Local Perspectives on Educational Challenges: Focus on Arkansas

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Associate Professor of Education & Public Policy
University of Arkansas, Fayetteville
Panel on Community Issues

- Ken Dahlstedt, Commissioner, Skagit County, Washington
  - County Perspective

- Otto Loewer, University of Arkansas
  - Regional/State Perspective on Creating New Rural Development Opportunities

- Gary Ritter, Center for Education Policy, University of Arkansas
  - Local Perspective on Educational Challenges
Overview: Education in AR

A. School Funding Litigation
   - Brief National Background
   - Background on Lakeview Case

B. What Challenges Do Arkansans Face?
   - Across the State
   - Rural Schools

C. What Reforms are Discussed?
   - What Have We Done?
   - What Could/Should We Do?
A. School Funding Lawsuits

Background in the US and in AR
Quick Review

**Education is a ...**

- State Responsibility (~ 45%)
- Local Function (~ 45%)
- Federal Interest (< 10%)
Funding Sources for US Schools

Percent of Revenue: Various Levels of Government, 1920-1995

- % Local
- % State
- % Federal

Is Education a National & Fundamental Right?

- At the Federal level – No! Education is not a right mentioned in the US Constitution.
- Life, liberty, and property are fundamental rights under the Federal Constitution.
- At the state level, some courts have declared education a fundamental right. This has significance in how a court looks at the finance case.
Important State Finance Cases

- **California** – *Serrano v. Priest* (1971)
- **Missouri** – *Missouri v. Jenkins* (1990)
School Finance Scorecard

Source: Advocacy Center for Children's Educational Success with Standards, http://www.accessednetwork.org/
Timeline of Arkansas

Lake View Lawsuit

- **1983**: Arkansas Supreme Court strikes down state's public school-funding formula. *(Alma v. Dupree)*
- **1984**: State raises sales tax by 1¢ to help fund public education.
- **1992**: Lake View School District sues state over disparities in school funding.
- **1994**: County Court rules finance system violates education adequacy & equity provisions of state constitution.
- **May 2001**: County Court declares funding system inequitable & inadequate and orders state to fund preschool. *(Supreme Court upholds in 2002)*
- **Feb. 2004 Special Session**: Legislature increases school funding by more than $400 million for 2005 & sets new funding formula
- Supreme Court removes itself in 2004, recalled in Fall 2005 and again finds system unconstitutional
- Legislature responds with additional funding in Spring 2006
B. What Education Challenges Do Arkansans Face?

- Statewide Issues
- Special District Issues
Key Challenges - Statewide

- Teacher Shortages & Quality
- Student Performance
- No Child Left Behind
Teacher Shortages?

![Bar chart showing number of teachers in different education levels from 1995 to 2003.](chart.png)

Source: AHEIS, Graduated Student Files for Public Institutions and IPEDS Reports, 2003

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Key Teacher Certification Areas, Totals from 1995 to 2003

Source: AHEIS, Graduated Student Files for Public Institutions and IPEDS Reports, 2003
Improvements on AR Benchmarks

Arkansas Benchmark Exam Results: Math and Literary for Grades 4, 6 & 8, Combined Population, % Proficient and Above, 2003-04 to 2004-05

- 4th Math: 61% (2003-04) to 65% (2004-05)
- 6th Math: 36% (2003-04) to 41% (2004-05)
- 8th Math: 22% (2003-04) to 32% (2004-05)
- 4th Literacy: 62% (2003-04) to 69% (2004-05)
- 6th Literacy: 27% (2003-04) to 42% (2004-05)
- 8th Literacy: 42% (2003-04) to 52% (2004-05)
End of Course Scores on the Rise

Algebra End of Course Exam, 01-05

- 2001-2002: 30% % Prof., 7% % Adv.
- 2002-2003: 37% % Prof., 7% % Adv.
- 2004-2005: 37% % Prof., 23% % Adv.

Grade 11 Literacy Exam, 01-05

- 2001-2002: 36% % Prof., 1% % Adv.
- 2002-2003: 39% % Prof., 2% % Adv.
- 2003-2004: 43% % Prof., 2% % Adv.
- 2004-2005: 44% % Prof., 1% % Adv.
NAEP Math: Catching Up!

