

**Minutes**  
**Vision for Excellence in Education and Arkansas Accountability System**  
**Steering Committee Meeting**  
**Wednesday, September 28, 2016**

The Vision for Excellence in Education and Arkansas Accountability System Steering Committee met Wednesday, September 28, 2016, in the Arkansas Department of Education Auditorium. Ms. Ouida Newton called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m.

Members Present: Johnny Key, Chair; Ms. Ouida Newton; Senator Jane English; Representative Bruce Cozart; Ima Etim; Michelle Hayward; Kelli Gill; Dr. Harold Jeffcoat; Joyce Flowers; Gloria Phillips; Melissa Bratton; 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](http://www.arkansased.gov/state-board/minutes/board_meeting_categories/2016).

**Consideration of Approval for Minutes – August 31, 2016**

Representative Cozart moved, seconded by Ms. Hayward, to approve the August 31, 2016, minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

**Ambassador Led Community Listening Forums**

Director of Policy and Special Projects Ms. Tina Smith said 62 ambassadors have signed up to serve. She said two (2) ambassadors are currently planning to host ambassador-led community listening forums. She said the information was posted on the ADE website at

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1BTZ6ZbUTKSL2hR54M8uPm5h0RF50pv7G0V3x0olZXwU/edit#gid=0>.

**How Do We Develop and Support a Student-Focused Learning System?**

**Standards**

Assistant Commissioner of Learning Services Ms. Stacy Smith said the Department envisions a student-focused learning system. She said personalized learning is students having choice. She said individualized instructional decisions are made by the educator.

Ms. Smith said academic standards define the knowledge and skills that students are expected to learn in a subject in each grade. The standards provide a clear path for students to gain the proficiency that is required to learn increasingly complex material in the next grade. She said the standards review process was defined in law and included expert reviews, educator committees, study of state and national standards, public comment, and State Board approval. She reviewed the Arkansas Academic Standards approval and implementation timeline. She said the Arkansas Academic Standards are rigorous and ensure students are college, career, and community ready. She said all approved courses are aligned with credit-bearing coursework and relevant career and technical education standards.

### **Assessments**

Director of Student Assessment Ms. Hope Allen said state law mandates state assessments. She said the state was in the processing of procuring a new assessment for Grades K-2. She said the ACT Aspire was administered in Grades 3-10. She said time would be added to the ACT Aspire writing assessment. She said the ACT was administered to Grade 11. She said students in Grades 10 may participate in the PSAT (optional). She said AP exams are required for students enrolled in AP courses. She said ELPA 21 was administered to English Language Learners receiving ESL services.

Ms. Allen said a third party alignment study would examine ACT Aspire and Arkansas Academic Standards. She said other studies have shown a high correlation between the standards and assessments. She said at the request of Arkansas educators the state was seeking interim assessments for Grades K-2. She said the Grades 1-2 assessments would be electronic.

Ms. Allen said the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) permits state systems to measure achievement through an annual summative assessment or multiple statewide assessments, the results of which would be required to be combined to produce a summative score.

Ms. Smith said the state was considering how to measure competencies in a student-focused system.

Ms. Allen said ESSA requires an annual assessment of Grades 3-10 English, Reading, and Math. She said other assessments could be considered in addition to the requirements. She said the state assessments are aligned to college and career readiness standards. She said state law requires all students to participate in the state assessments. She said ESSA requires 95% of students to be tested in all subgroups.

### **Reporting and Accountability System**

Office of Innovation for Education Director Dr. Denise Airola said Arkansas has an opportunity to report more information than required by ESSA. She said the accountability system should focus on the student-focused vision to improve the

education system. She said the theory of action is if we focus on what matters for students to be prepared for success in life, then more students will graduate from our school systems prepared for success in life.

Dr. Airola said reporting a metric is a form of soft accountability and increased transparency. The goal would be to incentivize positive behaviors and she encouraged the committee to consider the impact of the information. She said the state report card already reports most of the information required by ESSA. She said Arkansas could consider a more visual reporting tool using graphics to increase the richness of information.

