitment and put qualified teachers in every classroom.
  - 4 – Encourage and reward teaching knowledge and skill.
  - 5 – Create schools that are organized for student and teacher success.<sup>7</sup>
- The principal criterion for evaluating the impact of professional development shall be the improvement of student achievement on State criterion-referenced examinations and other related indicators as defined by the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment and Accountability Program.<sup>8</sup>
- Our message is very simple: If we are serious about leaving no child behind, then we must also be serious about leaving no teacher

unqualified. Because ensuring a quality, qualified teacher in every classroom – especially in high-poverty, low-performing schools – is the linchpin of any credible agenda of school reform.<sup>32</sup>

- The State Board of Education is in the process now of trying to advance a comprehensive strategy to attract, motivate and retain high caliber teachers to the teaching profession...The challenge of finding ways of retaining quality teachers and attracting new teachers is going to take additional funding. The single most important factor necessary to ensure that the State's system of education meets the *Rose* factors is the availability of well educated, well motivated, and well compensated teachers.<sup>31</sup>

## **KEY FINDINGS: RECRUITMENT**

### ***Arkansas***

- The U. S. Department of Education designated teacher shortage areas in Arkansas for the 1999-2000 school year. General areas include: secondary mathematics and sciences, K-12 handicapped, languages, and English-as-a-Second-Language.<sup>9</sup>
- Arkansas has 42 counties, located in the Delta region, designated as geographic areas of shortage, where it is often difficult to attract new teachers.
- Judge Kilgore notes that Arkansas teachers are compensated far less than their counterparts in neighboring states. This fact makes it difficult for districts, particularly those on the border with other states, to attract and maintain qualified teachers.<sup>3</sup>

### ***Literature Review***

- Studies indicate that young people often enter teaching out of a sense of calling and are much more motivated by idealism and the perceived lifestyle teaching offers than by salary.<sup>10</sup>
- A number of other factors affect the ability of the teaching profession to attract candidates and of schools and districts to attract teachers:
  1. potential candidates' perceptions of teaching
  2. the school environment
  3. interaction with and support from colleagues and school leaders
  4. workload and career growth opportunities
  5. comparative starting salaries
  6. hiring practices
  7. teacher mobility<sup>10</sup>
- A recent Public Agenda survey, *A Sense of Calling: Who Teaches and Why?*, showed that a majority of college graduates who do not enter

teaching believe teachers do not feel adequately respected and appreciated.<sup>11</sup>

- More than half (52%) of respondents to the most recent *Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools* said putting a qualified, competent teacher in every classroom offers the greatest promise of improving public schools. Only 4%, however, said difficulty in getting good teachers is the biggest problem facing their local schools.<sup>12</sup>
- The 2001 *Recruiting New Teachers* poll ranked teaching as the profession of greatest benefit to society and the career that, next to medicine, people would most recommend to a family member.<sup>13</sup>
- The Education Commission of the States says “hard-to-staff” schools are those “that have a particularly difficult time finding and retaining adequately trained teachers who are effective with their student populations.”<sup>14</sup>
- “Hard-to-staff” schools frequently have the greatest need for the most capable professionals and are most likely to have ill-prepared principals and under-qualified, inexperienced teachers.
- Teacher recruitment strategies used by states include the following:
  1. Early recruitment strategies
  2. Scholarship and loan forgiveness programs
  3. Targeted recruitment strategies
  4. Financial incentives
  5. Career fairs

## **KEY FINDINGS: RETENTION – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### ***Arkansas***

- There are 11 required focus areas for professional development in Arkansas: curriculum alignment, instructional strategies, assessment, advocacy/leadership, systemic change process, Arkansas content standards/frameworks, supervision, mentoring/coaching, instructional technology, principles of learning/developmental stages, building a collaborative learning community.<sup>8</sup>
- Arkansas requires 30 hours of professional development each year for all certified employees. A three-hour college credit course counts as 3 hours of professional development. Development activities must produce knowledge designed to improve students' academic performance.<sup>8</sup>
- There is a need for policymakers to establish a clear vision of the professional development program for teachers.

### ***Literature Review***

- Thirty percent of teachers and 50% of teachers in urban schools leave teaching within 5 years. Out of every 600 students entering four-year teaching programs, only 180 complete them, only 72 become teachers and only about 40 are still teaching several years later.<sup>15</sup>
- Most professional development costs are born by the local districts. Expenditures include 1) staff costs associated with planning and delivering in-service programs, 2) opening schools 2-5 days per year for in-service, 3) sending staff to workshops, 4) supervising and evaluating personnel, 5) reimbursing tuition, and 6) paying the salary increments teachers earn when they attain graduate degrees, college credits or CEUs.<sup>16</sup>
- Most districts do not know how much professional development is costing them.<sup>16</sup>
- Teacher knowledge must be encouraged and rewarded.<sup>7</sup>
- If teachers are to teach for deep understanding, they must be intellectually engaged in their disciplines and work regularly with others in their field.<sup>22</sup>
- Most school districts invest little in ongoing professional development for experienced teachers and spend much of these limited resources on unproductive “hit-and-run” workshops.<sup>7</sup>
- Staff development should be job-embedded, intensive, sustained over time, relevant to school improvement goals, linked to student performance, and strongly supported by the schools.<sup>18</sup>
- A focused professional development experience led by qualified teachers, mentors, and colleagues is the indispensable foundation for competence and high-quality teaching.<sup>19</sup>
- Despite the considerable resources that most schools devote to professional development (6-10 days per year), teachers and administrators alike generally have negative opinions of professional development.<sup>20</sup>
- An effective professional development program is not merely an agenda for designated in-service days. Ideally, it is a continuous process of learning through experience and through external training and other supplemental activities.<sup>20</sup>
- Teachers need time to prepare and equip themselves with the knowledge and skills necessary to maximize student learning. Professional development for teachers must become a seamless part of the daily and year-long job. Teachers’ learning must be accommodated by changes in how time is used throughout the school year and beyond it.<sup>17</sup>
- Eighty percent of the National Board Certified Teachers surveyed said the National Board Certification process was better than other

