

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
May 23, 2013

Members in Attendance: Dr. Dawn Simpson, Rev. Charles Killion, Mr. Jon Fulkerson, Dr. Jesse Hargrove, Ms. Lillian Williams, Ms. Kathy Powers, Ms. Brittany Kincaid, Mr. Jack Crumbly, Dr. Luis Restrepo (via conference call), Dr. Vera Lang Brown

Others in Attendance: Ms. Kim Wilson

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 1:05 p.m.

Dr. Simpson mentioned Senate vacancies are complete. The Closing the Gap Commission (the Commission) has two openings from the House to complete the board. Nominations were done some time ago. Dr. Simpson is trying to contact them to see if they are interested in joining. The Commission has one recommendation for Mr. Benton, but the Commission needs to wait until the other recommendation is confirmed. An update will be forthcoming.

The committee agreed to break from meetings for summer months of July and August.

Gayle Morris offered to post the article on the ADE website about the symposium in June.

Minutes of April 18, 2013:

Ms. Kathy Powers made a motion to accept the minutes, and Mr. Jack Crumbly seconded the motion. Due to a lack of a quorum, the minutes will be sent out for approval by e-mail to the other members.

Dr. Simpson asked all subcommittee groups this summer to prepare their report which is due the first of November.

Sub-committee Reports:

- **CCSS Discussion:**

Ms. Wilson reports on reviewing ADE's available parent /teacher help online.

A comment was made that the refrigerator curriculum on the ADE website is laden with educational jargon that makes it difficult for parents to understand. Suggestions were made to do more visuals and/or videotaping of classrooms to better inform parents about where student gaps exist.

- **ASCIP Discussion:**

Ms. Powers said the subcommittee had not met.

Dr. Brown would like the Commission to further study Arkansas Comprehensive School Improvement Planning (ACSIP).

Subcommittee Discussion:

It was suggested to add the following agenda item for September: How to encourage districts to form gap commissions if they don't have them? An initial letter has already been sent to superintendents. The Commission decided a follow-up communication is needed. In the letter the Commission needs to know if school districts have gap commissions and include the names of the gap commission leaders. Dr. Brown will get the presenters' biographic information for the ADE to grant professional development credit to educators who attend.

Update on Upcoming Bridging the Gap Educational Symposium in Pine Bluff for June:

Dr. Brown and Dr. Simpson met earlier last week and discussed printing, checking hotels, and contacting the ADE to reimburse travel for this event.

Gayle Morris provided an article about the symposium from a local news media. A question was asked about professional development for educators attending the symposium and if registration forms were available online.

Ms. Powers noted that the Commission's online link is prominent on the ADE website, so the form could be posted in that location.

Dr. Brown arrived and gave an update regarding event information.

In the update, printing, food and the agenda of presenters for the symposium were discussed. A sample copy of the agenda was reviewed. Suggestions were made to invite school representatives from focus schools so that a round table could be added to the agenda. The Commissioners reviewed the agenda and reworked it to accommodate a round table.

After a flyer was sent out across University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff campus, 21 people signed up to help with the symposium. Updates to the flyer will be made containing new times and dates which Jennifer George will post including a registration form on the ADE website for people to respond to and use to advertise the event. The Rockefeller Foundation was sent information about symposium and parent advocacy groups. A question was asked if anyone knew of another group to represent parents to contact about the symposium.

Dr. Simpson summed up the need to make sure numerous people are invited:

- by directing them to the website,
- by sending letters to school principals and superintendents in the Fourth Congressional District,
- by sending a press release to the news media,
- by sending letters to priority schools,
- and by sending information to co-ops to post the professional development available to educators, ASAP.

A review of the tasks at hand was made.

The symposium will count as a meeting for the Commission for the month of June.

Update on Upcoming Presentations:

Dr. Simpson shared an email sent to the commission's website from Scholastic, Inc. asking if the group is interested in having a guest speaker from Scholastic, Inc. Dr. Simpson will check on that and report back to the Commission.

Future Meeting Dates:

- Next Educational Symposium, June 6-7, 2013 (Pine Bluff)
- The Commission will break for the summer months (June, July, and August) and reconvene the third Thursday in September.

Adjournment:

Meeting adjourned at 2:55 pm.

Recorded by Connie Storey(ADE)