

**Distance Learning Coordinating Council Meeting Minutes  
February 14, 2006**

**Members in Attendance:**

Karen Ghidotti, Arkansas Virtual School – K12  
Belinda Kittrell, Arkansas Department of Education  
Sandra Hardage, Arkansas Education Cooperative (Dawson)  
Drew Mashburn, Office of Information Technology  
Nancy Sparks, Arkansas Department of Workforce Education  
Kathleen Stafford, Arkansas Educational Television Network  
Dr. Gail McClure, Arkansas Science & Technology Authority  
Dr. Steve Floyd, Arkansas Department of Higher Education for Karen Wheeler  
Chris Robbins, ASMSA  
Rodney Curry, Arkansas Telecommunications Association

**Members Absent:**

Robert Mouser, Telecommunications Association-Ritter Communications

**Visitors:**

Dr. Frank Holman, Superintendent, Cabot Public School  
John Goswick, Instructional Technology Director, Pulaski County School District  
Sara McDaniel, El Dorado School District  
Sandy O'Reilly, Arkansas Virtual High School  
Senator Shane Broadway  
Senator Dave Bisbee  
Representative John Bolin  
Daoming Chen, AETN  
Dee Cox, Special Programs Coordinator, Arkansas Department of Education  
Jim Boardman, Assistant Directory, Arkansas Department of Education

**Old Business:** Minutes from last meeting

Dr. Gail McClure motion, Chris Robbins second. Approved as read.

**New Business:**

May be called on to report in Special Session. Report due in September.  
Put forth strong recommendations, suggestions. Identify one or 2 things to work on before special session.

**Comments and Reports on Distance Learning Programs:**

**Overview of Act 1425-Drew Mashburn**

The Facilities Task Force was created in response to Lakeview Case. A second Task Force called the Technology Task Force was formed to recommend to the legislature a description of an adequate technology program in Arkansas schools.—Drew, Kathleen, Belinda, Steve Floyd and Chris Robbins served on this Task Force The Task

Force made approximately 10 recommendations and one was for the creation of a DL Coordinating Council. Recommendations included identifying distance learning needs. Other recommendations included improved statewide coordination, a central clearinghouse, and calendar. Other things to consider included a more clearly defined process for course content, academic quality, and a review of current courses for quality and academic integrity. Also listed was a need to provide documentation to prove the effectiveness of distance learning and provide an online registration process for course offerings. The report recommended a way to improve statewide coordination between providers and prevent duplication, provide a cost analysis, to report annually on #4,#5,#6. This council is to give recommendations to the Arkansas Department of Education and the Legislative House and Senate Education Committees.

### **Dr. Frank Holman-Academic Center of Excellence**

Conversion Charter school—(conversion school is a charter school within the school district) established for at risk students, ALE and those not learning in the traditional way. There were 55 expulsions per yr. with 600 9<sup>th</sup> grade and graduating 425. Current enrollment is 119 with 27 seniors. Now everything is under ACE-including ALE. A flexible schedule-4:00-8:00 evening on Tuesday and Thursday. The focus on English and Math with certified staff. Students work from home and attend class too. The program uses audiographics, MESA for core courses (purchased). The course is project based learning, learning.com, EdVentures, Math Realm and Nova Net. All students were in Cabot district with some home school students. Each individual student has a unique schedule.

Recommendations to the council:

- be careful on recommendations for technology that lock us in
- look at a variety of distance learning technologies - do not lock us in
- open enrollment and conversion for lock down
- set up for expanding technologies
- most important is meeting needs of kids

### **Cyber Academy – John Goswick, Director of Instructional Technology**

Program in PCSSD—pilot project

Trying to keep students from fleeing district-to home school

Alternative program for 504 students

All courses are online with text books online. Those textbook that are not online are provided by school district. Grades 7-12 not attending classes, the school receives ADM funding. Benchmark test, onsite semester test & mid term test are taken at school. The district uses Compass Learning Odyssey a purchased software for course content.

