

Minutes
Vision for Excellence in Education and Arkansas Accountability System
Steering Committee Meeting
Wednesday, November 30, 2016

The Vision for Excellence in Education and Arkansas Accountability System Steering Committee met Wednesday, November 30, 2016, in the Arkansas Department of Education Auditorium. Chair Johnny Key called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

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

Members Absent: none.

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/2016.

Consideration of Approval for Minutes – October 26, 2016

Ms. Flowers moved, seconded by Ms. Gill, to approve the October 26, 2016, minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

Listening Tours and Public Feedback

Director of Policy and Special Projects Ms. Tina Smith said the Office of Education Policy analyzed the responses from the community listening forums to develop a visual of the percentages of common responses. The top topics included student-focused learning, measure of school quality and student success, effective teachers and leaders, academic achievement, community engagement, and student engagement.

How Can Students Have a Voice in Student Focused Education?

Arkansas Coalition for Student Voice in Education (ACSVE)

Mr. Zack Fredricks, senior at Batesville High School, said the Arkansas Coalition for Student Voice in Education (ACSVE) is a group of students across Arkansas searching for a way to improve the educational system one voice at a time - but from a student's perspective. He said the students from Batesville High School, Harrison Junior High School, and Harrison High School EAST teams would share data from a student survey and three regional summits. He said 4,873 students responded to the survey. He said

over-testing becomes an issue when it disrupts learning – when the schedule for testing keeps other classes from continuing as scheduled. He said all students need to establish a personalized learning plan. He said as a result of his plan he was taking additional courses that prepared him for his course of study related to his career choice.

Ms. Grace Brandt, Harrison High School student, shared the multiple choice and true/false data from the student survey. She also shared information about the Harrison HALO project. She said students from other districts were interested in this flexible learning model. She said interim assessments were important in determining the needs of students. She recommended using growth to measure student achievement. She said state assessments help the state to consider needed resources to ensure students in every school are succeeding.

Mr. Cade Hixson, Batesville High School student, shared the open response data from the student survey. He said the curriculum (what students are learning) and state assessments (what is tested) are not always aligned. He said internships would allow students to make better decisions about career choices.

Ms. Amanda Okolo, Batesville High School student, said the student responses to curriculum questions included more flexible time for extra help and make up work; better time management of schedules including between classes and school day restructuring; and technology-based work should not distract from the concept/content. She said the purpose of testing is to see growth in student achievement. She said she appreciated taking the ACT as a free option for students.

Ms. Kelli Gill, Batesville High School Student, said student personal concerns included food issues, bullying, favoritism by faculty, not being allowed to work ahead, and the need for more life skills (taxes, insurance, scholarship information). She said the students reported that state assessments may be superseding their learning. Ms. Gill recommended pre- and post-assessments to gain an accurate view of growth. She said the ACT is important for attending college and the ACT Aspire assessments help students get better scores on the ACT and qualify for scholarships. She said she utilizes the assessment scores to set goals for self-improvement.

Mr. Jake Ward, Batesville High School student, said the students' facility and resource concerns included food, technology accessibility, current texts, blocked websites, and better distribution of funding for learning (fine arts). He said a paper assessment was more helpful for his thinking process.

Mr. Zack Fredricks introduced the Batesville EAST facilitator Ms. Jeanne Roepcke, chaperone Mr. Talan Roepcke, and Harrison EAST facilitator Ms. Mary Beth Hatch.

Mr. William Keener, Harrison Junior High School student, recommended end of year assessment for a summative view.

Ms. Brooklin Edwards, Harrison High School student, said the interim assessments had helped her to reflect on her learning.

Ms. Katie Fowler, Harrison High School student, said the current testing was not reflective of the courses she is currently taking because she is on an advanced pathway in mathematics.

Mr. Zack Fredricks said even when the current students in ACSVE graduate, the EAST programs would continue the ACSVE project and continue to provide feedback from students to the ADE.

Feedback from Ambassador led Student Forums

Steering Committee Member Mr. Anthony Bennett conducted two ambassador led listening forums. Mr. Bennett shared the feedback from these forums. He said the most important characteristics of effective schools were open/diverse environment, caring educators and administrators, and community-oriented. He said the best measures of success and quality of a school include more than test results; college, career, and life readiness of students; and amount a student learns from life, rather than just memory. He said to ensure every student succeeds requires teachers that develop bonds with students (achieved by hiring teachers with passion); preparing students for life, not just college/workforce; open opportunities for external involvement; and expanding learning beyond classrooms (hands-on learning, field trips). He said responses to personalized learning indicated it was good for some students who care or have the ability to shape their own education, not good for those students who needed academic guidance. He said a complete personalized learning environment was not a viable solution to helping students without the ability to guide their own education. He said students enjoyed being asked their opinions on education and most educators loved hearing from the students. He said many school issues can be solved on a local level when students and educators work on the resolutions. He said the perception of assessments measured the quality of the students and teachers. He said all students wanted excellent teachers. He recommended a bigger discussion about education innovation.

The Steering Committee discussed the data and the impact on the vision for student-focused education.

How Should We Measure Progress Toward the Vision of Excellence?

Director of Policy and Special Projects Ms. Tina Smith facilitated a discussion on the template/worksheet of required indicators for accountability.

Student Assessment Director Ms. Hope Allen said federal requirements for yearly assessments include grades 3-8 and grade band high school mathematics and reading

or language arts and grade band science. She said the state could consider a change in assessment grades for the state accountability system with a future vision of a suite of assessments that better represent a student-focused assessment system.

Office of Innovation in Education Director Dr. Denise Airola provided clarifying questions regarding including performance and growth in an accountability system. She said how the data are presented visually to educators, students, and parents will be important for improvement in student learning.

Assistant Commissioner for Learning Services Ms. Stacy Smith said the state has options with assessed grades in high school. She said the state could consider if a Grade 9 student met the Grade 10 scale score on the ACT Aspire, then the student would not be required to take the same assessment in Grade 10 but the score could count for growth.

After much discussion, the steering committee recommended a better balance of weight of performance and growth. The committee requested visual data models of the various options, including more flexibility of assessments for schools and consideration of subgroups.

Ms. Tina Smith said the July 2017 submission date to USDOE has been moved to September 2017. Commissioner Key said the most recent communication from USDOE moved the requirement to 2017-2018 for identification of schools needing comprehensive and targeted support. He said the state would also be required to identify consistently underperforming schools.

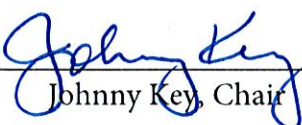
Next Steps

The Steering Committee cancelled the December 28, 2016 meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for January 25, 2017.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

Minutes recorded by Deborah Coffman



Johnny Key, Chair