

**Minutes**  
**Vision for Excellence in Education and Arkansas Accountability System Steering**  
**Committee Meeting**  
**Wednesday, April 26, 2017**

The Vision for Excellence in Education and Arkansas Accountability System Steering Committee met Wednesday, April 26, 2017, in the Arkansas Department of Education Auditorium. Chair Johnny Key called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.

Members Present: Johnny Key, Chair; Ms. Ouida Newton; Senator Jane English; Representative Bruce Cozart; Ima Etim; Keli Gill; Harold Jeffcoat; Joyce Flowers; Gloria Phillips; Melissa Bratton; Anthony Bennett.

Members Absent: Michelle Hayward.

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/state-board/minutes/board\\_meeting\\_categories/2017](http://www.arkansased.gov/state-board/minutes/board_meeting_categories/2017).

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

Ms. Phillips moved, seconded by Ms. Flowers, to approve the March 26, 2017, minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

**March Work Session Summary**

Director of Policy and Special Projects Ms. Tina Smith shared a summary from the March work session. She said that regarding accountability, the committee requested a model of the minimum N. She said the consensus of the group was that the school quality/student success indicator should begin with what we currently have available and change over time based on available data and information that responds to stakeholder requests. The group also supported the use of an index and a matrix.

Ms. Smith said clear direction was provided to continue to use the ACT Aspire for federal accountability with an interest in adding a career measure. The feedback included parallel work to begin developing robust and responsive assessment systems for the future.

Ms. Smith said the English Learner advisory group preferred a small N-size so that more schools are involved. She said this is an opportunity to have the perspective of an individual child's growth and to consider identification, accountability, and support. She said the current, rigid exit criteria could be reviewed and revised.

Ms. Smith said feedback included differentiated supports for novice, mid-career, and experienced educators. She said the Department is working on differentiated support to districts including Opportunity Culture models, teacher leadership, and a workforce stability index in conjunction with equity labs.

Ms. Smith said the State Board replicated the work session. She said the State Board members expressed confidence in the work of the steering committee and the ADE teams. She said much work will need to be done to build capacity to support districts including professional development and communication.

Ms. Ouida Newton said the State Board focused on continuing stakeholder engagement and equity for students across the state.

### **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) ESSA Feedback and Recommendations**

Mr. Louis Ferren said the Technical Advisory Committee reviewed the stakeholder feedback and discussed the long-term goals. He said the conversation around the fifth indicator included a 12-13 year (timeline of a student) aspirational goal with smaller incremental goals for each year. He said the NCLB is totally different from ESSA. He said NCLB focused on sanctions and labels for not meeting targets. He said ESSA will use an index to identify levels of support.

Mr. Ferren said some of the TAC recommendations included in the modeling are advanced placement, concurrent credit, career and technical, chronic absenteeism, N-size of 15, consideration of different weightings for performance and growth, and different weights for graduation rate. He said the state was considering a value added growth model that would be aggregated to a school level.

Members discussed how to move forward with a system that allows a student to excel and grow at their own pace, such as a competency based system. Commissioner Key said the steering committee will need to continue to meet periodically so that research and input can be ongoing in the efforts to design a desired accountability system. Ms. Phillips expressed questions about using K-2 assessments to measure growth. Commissioner Key said the modeling would also include a reading readiness indicator. Ms. Newton said interim assessments may be more helpful in informing instruction, intervention, and acceleration. Senator English said parents would feel more comfortable having a better base of information (more than one test score). Dr. Jeffcoat said many schools are using a standards model to inform parents of student performance. He said the process may not be uniform across the state, however, the goal of measuring progress and informing parents is consistent. Commissioner Key said the state would be looking at more comprehensive methods for determining progress in the future. He said it would be important to review the data on the accountability system to determine future changes. He said the patrons of the state are

determining the accountability system, not the state or federal government. Commissioner Key said the results of the modeling should be available at the May State Board Meeting.

### **Arkansas Student Voice Council (ASVC) Recommendations**

Ms. Ima Etim said she created a student voice pilot project in Jefferson County a year ago. She said the students applied to be part of the project. She said the students attended school board meetings and surveyed their peers. She said the students provided the feedback to their district school board.

Students from Watson Chapel and Pine Bluff presented the Arkansas Student Voice Council recommendations.

Watson Chapel student Ms. Madelynn Van Veckhoven said that she surveyed students at Watson Chapel High School and highlighted four areas for improvement including behavior/discipline rules, insufficient time at lunch, bathroom policies, and allowing the pledge of allegiance. She said that 56% of student believe that Watson Chapel is not as strict as it needs to be for students to follow the rules. She said that students needed more time during lunch to eat, interact with peers, have club meetings, and take Accelerated Reading tests. She recommended the district implement a "10-10" or "5-5" rule to encourage students to go to the restroom during the first ten or five minutes or last ten or five minutes of class to reduce tardiness and expedite the learning process. Finally, she recommended time in the morning set aside for the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence for students and faculty to pray, meditate, or reflect.

Ms. Veckhoven said many features of the school are great including the fact that teachers meet with students before school to provide additional tutoring.

Pine Bluff student Mr. Carter Buckner said facilities and resources are issues at his school. He said there is a stigma of low test scores at Pine Bluff High School. He said reliable internet may be hindering learning. He said although the building is older, technology should be current. He said 94% of students wanted more technology available for learning. He said that many students are on Virtual Arkansas because of the limited number of teachers available. He said his recommendations also included additional options for credit recovery in addition to an online class, behavioral counselors and social workers, more STEM opportunities, and before and after school tutoring to assist students in learning. He said more support should be put in on the front end to reduce the need for remediation. He said scoring well is not the norm, but considered an anomaly, and this stereotype should not be the narrative for future students. He said the culture of the school is causing some students to not want to come to school.

