

Arkansas Commission on Closing the Academic Achievement Gap

The Commission on Closing the Academic Achievement Gap was established by the Arkansas State Legislature, under Act 33 during the Second Extraordinary Session of 2003.

Minutes
March 19, 2015

Members in Attendance: Dr. Dawn Simpson, Ms. Kathy Powers, Ms. Lillian Williams, Dr. Jesse Hargrove, Mr. Jonathan Fulkerson, Colonel Nate Todd, Dr. Luis Restrepo*, Dr. Vera Lang Brown*
*via conference call

Others Guests in Attendance: N/A

Meeting location: Fifth floor Conference Room, Arkansas Department of Higher Education, 423 Main Street, Little Rock, Arkansas

Welcome/ Call to Order:

Dr. Dawn Simpson, chair, opened the meeting at 1:10 p.m.

Discussion of Minutes from previous Meeting: Minutes were reviewed. Motion for approval of the minutes by Fulkerson, seconded by Powers. Motion passed.

Updates needed for website:

Kimberly Freedman maintains the ADE website and needs to be contacted for the following updates:

- Add the May 21st meeting date,
- Add photos for Senator Jack Crumbly, Colonel Nate Todd, and Dr. Valerie Tatum,
- Remove information about Dr. Kimbrell, Shane Broadway, and Eddie McCoy.

Discussion of 2015 Symposium:

- a. Colonel Todd suggested that middle school students be invited to present at the next symposium to present data and their social media skills. Once that relationship is established, maybe those students could grow with their participation in future symposiums
- b. The 2015 Symposium will be held at the Arkansas Career Training Institute in Hot Springs.
- c. The possible date for the symposium will be June 19th or June 25th

Meeting Discussion:

- a. Dr. Fulkerson shared that an administrator and director of a local task force from Harrisburg (Poinsette County) contacted him regarding how to establish and better target closing the academic achievement gap with a local task force. Dr. Hargrove suggested that we create a template/pamphlet as a "quick start" guide for local task forces to organize and establish their commission including identifying parents and other community members who will comprise their commission and who will make the right combination of subcommittee members.
- b. Hargrove requested that we get a presentation of 3rd-8th grade data for 3 years comparing trends for ethnic subgroups. Simpson recommended that we contact Cody Decker at the ADE
- c. Todd asked for more clarification on the mission of the Commission. Simpson outlined the bill which established the Commission and described our mandates.
- d. We discussed Common Core as a hot topic in education legislation. Fulkerson cautioned when we present the topic at the symposium, we need to be careful to avoid becoming a gripe session or a cheerleading session. We need to view Common Core through the lens of closing the Academic Achievement Gap.

- e. Discussion centered around possible guests to our next Gap Commission meeting: Senator English, Senator Key, State Association of School Boards, Dr. Coffman, Cody Decker to present, Senator Joyce Elliott, Lt. Gov. Griffith, U.S. Congressman Bruce Westerman, Sharon Waterman, Diana Gonzalez Worthen, Sam Ledbetter, the State Board of Education, Dr. Aguirre, Tonya Williams at the Department of Early Childhood, business leaders around the state,
- f. Colonel Todd asked Dr. Restrepo about the purpose of educating students so that he could better conceptualize the purpose of the Commission. Restrepo summarized the purpose as developing citizens, improving quality of life, and securing employment.

Next Meeting: Thursday, April 21, 2015 at the Arkansas Department of Higher Education. Williams will provide a conference call-in number.

Meeting adjourned at 3:10