

ARIZONA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Fifty-first Legislature – Second Regular Session

**COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND  
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

Minutes of Meeting  
Wednesday, March 12, 2014  
House Hearing Room 1 -- 10:00 a.m.

Chairman Dial called the meeting to order at 10:09 a.m. and attendance was noted by the secretary.

**Members Present**

Ms. Alston  
Mr. Coleman

Mr. Saldate  
Mr. Thorpe

Mr. Orr, Vice-Chairman  
Mr. Dial, Chairman

**Members Absent**

Mr. Larkin (excused)

Mr. Stevens (excused)

**Committee Action**

None

Vice-Chairman Orr assumed the Chair.

**PRESENTATIONS**

**Arizona Minority Education Policy Analysis Center (AMEPAC)**

Panfilo Contreras, Private Education Consultant, Former AMEPAC Chair, introduced colleagues and related that AMEPAC is a policy center of the Arizona Commission for Postsecondary Education. The mission is to stimulate constructive statewide discussion and debate about improving Arizona's minority student early awareness, access and achievement throughout the educational attainment process. The *Arizona Minority Student Progress Report (2013) – Arizona in Transformation* (Attachment 1) represents the fifth benchmark report on minority student access and success. The report provides a snapshot of Arizona's educational achievement with the most recent data available. He reviewed portions of the report, noting that the demographic information is key in moving forward with education policy decisions for the state.

Vice-Chairman Orr asked if data is available showing concentrations of Hispanic students in K-12. Mr. Contreras responded that data is available by county: there are six or seven counties in the state where students of color are majority students; the metropolitan area is not there yet, but it is very close.

Everardo Martinez-Inzunza, Associate Dean, South Yuma County Campus, Arizona Western College; AMEPAC Chair, said there is a higher concentration of Hispanic students in rural districts where the majority of the population works in the agricultural industry, such as Yuma County, which is included in the average for the state. Along with the demographics, the report finds that poverty is the closest link to educational attainment. In looking at income for families, 9 percent of the white population had children under poverty, while 24 percent of the Hispanic population had children under poverty, which exacerbates the issue of college attainment since families with poor economic status do not have any college background and first-generation college populations have more obstacles.

Mr. Thorpe asked if there is some leveling out in the Maricopa County area compared to rural areas. Mr. Contreras said the data in the *County Addendum* (Attachment 2) shows that clearly. In response to a question, he indicated that the report is not broken down by school district, but that information is available through the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) and may be included in the *County Addendum* (Attachment 2) and *Appendices* (electronic version available at amepac.org).

Mr. Martinez-Inzunza referred to the report on page 35, table 1 (Attachment 1), which addresses the fact that ethnicity and income disparity also exist in the metropolitan areas to a very high degree. The Hispanic participation for Maricopa Community College dual enrollment is 15 percent while white student participation is 68 percent. Early college participation at the high school level is more than four times higher for the white population than the Hispanic population in Maricopa County. In Pima County, where there is a higher concentration of Hispanics, 39 percent are participating in comparison to 41 percent of white students. One of the tables relating to educational attainment in the report shows that the white student population attending universities is much higher in proportion to the Hispanic student population, so there are some major hurdles and barriers to accessing university education.

Vice-Chairman Orr asked if there is a statistical difference in comparing lower socioeconomic status and higher economic status across races. Mr. Martinez-Inzunza said yes; there is a close correlation to income, but it is exacerbated by ethnicity because of the instruction, culture, perception and anticipation by the families.

Mr. Thorpe said one item to strive for is to ensure there are no barriers to K-12 or higher education so whatever their background or heritage, people have an opportunity to succeed.

Mr. Contreras responded that one of the findings is that 85 percent of teachers in the K-12 system are white when the majority of students are of color, so one recommendation is to enhance teacher cultural competencies.

Mr. Martinez-Inzunza related his background experience. He stated that in the past 10 years, Arizona Western College (AWC) implemented some successful programs and noted that this is not an immigrant problem. Mr. Contreras remarked that although it is not in the report, over 85 percent of Hispanic students currently in K-12 education are U.S. citizens and not immigrant children.