Arkansas history course is in planning stage which will include interactive maps.

Odyssey secondary can not add additional courses so they are looking at Moodle which is a free open source software for development of new course content. PCSSD is going to use Webct-for staff development.

Compass Learning is text driven and they are using this due to bandwidth.

- They use certified instructors for each discipline
- email stays within course

- instructors can meet with student in person or by phone
- student teacher ratio-12 to 1
- teachers are paid extra \$150 per semester course per course per student—teacher doesn't get paid until student passes course.
- 72 students enrolled
- send letters to those who have not completed lessons after 3 weeks-can be dropped from the program
- recommended by counselors from PCCSD
- students outside the district are not allowed to enroll
- students must have their own computer with connection to Internet, offer access to school computer/Internet

Students enrolled in the course recovery class pay-\$180 per semester per course.

Recommendation to council:

PCSSD had a good start but will probably go to different software next year.

### **Virtual Academy-Sara McDaniel**

El Dorado Public Schools-been in existence for 5 years

- offer basic courses not AP
- use CompassLearning Odyssey Learning
- designed to reach students with health, behavior problems, pregnant girls
- Have 7 students—1 jr. high, 6 high school
- Provide computer and Internet (high speed) to students
- they spend time with parents and students, constantly monitor students, maintain equipment, progress reports, supplemental material, have a signed contract by students and parents—20 to 30 hours a week
- Internet Filer on is placed on all machines
- Midterm Test are taken at home-can't access info on line while taking the test
- social worker is sent to check on students not doing the work
- If parent or student responsibilities not upheld with documentation on student the student is out of the program
- Use AR virtual high school if courses not available from Compass
- Labs are conducted using house hold items
- Internal email, online encyclopedia, high school ace, dictionary are provided within the software

Will use Odyssey elementary next year for IEP

### **Arkansas Virtual High School-Sandy O'Reilly**

The school was funded by a Goals 2000 grant in 1999. After 6 years in operation, the school now has over 1200 students.

- Webct is used for content, email, discussion, and grades.
- Interactive CD ROMs can be created from Webct.
- Employees include 24 part-time teachers, 2 full time teachers. Teachers are to respond to students within 24 hours with questions and tutoring.

- PowerPoint, interactive activities, video clips, virtual labs, core classes, AP classes are included in the software.
- Most students are on campus but some with health issues are not.
- ALE kids began talking the program this year.
- The school had an 80% success rate until this year and because of the ALE kids this percentage has dropped.
- Students enroll for specific classes, schools can't offer, scheduling conflicts, etc.
- 20% credit recovery, 95 school districts, fall enrollment in Aug-Sept,
- Course offerings include - Spanish, oral comm., health, art
- Needs are more full teachers + \$\$
- ADE funds the program
- No cost to schools, schools provide site facilitator, grades came from VHS
- Textbooks are provided by the school
- They receive \$500 per student per year for up to 900 students
- Provide summer school-course recovery courses

Recommendation to council:

Need one more full time teacher

### **Arkansas Virtual School-Karen Ghidotti**

- Funded under a Fed grant.-no state dollars.
- Faculty includes a special ed teacher, director of technology, principal, 8 teachers-non alternative certified
- pilot program limited to 430 student , K-7
- 2006-07 last grant year
- Six mandatory courses-enrollment process is a lottery application
- 130 slots each year, school improvement students are enrolled automatically
- Parents attend a mandatory 3-4 hours training with proof of residency, must completed enrollment packet, ARVS provides documentation to local district (enrolled in local district who receives ADM)
- Placement test are given to students for accurate placement in curriculum
- Computer + printer, Internet reimbursement , books materials, manipulatives (100 pounds of curriculum for each student) access to an experienced teacher and administrator
- Special services are provided by the local district
- Parent-teacher conferences done by voicemail/email every 2 weeks
- Student has AIP, work samples of students, progress reports, training sessions for parents for mandated test, monthly outings, school community board
- Curriculum is mastery based learning, students are placed on correct level, pace and time spent on each objective varies by child, students exert more effort in important objective
- Company developed curriculum
- AR state standards are aligned to the curriculum

