

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
March 14, 2013

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

Others in Attendance: Ms. Kim Wilson (via conference call)

Excused Absence: Mr. Jon Fulkerson, Dr. Hargrove

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 February 21, 2013:

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

Dr. Simpson officially welcomed Mr. Jack Crumbly to the Closing the Academic Achievement Gap Commission (Commission). Mr. Crumbly is a retired superintendent and wants to open a charter high school in Lee County for troubled youth.

CCSS Discussion:

Ms. Powers shared a report on the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) with the Commission. The CCSS were supported by state chiefs in order for schools to have common expectations for all students. At present, forty-five states have adopted the CCSS for math and literacy. Additionally, she shared that a question has arisen regarding how much fiction should be taught. The CCSS recommends that 70% of texts be informational text which should be taught throughout the school year. However, this is a shared responsibility with all content area teachers. Schools are working on strategies to assist teachers with integrating informational text into the school day. New assessments are being developed to measure the CCSS. Arkansas belongs to one of the two assessment consortiums: Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). The other assessment consortium is called Smarter Balanced.

Additional information about the CCSS and the upcoming assessments can be found at the following websites: www.corestandards.org, www.achieve.org, and www.PARCCOnline.org.

Subcommittee Discussion:

Dr. Simpson updated the Commission about the subcommittee work. She mentioned that the CCSS subcommittee met on March 4th. The Parental Involvement subcommittee still needs to meet. The Local Closing the Gap subcommittee will be working on the Pine Bluff symposium.

The symposium will be held June 6-7, 2013. A reception will be held on the evening of June 6, and the conference will begin June 7. The subcommittee is still discussing themes for the event. The subcommittee hopes to offer technology professional development hours for the attendees. For instance, the conference could highlight how schools are using iPads and apps in the classroom, and new technologies of visual cultures. The format of the conference will be similar to last year, but may include additional invites beyond educators including community members, parents and legislators.

Dr. Simpson would like to send a letter out prior to the symposium. Ms. Kincaid will send out an e-mail for approval.

Technology Discussion:

Ms. Powers shared with the Commission that Little Rock has a program for free and reduced lunch students to purchase a laptop for \$40 and monthly internet access for \$10. She would like to hear from someone who is working with this program.

Mr. Crumbly stated that internet access is still cost prohibitive in many parts of Arkansas, especially the Delta region. Many of these have lower teacher pay which hurts their efforts in attracting more qualified teachers. A mill does not raise as much money in impoverished communities as it does in more affluent ones. Furthermore, many of these communities are unable to offer attractions which would help appeal to teachers as a place to work and live.

ASCIP Discussion:

Dr. Brown would like the Commission to further study Arkansas Comprehensive School Improvement Planning (ASCIP). She posed the following questions for the Commission to consider:

- How are resources allocated?
- How does the ADE define goals of success for ASCIP?
- How does ASCIP help close the academic achievement gap?
- How much funding is determined and/or allocated?
- Who makes the funding decisions?
- Once a school completes an ASCIP plan, where does it go?
- Are ASCIP plans available to review?

Mr. Crumbly said he would like to work on this subcommittee. Ms. Wilson attended the ASCIP meeting, but will focus on parental involvement since this will support the new Teacher of the Year platform.

Future Meeting Dates:

April 18, 2013—Dr. Guerrero, guest speaker

May 23, 2013—Dr. Cushman, guest speaker

The Commission will break for the summer months and reconvene in September.

Meeting adjourned at 2:30 pm