Mr. Martinez-Inzunza said when he was in college, there were Chicano movements about how Mexicans need to help each other, stick together and be taught by Mexicans, but he disagreed. His best instructors in junior high were non-Mexican who were caring teachers, and some of his worst teachers in high school were Mexican. Ethnicity does not necessarily correlate to teaching; what correlates to teaching is cultural sensitivity.

He related that in south Yuma, in working with the Gadsden Elementary School District, which receives the same level of funding per student as any other school district, students have been able to outperform the majority of junior high students in Arizona. AWC and Gadsden are partnering to make an early college charter high school. He said the AMEPAC report is the fifth report to track performance, and performance disparity has grown in the past few reports because the demographics are changing so quickly. It is not that Hispanics are doing worse; when Hispanics become a larger proportion than the population that is higher performing, state performance drops, so they would like to consider doing things differently. Several outstanding programs in the state have been identified. The final recommendations are to look at what works, barriers to low-income families and the impact of bills and policies.

Mr. Thorpe recommended that AMEPAC become more proactive in keeping the Members aware of how they can make a difference, suggestions for policy changes, repurposing existing monies, etc. Mr. Martinez-Inzunza said he already started on an approach and introduced Amanda Martinez, a legislative intern who will be his contact.

Mr. Saldate remarked that he found out about this report by chance, but he noticed the name of Dr. Alfredo G. de los Santos, Jr., who is an esteemed scholar in this area. He said this is one of the areas in which he sees a need for the transfer of knowledge from the research that is being done at the universities to improve the conditions in K-12 and throughout. It is a wonderful report and a noble effort.

Mr. Contreras stated that there is a precursor to the report, *To Learn and Earn*, which expands on the impact of education to the state economy (Attachment 3).

Vice-Chairman Orr asked the cost associated with the program at Gadsden and AWC. Mr. Martinez-Inzunza responded that what excites him about what they are doing is lowering costs; the average daily membership (ADM) will pay for students who are participating through the charter school for the college tuition. The intent is that in four years, these students will complete their high school diplomas and a two-year college certificate or degree. He is working on guaranteed admission to the university system where the students will be applying for financial aid. The program will not only accelerate education; higher academic achievement will be attained and two years' cost will be eliminated from the taxpayers' pockets. These students will become taxpayers and industries will be attracted to the state because there will be a higher number of university graduates within the population. It is actually an economic stimulus program based on education that is intended to help Arizona reach a competitive national standard.

Ms. Alston expressed appreciation for the presentation and encouraged AMEPAC to become proactive. She requested duplicate documents to hand carry to the Phoenix Union High School District, which she was provided. Mr. Contreras related that Dr. Timothy Ogle at the Arizona

School Boards Association agreed to mail one of the reports to every school board member and superintendent in the state, which was done in mid-January 2014.

Mr. Coleman asked if the charter school program is community college-sponsored. Mr. Martinez-Inzunza said they have been working with Gadsden, which is serviced by the Yuma Union Unified High School District on concurrent enrollment. The junior high students complete their school day and then take afternoon classes; parents and community leaders provide scholarships. He found out last year that elementary schools may also petition to have high school grades offered so the State Board of Education was petitioned and granted the opportunity to start a high school from Gadsden this year. It does not add any cost to the college; it is funded by ADM as a charter school to Gadsden.

### **Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council**

Dr. Teri Traaen, Government Affairs Liaison, Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council, said she and Dr. Skip Brown are long-time public school administrators who are now consultants and business owners working on a government relations project for the Council. She referred to handouts: a powerpoint presentation, *ONE Community Working Together* (Attachment 4) and *Timeline of State Events in the History of Developmental Disabilities* (Attachment 5) showing what has happened in Arizona and at a national level.

