

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
January 19, 2012

Members in Attendance: Dr. Dawn Simpson, Dr. Jesse Hargrove, Dr. Eddie McCoy, Ms. Kathy Powers

Others in Attendance: Mr. Horace Charles, Ms. Bernedit Divide, Ms. Anna Parkin

Excused Absence: Mr. Jon Fulkerson, Mr. Brooks Harrington, Mr. Gus Williamson, Ms. Elfreda Boyd,

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 November 19, 2011: Dr. McCoy made a motion to accept the minutes. The Closing the Gap Commission (The Commission) will approve the minutes via e-mail due to a lack of a quorum.

Dr. Simpson opened the meeting at 1:00 p.m.

Dr. Simpson announced that Dr. Vera Lang Brown from the University of Arkansas Pine Bluff will be sworn in by the governor and will be joining The Commission.

Meet and greet committee meeting in Blytheville, AR:

The upcoming meeting will take place the third week in February. The subcommittee wasn't able to meet in December, but they have been working on the meeting preparation together via e-mail. The meet and greet session will be held on Thursday, and the subcommittee is planning training, speakers, and a panel discussion for Friday. Dr. Hargrove expressed that the speakers would be of critical importance, so any speaker suggestions should be forwarded to Dr. Simpson. Additionally, The Commission will be touring the Blytheville community. They plan to visit with some of the students in Blytheville and get their thoughts and feedback on educational issues.

Ms. Divide asked how The Commission was planning on engaging the larger community. Dr. Simpson responded that Mr. Fulkerson was working with the Blytheville School District and the surrounding community to ensure that all appropriate parties received invitations to the upcoming meeting. Dr. Simpson further explained that the purpose of the meeting was to announce themselves to the local communities and discuss gap issues. The Commission didn't want to be perceived as a regulatory agency. The purpose of this meeting is to listen to educators and community members and elicit dialogue on gap issues.

Mr. Charles and Ms. Divide have observed that many schools in south Arkansas have local achievement gap commissions, but they are ineffective because the schools lack the resources and the school personal may not feel it is important or understand the complex issues.

Dr. McCoy asked if there should be some type of monitoring or compliance process in place to ensure schools are putting the necessary pieces in place in order to close achievement gaps. Additionally, Dr. McCoy thought a model or list of best practices on closing the achievement gap would be beneficial to schools. Ms. Powers agreed that these would be great resources for The Commission to develop and post on the website.

The Arkansas Public Policy Commission offered assistance to the Closing the Gap Commission. Mr. Charles and Ms. Divide would like to help The Commission plan a future meeting to be held in Southern Arkansas and they are interested in lobbying legislators for a budget to assist with travel expenses. Furthermore, they would like to assist The Commission members with developing goals, objectives, and a long-term strategic plan. Mr. Charles would like to see The Commission develop overarching goals for their purpose and mission, as well as smaller goals for each task they are planning to accomplish. These items could also be posted on the website for public dissemination. The members of the Arkansas Public Policy Commission also offered to assist with nominating individuals to fill the open positions on the Closing the Gap Commission.

Future meeting date:

February 16, 2012

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Recorded by Sheree K. Baird, Social Studies Specialist