

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
September 13, 2013

Members in Attendance: Dr. Dawn Simpson, Dr. Vera Lang Brown, Mr. Jack Crumbly, Mr. Jon Fulkerson, Rev. Charles Killion, Ms. Kathy Powers (via phone conferencing), Dr. Luis Restrepo, Ms. Lillian Williams

Others in Attendance: Brittany Kincaid

Excused Absence: Dr. Jesse Hargrove

Guest Speaker Presenters: Mr. Jonathan Dempsey, Mr. Sam Howe, and Mr. Jerry Boyd, Consultants, Scholastic, Inc.

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 welcomed guests from Scholastic, Inc.

Scholastic, Inc. PowerPoint presentation by Mr. Sam Howe:

Navigating Waves of Change in the State of AR: Driving Academic Improvement Through Challenging Times

The PowerPoint references children from fragile families with economic and family challenges and why they matter.

The PowerPoint had graphs to indicate enrollment growth, reading and math trends among economic and disadvantaged students.

The PowerPoint indicates the rigor risk of Arkansas students using NAEP scores as a predictor of future testing of the Common Core Standards.

Scholastic Education offers an academic improvement plan and communication plan for schools to prepare for College and Career Readiness transition.

Questions were posed to the commissioners to get them thinking more about how to close an achievement gap.

Many commissioners responded with questions for Mr. Howe and Mr. Dempsey. A discussion around the difficulties in various areas of Arkansas and possible suggestions were made to address the issues of poverty level students in closing the achievement gap in those areas. Dr. Restrepo suggested they find ways to get involved as to what the Commission could do to communicate to educators and parents to get involved. The Commission will encourage schools and communities to make a plan of action to help Arkansas students.

Mr. Howe shared examples of what some other states have done to bridge the gap by having a Model Schools Conference, where schools of all types present what they did to improve academic scores.

Mr. Dempsey stated that he hopes this information is helpful and that Scholastic, Inc. is helping schools in Arkansas already. Scholastic, Inc would like to find audiences who need help and Scholastic, Inc. is willing to go anywhere to help. Scholastic, Inc. is willing to help the Commission with their symposiums to continue discussing the problems. They also made available the PowerPoint presentation for the Commission to share with others.

Minutes of May 23, 2013:

With corrections to minutes to be made before posting on the website, Dr. Restrepo made a motion to accept the minutes, and Mr. Crumbly seconded the motion.

Updates:

Feedback on 2nd Annual Educational Symposium-Bridging the Gap, Pine Bluff

Dr. Simpson said all went well and because of lack of time, the Commission will delay sharing information on the symposium at this meeting.

Subcommittee Discussion:

Dr. Simpson reminded committees to meet sometime before next meeting and report. Subcommittee reports are due by November 1st.

Dr. Restrepo reminded the Commission that he will soon book the next year's symposium, and the Commission will need to decide on a date for the symposium in the next meeting.

Ideas for Future Presentations:

Dr. Simpson asked the Commission to email her with suggestions for future presentations.

Future Meeting Dates:

Next Meeting Date – October 10th.

Meeting adjourned at 3:07 pm.

Recorded by Connie Storey