

**Minutes**  
**Vision for Excellence in Education and Arkansas Accountability System (ESSA)**  
**Steering Committee Meeting**  
**Monday, October 16, 2017**

The Vision for Excellence in Education and Arkansas Accountability System Steering Committee (Steering Committee) met Monday, October 16, 2017, in the Arkansas Department of Education (Department) Conference Room 201-A. Chair Johnny Key called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m.

Members Present: Commissioner Johnny Key, Ouida Newton; Senator Jane English; Ima Etim; Keli Gill; Harold Jeffcoat; Joyce Flowers; Gloria Phillips; Melissa Bratton; and Anthony Bennett.

Members Absent: Michelle Hayward; and Representative Bruce Cozart.

Audience: ADE staff, general public, and press.

The meeting was live streamed and the recording was posted on the ADE website at <http://www.arkansased.gov/divisions/public-school-accountability/every-student-succeeds-act-essa/stay-informed-archive>

**Consent Agenda**

**Consideration of Approval for Minutes – July 26, 2017**

Ms. Flowers moved, seconded by Senator English, to approve the July 26, 2017, minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

**Action Agenda**

**Arkansas ESSA Application**

Assistant Commissioner for Public School Accountability Ms. Deborah Coffman said the ESSA application was submitted to the U.S. Department of Education on September 15, 2017.

Commissioner Key said the Department had received questions from districts regarding whether there was additional money to implement ESSA, particularly with Title IV. He said the implementation of ESSA would not require additional federal funds.

## **2016 Schools' Score Distributions for ESSA School Index Indicators**

Ms. Coffman said this is the first time the Department is implementing the ESSA School Index Indicators. She said the ESSA plan would be assessed and amended as necessary over time.

Ms. Coffman said there are three grade configurations. She said the second and third indicators are merged in the Arkansas plan. She said the indicators are Weighted Achievement, School Mean Growth plus English Learner Growth, Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate, and School Quality and Student Success. She said the Department has tested the model on an old dataset to address any model errors. Ms. Coffman presented a PowerPoint modeling the data.

Commissioner Key said GPA is part of the school quality measure, but because other indicators will reveal grade inflation, the Department is not concerned that schools will be encouraged to inflate grades.

Ms. Coffman said the Department weighted the components to determine the overall school rating.

She said the lowest 5% of schools are identified as in need of comprehensive support. She said the Department will rank Title 1 schools based on scores. She said these schools will qualify for additional support through the Department and 1003 funds. She said schools in the lowest 5% will receive comprehensive support for three (3) years.

Ms. Coffman said the cut score for the lowest 5% should increase over time. She said this will indicate that schools are improving overall. She said the same cut score will be used in subgroup scores. She said data from the six (6) subgroups will be measured, and any subgroups within schools across the three (3) grade levels that fall below the lowest 5% cut score will be identified, and schools will be notified.

## **Stakeholder Engagement Process to Determine School Rating**

Ms. Coffman said the A-F Rating is a simple way for parents to understand school ratings. She said the Department is considering the reporting mechanisms for school ratings and how to assign letter grades. She said a student engagement process was recommended to the Department. She said a performance profile will be established for each indicator for each grade level. She said the Department will establish high, medium, and low cut levels of growth, and the school ratings will be assigned based on this process. She said the Department wants external stakeholders to have a comprehensive understanding of what each letter means.

Ms. Coffman said the next A-F Rating will be released in April 2018. She said the school rating process will require feedback from stakeholders. She said stakeholder input will be submitted to the Steering Committee for feedback before submission to the Arkansas State Board of Education for final approval.

## **Planning for ESSA implementation**

Ms. Coffman said each component requires a close look before the index is considered as a whole.

The Steering Committee recommended that the Department create video vignettes explaining the plan and how it impacts schools. The Steering Committee said the Department should follow up with a livestream event where questions can be answered. Ms. Coffman said topics to be explored in the livestream include "N-size," the indicators, subgroups, how to use data to improve individual schools, and the A-F Rating.

Ms. Coffman asked Steering Committee members to reread the Arkansas ESSA plan. She said feedback should be sent to Director of Special Projects Ms. Tina Smith. Ms. Coffman said a calendar of the video release schedule would be shared on the Department website.

Steering Committee members said additional resources should be available. They said comments from the Department website can be integrated into a Q&A forum. Senator English recommended that a concise section answering a few questions be offered on the website. She said these questions could include the following: What is the Department doing? Why is the Department doing it (i.e. ESSA plan implementation)? What is the Department trying to accomplish?

## **Next Steps**

### **Additional Recommendations**

Commissioner Key said the Department would like to ensure alignment between the Department and advocacy groups across the state. Commissioner Key asked the Steering Committee to solicit feedback from their communities so that issues are addressed.

### **Future Steering Committee Meetings**

The next Steering Committee meeting would be announced at a future date.

## **Adjournment**

Commissioner Key adjourned meeting at 2:30 p.m.

*Minutes recorded by Kelicia Hollis*

  
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Johnny Key, Chair