

**Minutes**  
**Vision for Excellence in Education and Arkansas Accountability System (ESSA)**  
**Steering Committee Meeting**  
**Wednesday, July 26, 2017**

The Vision for Excellence in Education and Arkansas Accountability System (ESSA) Steering Committee met Wednesday, July 26, 2017, in the Arkansas Department of Education Auditorium. Chair Johnny Key called the meeting to order at 9:33 a.m.

Members Present: Commissioner Johnny Key, Chair; Ms. Ouida Newton; Representative Bruce Cozart; Michelle Hayward Joyce Flowers; Melissa Bratton; and Anthony Bennett.

Members Absent: Senator Jane English; Keli Gill; Ima Etim; Harold Jeffcoat; and Gloria Phillips

Audience: ADE staff, general public, and press.

The meeting was live streamed and the recording was posted on the ADE website at <http://video1.aetn.org/adeplayer6.html?source=smil:adelive.smil&type=mbr&server=video3.aetn.org/live/>

**Consent Agenda**

**Consideration of Approval for Minutes – May 24, 2017**

Ms. Flowers moved, seconded by Mr. Bennett, to approve the May 24, 2017, minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

**Action Agenda**

**Feedback from 30 Day Comment Period**

Ms. Newton asked whether the Department was pleased with the amount of feedback received. Commissioner Key said that the comments received were substantial, but the numbers were not as robust as desired. He said this may have been because the Department received much feedback prior to public comment period from small group conversations with stakeholders. ADE Director of Special Projects Ms. Tina Smith said that there were 114 responses.

ADE Deputy Commissioner Dr. Ivy Pfeffer said that there were a lot of small group conversations with stakeholders. She said that there was a lot of positive feedback for the direction of the ESSA plan.

## **Review and Discussion of Proposed Final ESSA Plan**

Commissioner Key expressed gratitude to the ADE team for compiling feedback and writing it in a clear, concise manner. Commissioner Key said Governor Hutchinson has read the most recent draft and is pleased.

Mr. Bennett said the purpose of the plan is listed twice on page 12 under Theory of Action. Ms. Newton said the descriptions in newest draft are much clearer are from the previous draft. Mr. Bennett echoed Commissioner Key's sentiments of a well-revised draft.

Ms. Newton said the long-term achievement goal of 80% of students achieving a test-based grade-level proficiency score is more feasible for classroom teachers than the previous 90% goal. Ms. Newton said there are more indicators to choose from in the 5<sup>th</sup> indicator than in the original plan. She said that students would accrue points based on what they are eligible for, which was a change from the previous draft.

Dr. Pfeffer said educators felt there were some aspects in the 5<sup>th</sup> indicator that they could not control when the Department discussed the 5<sup>th</sup> indicator with schools. She said the Department returned to an earlier idea of looking at every student for the 5<sup>th</sup> indicator. She said that the goal is not to focus on how many points a school can receive out of each kid, but that all kids are able to access the resources that the Department deems good for their development. Commissioner Key said the revised plan for the 5<sup>th</sup> indicator better meets the equity challenges that the State faces. He said that being more student-focused as reflected in this plan will help engage the Department in meaningful stakeholder investment.

ADE Assistant Commissioner for Learning Services Ms. Stacy Smith said the revised plan turns the conversation at the school-level to school climate and addressing school climate issues. She said the plan addresses more than which students are missing 10% of their class. Ms. Smith said the Department promotes active community engagement through the plan. She said career pathways is also an important focal point for the Department.

Ms. Newton said there was change in weighting measures for English learners in the newest draft. Ms. Smith said there was much discussion on English learners. She said the growth score is factored from two measurements. She said ACT Aspire scores are used for content knowledge and ELPA21 scores are used for measuring English language proficiency. Ms. Smith said individual student scores plus an aggregate of student growth scores across the school are combined for the overall score. Ms. Bratton said the variables that impact time to proficiency is factored into the plan, and this includes the grade level at which students enter the school system.

Ms. Newton said that the addition of Pre-K was a good addition to the plan.

Ms. Flowers said that plan looked good, and she would forward her proof-level revisions to ADE Director of Special Projects Ms. Tina Smith.

Ms. Bratton said the plan looked excellent. She said there were not many changes in Section E, but many areas were better specified.

Representative Bruce Cozart said the plan looks great. He said that as a former school board member, he believes this plan is something that would be understood and accepted by districts.

ADE Assistant Commissioner for Public School Accountability Ms. Deborah Coffman said the Department has tried to be as explicit as possible while also being open the plan's limitations. Ms. Coffman asked the educators on the committee whether the plan articulates what educators need to know to be accountable. Ms. Bratton said yes in regards to English language learners. Ms. Bratton said she believes the plan is functional. Ms. Hayward said she feels confident that districts and schools would be able to understand and move forward with this plan.

Ms. Coffman said there are three (3) things the Department wants to accomplish. First, to provide a clear theory of action. Second, to convey that improvement is a continuous cycle of inquiry. Third, that the district is responsible for providing support to schools. She said that equity is important in this plan. Commissioner Key said the Department focused on an N size of 15 as an equity measure.

## **Next Steps**

### **1. ESSA Timeline Update**

Commissioner Key said the Department is interested in continuing a group like the Vision for Excellence in Education and Arkansas Accountability System steering committee that could feedback moving forward. Ms. Newton said feedback through the implementation stage is vital.


Ms. Coffman said the plan is to be revised at the end of three (3) years. She said there is an opportunity to submit amendments to the plan if there is need for change. Commissioner Key said the plan will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education on September 18, 2017. He said the U.S. Department of Education has 120 days to make a decision. Commissioner Key asked committee members to indicate whether they had interest in continuing engagement with the Department regarding the ESSA

implementation and subsequent feedback process. Commissioner Key said the July 26, 2017 meeting would be the last steering committee meeting before ESSA submission to Governor Hutchinson.

**Adjournment**

Commissioner Key adjourned the meeting at 10:38 a.m.

*Minutes recorded by Kelicia Hollis*

  
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Commissioner Johnny Key, Chair