- focus is LA-phonics , Math-Sadle-Oxford math with interactive, lab materials- these are part of 100 lbs of curriculum
- there is a student material policy for returnable
- Courses have 180 total lessons, 160 content lessons, 20 choice lessons
- Lesson time=60 min.
- Art tied to history, music the student is sent the instruments
- Software has teacher management component built into software
- Parents sign in attendance for the student

### **Kathleen Stafford-AETN United Streaming**

Free service to all schools in AR, and private schools –85,000 downloads from state – search key word or subject, grade all correlated to AR standards  
20 hours of AETN AR studies, teacher lesson plans, worksheets, writing prompts, rubrics scoring sheet—95% of AR schools use it

### **Overview of legislation-Senator Bisbee, Senator Broadway, Representative Bolin**

#### **Broadway**

- Grew out of task force, dl issue- opportunities for schools to fulfill course requirements
- Needs to be coordination-central point of coordination should be providing schools, high ed with a clearinghouse to know what is out there. This is an opportunity for rural schools.
- How do we continue to provide to rural schools
- Do we continue with lines in ground or provide wireless. Which is more efficient?
- What technology do we need to help us with teachers and professional development?
- How do we train teachers integrate tech into classroom?
- Virtual school-how much does it cost to educate that child that doesn't have bldg, buses, etc.?

#### **Bisbee**

- DL advisory committee should look at the bigger picture.
- How do we use technology to teach?
- What about DL for schools that don't have enough teachers in schools to offer additional classes?
- What about good teachers—getting true talent to as many students as can, one teacher in small school could be teaching all the math courses.
- Teaching distance could help resolve this teacher problem.
- Digital curriculum wherever it is in a virtual academy or home school, within a school building
- Need to work on legislation on virtual schools—how much does it cost-not a public school?
- Entire senate Education committee is left handed

## **Bolin**

- What is the capability of dl? DL is the perfect thing to do we just need to take it to highest level.

## **Questions**

- Legislative timeline for our report to the committee on education by Jan 2007 in fall of 2006.
- Make recommendations to budget committee by mid summer
- By May—need some information right now
- What's available, available dl, what format, cost for every campus
- 1200 campuses
- What's available? Who's providing courses? How are the systems being utilized? What barriers are out there? What about class schedules, calendar, etc?
- It's ok to make recommendations outside our charge, but focus on dl. We might need to bring other recommendations (curriculum, professional dev, etc.) to the legislature.
- good professional development aligned to the curriculum, frameworks), barriers for teachers and dl—teachers fear of dl
- Education adequacy, aging teachers retiring- there will be a shortage of teachers—how do we supplement retiring teachers?-\$\$\$-there is lifetime learning cycle
- What things aren't working well?

Distance learning standards and rules: on-line distance learning curriculum:

Drew Mashburn, Sandra Hardage, Karen Ghidotti Chris Robbins

Supplemental distance learning course material: Improving utilization of dl resources

Gail McClure, Belinda Kittrell,

Coordination of distance learning services; Methods for fostering collaborative process:

Strategies for reducing the occurrence of isolated dl activities:

Kathleen Stafford, Nancy Sparks, Rodney Curry, Belinda Kittrell

Options for spreading dl costs and increasing value of shared dl services: entire committee

Inventory Meeting--CIV, audiographics, online, other—Feb 17-1:00-Maumelle

Email list of questions to Karen that needs to be on inventory

Next Meeting: March 10 from 9:00 – 3:00 at State Police Bldg

Motion to adjourn by Chris Robbins and second by Nancy Sparks. Approved by unanimous vote.