Mr. Buckner said two teachers changed his direction. He knew he wanted to do something big and they were role models. He said his father is a teacher and also a great role model.

Pine Bluff student Ms. Kaitlyn Peterson said bathrooms are not available during lunch time, the cell phone policy should be clarified, alternative cafeteria options should be available due to overcrowding, and rules should be enforced at the beginning of the school year, not just at the end of the year.

Ms. Peterson said her teachers provided positive feedback. She said the teachers are always willing to help, stay after school, and mentor.

Pine Bluff student Ms. Briana Johnson recommended tutoring after school and during lunch. She said 94.7% of students believe that concurrent courses should be available. She said students also expressed a need for ACT, SAT, and AP exam tutoring.

Ms. Johnson said teachers were her role models.

Pine Bluff student Ms. Brooklyn Tody said there are inconsistencies in school policies. She said the uniform policy, student identification requirements, and attendance are not implemented consistently across the school year. She said there are not enough certified teachers, instead, many classes are taught by long-term substitutes. She said enforcing the rules at the beginning of the year is important. She said student voice is important for solutions. She said the district should be recruiting from the high school and universities to find teachers.

Ms. Tody said she excelled because she could take advanced classes. She appreciated free meals for all students and two additional opportunities to take the ACT exam.

Mr. Bennett said that student voice is so important for an effective school. He said schools should have high expectations of all students. He said consistency is important to students.

Ms. Phillips recommended that students consider networking to support other students. Mr. Buckner said some classes have that type of community but it has not expanded to the school.

### **Discussion of First Draft of ESSA plan**

Members of the steering committee discussed the first draft of the ESSA plan and made the following suggestions, comments, and points for clarification:

## Section A

- Need clarification on the English Language assessment.
- Include the review and adoption cycle for academic standards.
- Page 7, correction - ACT Aspire started in 2015-16.
- Page 7, if science is considered for school quality/student success indicator, it should be noted that it would be another indicator based on the ACT Aspire.
- How can ACT be used for growth if the test is optional?
- Is the number of students taking a test an indicator of school quality?
- The overview of vision and goals is excellent.
- Page 21 – first paragraph – clarify or define the term “right censored”.
- Pages 31-32 – levels of support need definitions and the meanings of weights need more details.
- Page 33 – How does the support to schools align with Act 930 support to districts?

## Section B

- Page 40 – paragraph reads as if the MSIX database for migrant is being used already.
- How did military children fit into migrant students?
- How do we incorporate the interventions for all students?

## Section C

- Will day-treatment students be included?

## Section D

- Page 46 – 3<sup>rd</sup> bullet - unqualified teacher is not defined.
- Page 50 – opportunity culture schools and leadership quest need to be defined upfront - definitions come later in the document.
- Page 52 – workforce index need to be defined upfront - definitions come later in the document.
- Page 57 – teacher residency and paraprofessional programs need elaboration.

## Section E

- Page 54 – LEADS – check the words in the acronym
- Page 59 – Need to clarify “who” the person the English learner referral form is referencing.
- Page 59 - English Learner Referral (ELR) form - Please provide clarity on who is qualified to identify whether a student "demonstrates" usage of another language. Also, possibly adding a definition of "demonstrate."

- Page 60 - Former English Learner Year 1 - Can we add another and/or statement to clarify? Example: If a student comes from Texas, they may be LMS, but have never been placed in a program due to proficiency in English. Therefore, this student would not be considered formerly EL. Possible phrasing: *"and there are supporting documents that prove prior placement in an ESOL program or services being given."*
- Page 60 – More clarification of exit criteria.
- Should we combine the English Learner information in Title I with the information in Title III?

#### Section F

- Waiting on more information regarding funding. Commissioner Key said this is an opportunity to tell the state's story of what we are doing for high achieving students.

#### Section G

- Page 66 - How many 21<sup>st</sup> century grants are available? Can grantees reapply for funding at the end of the grant cycle?

#### Section H

- Page 70 – What are the definitions for “free and reduced lunch” and “low income?” What is the definition of a rural school?
- McKinney Vento is well explained.
- Page 73 – part 7 – Need to define the type of counselors.

#### Appendix A

- Page 74 – How will 5<sup>th</sup> year cohort be used in calculation?
- Page 75 – What is the justification for different N-size for subgroups? Why wouldn't all subgroups have the same N-size?
- How does a 2-year total work for the N-size? Need more explanation on the impact for schools.

#### Next Steps

##### a. Transition to School Support and Improvement

Director of Policy and Special Projects Ms. Tina Smith said the Dear Colleague letter clarified the timeline for implementation of ESSA. She said the federal agency has 120 days to provide a response after the state application is submitted.

Ms. Smith said she received an email today stating that all guidance and colleague letters will be under review.

Commissioner Key said that President Trump signed an executive order to require a review of all federal guidance, regulations, and Dear Colleague letters related to the Every Student Succeeds Act and certain other federal education statutes. The purpose of this review is to ensure that the U.S. Department of Education's interpretation of federal laws does not improperly interfere with local decisions about curriculum and instruction. The Executive Order called for the revision or repeal of any guidance, regulations, and Dear Colleague letters that are not aligned with federal law or overstep the federal government's authority.

**b. Important Dates**

Ms. Smith said the second draft will be posted May 15, 2017. She said the draft will include the feedback. She said there would be a 30-day comment period.

**c. Discussion of Future Meetings**

Ms. Smith said the committee needs to see the results of the modeling. The committee agreed to move the next meeting to May 24, 2017.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 11:48 a.m.

*Minutes recorded by Deborah Coffman*

  
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Johnny Key, Chair