### **Federal Funding Supports**

Director of Federal Programs Mr. Bobby Lester said each federal funding program was guided by a separate set of federal rules and regulations. He said Title I, Title II, and Title III funding supports remained similar to past practices. He said Title IV, Title V, and Title IX funding supports changed many programs and the state was awaiting additional information and guidance from the federal office.

### **Subgroups**

Director of Policy and Special Projects Ms. Tina Smith said ESSA required accountability measures for English Language Learners, Special Education, economically disadvantaged, African American, Hispanic, and Caucasian subgroups. She said additional reporting was required for English Language Learners, Special Education, economically disadvantaged, African American, Hispanic, Caucasian, migrant, gender, active duty military dependents, homeless and foster children subgroups.

### **N-size**

Office of Innovation for Education Director Dr. Denise Airola said a minimum number of students are necessary to determine the accountability and/or reporting for the purpose of providing all children a significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education and to close educational achievement gaps. She said the current accountability N-size is 25 students. She said the current reporting N-size is 10 students. She said the N-size impacts efforts to advance equity, access, and opportunity for all students. She said the technical considerations regarding the minimum N-size includes the inclusion or exclusion of student subgroups in accountability calculations. She shared a model of the percentage of schools meeting minimum N for 0, 5, 10, 15, 20, and 25. She said the state could consider alternative solutions for small subgroups.

Assistant Commissioner of Public School Accountability Ms. Annette Barnes said under ESSA support would be provided to schools identified for targeted services or comprehensive services. She said the N-size would be important for identifying subgroups and may determine the type of support a school would be provided.

Dr. Airola said one state reported that it had used an N-size of 10 for reporting but included all students in accountability.

### **Personalized Learning**

Office of Innovation for Education Ms. Marsha Hash said personalized learning is tailoring learning for each student's strengths, needs, and interests, including enabling student voice and choice in what, how, when, and where they learn to provide flexibility and supports to ensure mastery of standards. She shared two videos from the CCSSO Next State of Learning series available at <http://www.nextstateoflearning.com>. She said approximately 300+ educators attended the Innovation Summit in Little Rock and she is seeing personalized learning happening in Arkansas.

Dr. Airola said education preparation programs are utilizing tools such as <http://studentsatthecenterhub.org> to redesign programs of study for future teachers.

### **Community Listening Forums and Public Feedback**

Director of Policy and Special Projects Ms. Tina Smith said three (3) community listening forums have been held, with seven (7) more scheduled. She said the most common responses from the forums regarding the characteristics of a quality school were student focused learning; effective teachers and leaders; and college, career, and community readiness upon graduation. She said the best measures of success would be student proficiency, student growth, graduation rate, and the number of AP courses. She said the participants said in order to make sure every student has an opportunity for success it would require recruiting and retaining effective teachers and leaders, implementing student-focused systems, providing personalized learning for students, and incorporating professional learning communities.

### **Current Data Available from Surveys and Meetings**

Director of Policy and Special Projects Ms. Tina Smith shared the data from the Academic Standards and Assessment survey.

### **Next Steps**

The next Steering Committee meeting date is October 26, 2016. Commissioner Key encouraged all stakeholders to let their voices be heard, to share what they know with parents, students, teachers, administrators, community leaders and all other stakeholders, and to attend a Community Listening Forum in their area.

## Public Comment

Public Comment Dr. Ann Robinson, professor at UALR, thanked the committee for its service. She encouraged the committee to consider the progress for advanced learners and gifted/talented students. She referenced the Fordham report, *High Stakes for High Achievers*, published August 31, 2016.

Public Comment Ms. Dallas Green, advocate for the Arkansas Dyslexia Support Group, encouraged the committee to consider the progress of students identified with dyslexia.

## Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:03 p.m.

*Minutes recorded by Deborah Coffman*

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J. Key", is written over a horizontal line.

Commissioner Key, Chair