

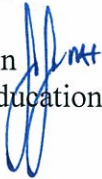

**ARKANSAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**  
**HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**  
and  
**SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

Senator Jimmy Jeffress  
Senate Chair

Representative Bill Abernathy  
House Chair

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** The Members of the Senate Interim Committee on Education  
The Members of the House Interim Committee on Education  
The Incoming Members of the Senate Interim Committee on Education  
The Incoming Members of the House Interim Committee on Education

**FROM:** Senator Jimmy Jeffress, Chair, Senate Interim Committee on Education   
Representative Bill Abernathy, Chair, House Interim Committee on Education 

**SUBJECT:** Recommendations of the Joint Subcommittee on Grade Inflation

**DATE:** November 17, 2010

At their joint meeting on Tuesday, February 23, 2010, the House Interim Committee on Education and the Senate Interim Committee on Education authorized their respective chairs to establish and appoint a Joint Subcommittee on Grade Inflation to review issues associated with the calculation methodology used to determine grade inflation in the public schools under Arkansas Code Annotated 6-15-421. The Subcommittee was to be composed of:

- Three (3) members of the House Interim Committee on Education
- Three (3) members of the Senate Interim Committee on Education
- The Commissioner of the Arkansas Department of Education or his/her designee
- The Director of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education or his/her designee
- Three (3) representatives appointed by the Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators
- Three (3) representatives appointed by the Arkansas Education Association
- One (1) representative appointed by the Arkansas School Boards Association

The Chair of the House Interim Committee on Education and the Chair of the Senate Interim Committee on Education served as the co-chairs of the Joint Subcommittee on Grade Inflation. The membership of the Subcommittee comprised the individuals listed below:

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**Representative Bill Abernathy**, Co-Chair, District 22, Polk and Pt. Montgomery Counties  
**Representative Eddie Cheatham**, District 9, Pt. Ashley, and Pt. Drew Counties  
**Representative Monty Betts**, District 50, Pt. White County  
**Senator Jimmy Jeffress**, Co-Chair, District 24, Ashley, Bradley, Chicot, Drew, and Pt. Desha Counties  
**Senator Johnny Key**, District 1, Baxter, Marion, and Pt. Boone County  
**Senator Joyce Elliott**, District 33, Pt. Pulaski County  
**Dr. Tom Kimbrell**, Commissioner, Arkansas Department of Education  
**Dr. Jim Purcell**, Director, Arkansas Department of Higher Education  
**Dr. Richard Abernathy**, Executive Director, Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators, and former Superintendent, Bryant School District  
**Ms. Karen Cushman**, Superintendent, Hector School District  
**Dr. Larry Smith**, Superintendent, White Hall School District  
**Mr. Gerald Harper**, Teacher, J.A. Fair High School, Little Rock, AR  
**Ms. Mary May**, Teacher, Hope High School, Nashville, AR  
**Ms. Janet Johnson**, Teacher, Bryant High School North, Little Rock, AR  
**Mr. Ron Harder**, Policy Service & Advocacy Director, Arkansas School Boards Association

The Subcommittee met on the following dates and received testimony from the appropriate staff of the Arkansas Department of Education and persons knowledgeable in statistical methodologies:

- March 31, 2010
- April 27, 2010
- May 24, 2010
- November 15, 2010

At the conclusion of the November 15, 2010 Subcommittee meeting, after reviewing the testimony presented to the Subcommittee at its previous meetings and discussing the issues thoroughly, the Subcommittee adopted the following motion made by Ms. Janet Johnson and seconded by Ms. Karen Cushman:

**I move that the Joint Subcommittee on Grade Inflation of the House and Senate Interim Committees on Education recommend to the membership of the House and Senate Interim Committees on Education and the Lottery Oversight Committee that the additional requirement for eligibility as a traditional student for Part II of the Arkansas Academic Challenge**

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**Scholarship (a.k.a. the Lottery Scholarship) concerning graduation from a school district identified as having “grade inflation” be removed.**

**This recommendation is based on testimony received by the Subcommittee that the calculation methodology used to determine grade inflation in the public schools under Arkansas Code § 6-15-421 was designed as a measure of systemic performance of a school district. It was not designed to be, nor is it relevant as, a measure of individual student performance or achievement.**

**In addition, the Subcommittee recommends to the House and Senate Interim Committees on Education that Arkansas Code § 6-15-421 be repealed due to questions regarding the validity and reliability of the current grade inflation calculation methodology.**

The motion was adopted with one (1) dissenting vote.

After discussing the need to minimize instances of grade inflation and the need for systemic accountability in those instances where grade inflation can be demonstrated to have occurred, the Subcommittee adopted a second motion made by Mr. Ron Harder and seconded by Dr. Jim Purcell:

**I move that the Joint Subcommittee on Grade Inflation of the House and Senate Interim Committees on Education recommend to the membership of the House and Senate Interim Committees on Education that a study be undertaken to determine the feasibility of developing the appropriate statistical methodology to hold schools and school districts accountable for instances of grade inflation.**

Without objection, the motion was adopted.

We hope that you will find this information helpful. Please do not hesitate to call on us if you have any questions or if you need additional information.