

## **Arkansas Commission on Closing the Achievement Gap**

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

Minutes  
February 16, 2012

**Members in Attendance:** Dr. Dawn Simpson, Dr. Jesse Hargrove, Dr. Eddie McCoy, Ms. Kathy Powers, Ms. Susan Harriman, Mr. Brooks Harrington, Ms. Elfreda Boyd

**Others in Attendance:** Mr. Horace Charles

**Excused Absence:** Mr. Jon Fulkerson, Mr. Gus Williamson, Dr. Vera Lang Brown

**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 1:00 p.m.

Minutes of January 19, 2012: Ms. Powers made a motion to accept the minutes. Dr. Eddie McCoy seconded the motion. The Closing the Gap Commission (The Commission) approved the minutes.

**Updates—GAP Commission: (Local Gap Meet/Greet Subcommittees and Committee Assignments)**

The local closing the gap meet and greet event in Blytheville should highlight the purpose of the subcommittees. The subcommittees and chairs are:

- Task Force – Dr. Hargrove, Dr. Simpson and Mr. Fulkerson
- Scholastic Audit/ACSIP – Mr. Williamson
- Parent Involvement – Mr. Fulkerson
- Common Core – Dr. Hargrove
- Analysis of Distribution for Educational Resources – Dr. McCoy and Ms. Boyd

Typically subcommittees consist of 5 or more members. Dr. McCoy expressed concern regarding the purpose/role of the Distribution of Educational Resources subcommittee. In particular, she inquired about how the subcommittee's work relates to closing the achievement gap. Dr. Simpson responded that subcommittees planned guest speakers from outside and within the Arkansas Department of Education (i.e. Jim Boardman, Dr. Charity Smith) to discuss how educational resources are being distributed. While the subcommittee's work may be examined based on equity, Dr. Simpson does not want to limit the subcommittees work to only equity issues. Dr. Hargrove also explained that after the subcommittee thoroughly reviews the research they will know how to best address the achievement gap. Mr. Charles suggested that the subcommittee begins its work by exploring Title 1 poverty funding. The Commission requested dates for subcommittees to meet. Upcoming meeting dates should be between February 16, 2012 and March 15, 2012. Subcommittee chairs may email Dr. Simpson their meeting dates. The Common Core subcommittee agreed to meet February 22, 2012 at 10:00 am. In addition, the Task Force will hold a conference call Friday, February 17<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am.

Dr. Anderson and Dr. Hargrove shared outcomes from the Task Force meeting held on February 16<sup>th</sup>. The Superintendent of Blytheville proposed holding the meet/greet Thursday, May 10 and Friday, May 11, 2012. Furthermore, he was very receptive in regards to assisting with meeting space, hotel accommodations, and lunch/meals. Dr. Anderson suggested holding a meet and greet Thursday evening and an educational symposium Friday morning followed by a luncheon. Ms. Powers recommended offering professional development (PD) hours for attendees. Dr. Simpson plans to speak with Dr. Kimbrell and/or Ms. Kaufman in respect to providing PD hours.

Dr. Simpson stated that Mr. Fulkerson is currently working on hotel accommodations, meeting facilities, and the cover design for the program. In addition, Mr. Fulkerson is currently seeking sponsors for some of the events. Once speakers and topics have been finalized, students from the Blytheville school district will be asked to design a cover for the program. Dr. Simpson stated that she has access to printers and will be able to print the final program. Dr. Simpson also asked if anyone had any ideas in respect to the Blytheville meet and greet (i.e., sponsors, speakers, topics). Ms. Powers suggested a banner incorporating the theme of the conference. Dr. Simpson reminded The Commission that the original goal of the conference was to provide educational outreach and bring awareness to the purpose of the Closing the Gap Commission. The goal of the conference is to provide awareness of The Commission as a resource to school districts and communities, assist in the functioning of local closing the gap committees, and provide support. Dr. Hargrove stated that The Commission would like for at least 20% of the school districts in Congressional District 1 to attend the Blytheville meet and greet. He added that there is also support from the Mississippi County community and the Harrisburg Co-Op. It was suggested that invitations be extended to the Joint Education Committee for the House and the Senate, Dr. Kimbrell, parents, community (i.e., church's providing tutoring, boys and girls clubs), literacy and math coaches, and education service cooperatives. Mr. Charles expressed that some teachers may attend the meet and greet specifically for PD, while some will attend for the conference in general. He recommended asking Arkansas State University to host PD efforts. In addition, Mr. Charles stated that Gap members should leave the conference with vital issues impacting legislation and vice versa. Ms. Powers suggested providing information to attendees focused on developing instructional strategies that may influence/impact the achievement gap.