Dr. Traaen reviewed the powerpoint presentation (Attachment 4, pages 1-2), noting that approximately \$1.2 million in funding is obtained annually from the United States Department of Health and Human Services, which is used for supportive programming and efforts on behalf of Arizona's approximately 100,000 developmentally disabled (DD) citizens. Of those, 55,000 to 60,000 are students in K-12; the rest are adults from post-age 18 through post-retirement age. DD includes diagnostics like cerebral palsy, autism and Asperger's, and sometimes there are dual diagnostics. In schools, students typically have individual education plans and, between ages 16 and 18, should have transition plans in place to prepare them for life beyond the formal education system. She discussed how the Council supports persons with DD using a five-year plan.

Dr. Skip Brown, Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council, continued the powerpoint presentation (Attachment 4, pages 3-4), outlining the goals of the five-year plan to help persons with DD develop the ability to address issues that are important to them, match persons with DD with jobs that are productive and provide information about persons with DD. He discussed projects to accomplish the goals.

Dr. Traaen finished the powerpoint presentation (Attachment 5, pages 4-6) on Employment First, a program in which 26 states participate to enhance employment for every DD individual. Some states, through their legislative bodies, have given a call to the greater business community to not only encourage, but challenge every business entity to consider how and where to begin employing DD citizens, if they have not done so in the past. She envisioned the opportunity and possibility in Arizona that every business could be a partner in employing the DD. For example, in school districts, adult mentors are working with youth ages 16 to 18 in trade areas. The City of Scottsdale has training opportunities in the utility payment area and the Green Valley Water Company brought someone on board who is excelling.

Mr. Thorpe stated that young people with DD are amazing employees, and once an employer gets over the initial hesitation of hiring someone with a disability, it typically turns out to be a success story for the company and the employee.

Dr. Traaen noted that the Council stands ready through connections with Untapped Arizona. There are opportunities through Maricopa Community College to work with business and industry where willing and interested young people can be matched, as well as early career or mid-career persons who need assistance with job searches. Medtronic is also willing to conduct a training enclave.

Dr. Brown remarked that the school districts have done a marvelous job. In the Scottsdale Unified School District, the Director of Facilities and Operations has two young children who are autistic and wondered what will happen to them, so he started a program by pairing other autistic children with the grounds personnel and eventually plumbers. It has been so successful that the school district is hiring one of the students as an apprentice plumber next year. It is important to get past employer reluctance to hire DD individuals. Maintenance departments in school districts involved are working with special needs departments on training.

Ms. Alston said it was brought to her attention that the federal match for job training is not being maximized through the Division of Employment and Rehabilitative Services at the Arizona Department of Economic Security. She introduced a bill that has not gone anywhere; however, there is a Job Training Fund in the Arizona Commerce Authority (ACA) from which dollars could be used for rehabilitation services with no impact on the General Fund.

Dr. Traaen said that would be the type of thing to watch in their role of assisting the Council so parents, self-advocates, the Council and its partners know what is available. Also, Central Arizona College, through its vocational and technical side, is partnering with Untapped Arizona, which may be an option for those matching federal dollars.

Vice-Chairman Orr said he engaged in conversations last year with the ACA because people were ready to provide funding to the ACA for an 8:1 drawdown, and he would like to continue those conversations. There are some procurement issues within the vocational rehabilitation system that need to be addressed, particularly if private sector money is involved. Performance standards need to be changed to ensure the money goes exactly where the donors intended. He added that Jim Click, Chairman of the Board, Linkages of Arizona, would say, from a business standpoint, that rehabilitation works. Linkages has 50 to 60 DD employees who are the best, most loyal and most able workers, and the executives and staff involved with the rehabilitation agency are the best in the state.

Dr. Traaen stated she is profoundly appreciative of the time to bring these issues to the Members and of the businesses and industry, the chambers, individual business sites and centers in Arizona that are committed to the future for the DD.

Without objection, the meeting adjourned at 11:08 a.m.

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Linda Taylor, Committee Secretary  
April 2, 2014

(Original minutes, attachments and audio on file in the Chief Clerk's Office; video archives available at <http://www.azleg.gov>)