

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
October 16, 2014

Members in Attendance: Dr. Dawn Simpson, Rev. Charles Killion, Dr. Luis Restrepo, Ms. Lillian Williams, Dr. Jesse Hargrove, Senator Jack Crumbly, Ms. Brittany Kincaid (for Ms. Susan Harriman)

Others in Attendance: N/A

Meeting location: Commissioner's Conference Room, Arkansas Department of Education, Four State Capitol Mall, Little Rock, Arkansas

Welcome/ Call to Order:

Dr. Dawn Simpson, chair, opened the meeting at 1:15 p.m.

Discussion of Minutes from May 12 Meeting: The May 12 meeting was a presentation of the Arkansas Commission on Closing the Academic Achievement Gap Annual Report to the Joint Education Committee. Afterward, Commissioners had a casual lunch meeting where they discussed the presentation. No minutes were taken of that meeting. Simpson will contact the legislative committee for minutes of that meeting. Simpson noted that since the April 17, 2014, minutes have not been approved, they will be sent around to Commissioners via email for approval.

2014 Symposium Discussion:

- a. All Commissioners agreed that the 2014 Symposium was a success. Simpson handed out an itemized GAP Symposium Final Expenses and Funding document that was prepared by Dr. Restrepo.
- b. Restrepo went over the expense and funding document in detail. He noted that the total cost of the symposium was \$7,852. Total funding from a combination of registration fees and sponsors was \$7,855.00. This was the first year any registration fees were charged, but about forty percent of registrants received fee waivers. Participants received six hours of professional development credit. Two legislators attended the symposium. Simpson said that the expense and funding document would be a great way to show legislators that the symposium needs funding.

2014 Presentation of Report to Joint Education Committee:

- a. Commissioners were surprised that many legislators did not know about the Commission. It was noted that more presentations to the legislators would make the Commission more visible. Hargrove suggested putting the presentations on YouTube and sending the link to the Governor, President Pro Tempore of the Senate, and Speaker of the House. Restrepo recommended adding an executive summary to each report. The commissioners also mentioned the need to engage the State Board of Education and Arkansas Department of Education employees. They also agreed to reach out to Senator Eddie Cheatham and Representative Sheilla Lampkin, specifically.
- b. Commissioners discussed the best time to present again to the Legislature. Crumbly suggested sometime in the first two weeks of the upcoming Legislative Session.

Discussion of 2015 Symposium:

- a. Commissioners discussed possible locations for the 2015 Symposium. It was agreed that the Symposium is usually most successful when it is held in the town of one of the commissioners.

The commissioners discussed the Arkansas Career Training Institute in Hot Springs. ACTI would be a good location because Simpson works there, parking and lodging are easily accessible, it houses a culinary training program to provide meals, there are classrooms and an auditorium for general and breakout sessions, and there are several student organizations to assist with the event. Williams moved to hold the Symposium at ACTI. Killion seconded. All commissioners present voted "aye."

- b. Deputy Commissioner Mike Hernandez stopped by to introduce himself. Commissioners told Hernandez about the Commission and its mandate to reach out to all congressional districts. They also discussed the 2014 Joint Education Meeting at which legislators seemed to indicate support for a budget of \$10,000 for the Commission. Then-Education Commissioner Tom Kimbrell seemed amenable at that time to the Department of Education supplying those funds. Commissioners went over the financial breakdown of the 2014 Symposium with Hernandez, who stated that he would look into the funding situation.

Report Discussion:

- a. Commissioners had a general discussion about consolidation and remediation and their effect on the achievement gap, as well as the long-term cost of both. Williams said that she would see if the Arkansas Department of Higher Education has remediation data that might be useful.
- b. Simpson noted that the report is due November 1st. It should include the mission, history of legislation, meeting dates, information about the 2014 Symposium, members, and committee information. The Commissioners decided that any pertinent published reports on the subject of closing the achievement gap could be added to the appendix of the report.

Next Meeting: Friday, October 24 at 9:00 at Arkansas Department of Higher Education. Williams will provide a conference call-in number.

Meeting adjourned at 3:20