Dr. Simpson reminded the commission that they need to confirm speakers, decide on topics, and generate ideas for the general session. Possible topics for the general session may include the purpose of the commission, national statistics, how Arkansas is fairing as compared to other states, and best practices. The Commission suggested Dr. Charity Smith, Dr. Gayle Potter, Mr. Jim Boardman, Representative Rainey, Dr. Tracy Tucker, and someone from NORMES as possible speakers. Mr. Brooks stated that he will check with Higher Ed in respect to securing a speaker. He suggested one or two College and Career (CC) coaches for the break-out sessions and pointed out that there are not CC coaches in every part of the state. Dr. Simpson stated that she will contact speakers once members have emailed all suggestions and they have been finalized via email. She also suggested Dr. Kimbrell and Mr. Broadway as general session speakers. Dr. McCoy recommended having the session presenter(s) speak to The Commission before presenting in Blytheville. The Commission recommended offering 2 or 3 breakout sessions on Friday, May 11, 2012. Mr. Charles suggested the following topics:

- Why are public schools failing?
- No Child Left Behind: Help or Hinder?

- Public school funding and distribution
- What does the Scholastic Audit entail?
- ACSIP: Working document or paper drill?
- Parental Involvement
- Multicultural and ESL Learners
- Standardized testing
- Special Education

Dr. McCoy suggested that someone present information on how achievement information is reported and Ms. Boyd recommended a presentation on AYP.

Dr. Simpson stated that she will send superintendents letters about the Blytheville meet and greet on or by March 1, 2012. Superintendents will be asked to RSVP no later than April 12<sup>th</sup>. Written notification will be followed with an electronic invitation (possibly an evite) and will include the agenda for the event. The cover for the program and the title of the conference will also need to be finalized by March 1<sup>st</sup>.

The committee decided that they will create an action report after the Blytheville meet and greet. The action report will highlight the goals of the event and the final results. The results will be used to guide future legislation. Dr. Hargrove and Ms. Powers agreed to craft evaluation questions (to be completed by those who attend the event). The evaluation questions will be discussed at the next meeting (March 15<sup>th</sup>).

Dr. Simpson tabled the discussion on strategic planning. The topic will be addressed during the next meeting scheduled for March 15, 2012.

Dr. Simpson provided each commission member with a copy of Act 1314 and discussed the criteria for appointing members to The Commission. Ms. Boyd nominated Barbara Warren (Congressional District 2) to fill one of the current vacancies. Dr. Hargrove pointed out that although the district 2 vacancy has already been filled, The Commission should accept Ms. Boyd's nomination for future vacancies.

Committee members were asked to verify their contact information and term expiration date listed on The Gap Commission Current Membership List (which is also located on the ADE web site), make changes if needed, and submit these changes to Dr. Simpson.

Dr. Simpson ended the meeting by reminding The Commission that all members needed to be present during the upcoming meetings (March 15<sup>th</sup> and April 19<sup>th</sup>). In the meantime members should be thinking of recommendations for speakers. During the March 15<sup>th</sup> meeting The Commission will discuss recommendations, the cover for the program, and may possibly have a count of who plans to attend the event. The Commission decided that the meeting scheduled for May 17<sup>th</sup> is necessary because it will provide The Commission with the opportunity to discuss feedback from the Blytheville meet and greet and plan the next course of action.

**Future meeting date:**

March 15, 2012

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Recorded by Dr. Taniesa Moore, Program Advisor (Office of Student Assessment) in the absence of Sheree K. Baird, Social Studies Specialist