professional development experiences, and 61 percent said the act of going through the process has had a greater impact on them than actually achieving the certificate itself.<sup>21</sup>

- The teaching career does not encourage teachers to develop or use growing expertise.<sup>7</sup>
- Professional development is likely to have greater impact on practice if it is closely linked to school initiatives to improve practice.<sup>22</sup>
- Teachers need opportunities to explore, question and debate in order to integrate new ideas into their repertoires and their classroom practice.<sup>22</sup>
- Professional development should be viewed as an integral part of teachers' work.<sup>22</sup>
- Professional development programs should provide for sufficient time and follow-up support for teachers to master new content and strategies and to integrate them into their practice.<sup>22</sup>
- Policymakers should focus their deliberations on the central issues of professional development and set some clear goals for policy. These goals might include the following:
  - Focusing professional development on core problems of teaching and learning.
  - Balancing individual and organizational interests in professional development, and restructuring incentives so that they are more closely aligned.
  - Embedding more professional development in the workplace so it is more closely related to teachers' work experience.
  - Ensuring that high-quality professional development opportunities are accessible to teachers who serve the most vulnerable students.
  - Improving the productivity of professional development.<sup>23</sup>
- Good professional development should encompass expectations educators hold for students, child-development theory, curriculum content and design, instructional and assessment strategies for instilling higher-order competencies, school culture and shared decision-making.
- Steps state policymakers might take to push professional development in the right direction:
  - Increasing awareness among educational leaders
  - Increasing public support and awareness
  - Reviewing policies and practice
  - Setting standards and priorities
  - Providing more time
  - Strengthening teacher roles

- Supporting local adoption or demonstrations of promising approaches
- Re-thinking incentives<sup>23</sup>

## **KEY FINDINGS: REMUNERATION**

### ***Arkansas***

- National average beginning teacher salary was \$27,989 in 1999-2000. Arkansas was \$22,599 – ranking 47<sup>th</sup> out of 51.<sup>24</sup>
- National average teacher salary in 1999-2000 was \$41,820. Arkansas reporting \$33,691 – ranking 43<sup>rd</sup> out of 51.<sup>25</sup>
- Based on a report from the Southern Regional Education Board (November 2000), out of 13 states, Arkansas ranks 11<sup>th</sup> in starting teacher salary (Base=\$21,860), and tops out at 15 years ranking 8<sup>th</sup> for 1999 – 2000.<sup>26</sup>
- A breakdown of salaries by District ADM demonstrates the smaller the district, the smaller the salary.<sup>27</sup>
- A review of Judge Kilgore’s ruling notes that “disparities in pay among Arkansas districts are also addressed. Typically, the districts with the greatest number of high-needs or at-risk students on a percentage basis are the districts that can pay teachers the least.” “[Remedies] First, because in the court’s view competent, motivated teachers are the most essential element of an adequate system, Judge Kilgore orders both higher and substantially equivalent salaries across the state.”<sup>3</sup>
- Judge Kilgore concluded that “disparities in teacher salaries within the State are unconstitutional.”<sup>31</sup>
- Judge Kilgore concluded that “teachers salaries are inadequate as compared to competing markets.”<sup>31</sup>
- While Arkansas’ teachers are provided benefits such as health insurance, their portion of the contribution to the program is a significant burden to many teachers in the state.

### ***Literature Review***

- Financially, teaching is a less attractive profession to be in than it was in 1980. Based on 19% adjusted increase compared to overall salary increase of 29%.<sup>6</sup>
- Shifting pay increments from years of experience and loosely related education units to more direct measures of professional skills and competencies, adding a mechanism that encourages on-going training and assessment of instructional strategies, and perhaps adding group-based performance bonuses, are compensation

changes that could link how teachers are paid with the evolving strategic needs of new school organizations.<sup>28</sup>

- While the existing data sources appear to show that benefits for teachers compare favorably to those in the private sector, it is not possible to directly compare how they have changed over time relative to the private sector. Thus, there is no indication of whether teaching has become a more or less attractive occupation given changes in benefits.<sup>6</sup>
- There is evidence suggesting that the rigid pay structure in teaching may adversely affect the number of high ability individuals entering or remain[ing] in the teaching profession.<sup>6</sup>
- Current AFT (American Federation of Teachers) policy on teacher compensation supports the following:
  1. endorsing additional compensation to teachers who earn advanced certification by passing the demanding, performance-based assessments of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS);
  2. placing new teachers in shortage fields (e.g., math and science) further up on the salary schedule; and
  3. paying teachers for mentoring, peer support and other professional development activities.

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