NAEP Math Results, 2000-05 (scale 0-500)

- Grade 4 AR
- Grade 8 AR
- Grade 4 National
- Grade 8 National

2000 2003 2005

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NAEP Reading: Just About Par!

NAEP Reading Results, 2002-05 (scale 0-500)

Grade 4 AR
Grade 8 AR
Grade 4 National
Grade 8 National
## No Child Left Behind: AYP

### Arkansas State Baseline Scores for Proficiency and Targets for Increasing Proficiency Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Baseline Scores</th>
<th>Yearly Targets for Increasing Proficiency Levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten - Fifth Grade Literacy</td>
<td>31.8%</td>
<td>5.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten - Fifth Grade Mathematics</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
<td>5.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth - Eighth Grade Literacy</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
<td>6.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth - Eighth Grade Mathematics</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>7.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ninth - Twelfth Grade Literacy</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>6.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ninth - Twelfth Grade Mathematics</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>7.47</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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Key Challenges – Rural Schools

- Delivering Core Classes
- Declining Enrollments / Funding
Core Classes

- 38 Units **MUST** be taught annually
  - Language Arts – 6 units
  - Science – 5 units
  - Mathematics – 6 units
  - Foreign Language – 2 units
  - Fine Arts – 3.5 units
  - Computer Applications – 1 unit
  - Social Studies – 4 units
  - Health and Safety/P.E. – 1.5 units
  - Career and Technical Education – 9 units

Source: Arkansas Accreditation of Schools, 23.04
Rural Schools: High Spending ➔ Low Salaries

High School Enrollment Categories, 2002-03

District Expenditures per Pupil, 2001-02

Average Teacher Salary in District, 2001-02
C. Key Reforms

- What Have We Done?
  - Funding Changes
  - Reorganization
- What Should We Do?
# Funding Changes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue Source</th>
<th>2003-04 Revenue Per Pupil</th>
<th>2003-04 Total Revenue (thousands)</th>
<th>2004-05 Revenue Per Pupil</th>
<th>2004-05 Total Revenue (thousands)</th>
<th>% Change in Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Revenue (foundation)</td>
<td>$3,237</td>
<td>$1,450,000</td>
<td>$3,834</td>
<td>$1,728,000</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Revenue (required 25 mills)</td>
<td>$1,518</td>
<td>$680,000</td>
<td>$1,591</td>
<td>$717,000</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Foundation Revenue</td>
<td>$4,755</td>
<td>$2,129,000</td>
<td>$5,424</td>
<td>$2,445,000</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Revenue (categorical)</td>
<td>$49</td>
<td>$22,000</td>
<td>$422</td>
<td>$190,000</td>
<td>761.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Rev. (other)</td>
<td>$442</td>
<td>$198,000</td>
<td>$440</td>
<td>$198,000</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>State Rev. (capital)</td>
<td>$82</td>
<td>$37,000</td>
<td>$39</td>
<td>$17,000</td>
<td>-52.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Rev (local tax &gt; 25 mills)</td>
<td>$727</td>
<td>$326,000</td>
<td>$845</td>
<td>$381,000</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Federal Revenue</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$448,000</td>
<td>$1,049</td>
<td>$473,000</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Revenue</td>
<td>$642</td>
<td>$28,0007</td>
<td>$684</td>
<td>$308,000</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Revenue</td>
<td>$7,696</td>
<td>$3,447,000</td>
<td>$8,902</td>
<td>$4,014,000</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reorganization

- **Act 60 of the 2003 Special Legislative Session**
  - consolidated districts with enrollments for 2 consecutive years of less than 350 students

- **Compared to the rest of the state, districts consolidated had:**
  - higher rates of poverty (by more than 10 percentage points),
  - higher spending per pupil (by more than $1,500), more students of color,
  - lower teacher salaries (by nearly $5,000), and
  - lower test scores
## Consolidation Effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAEP Test</th>
<th>2003-04</th>
<th>2004-05</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4 Math</td>
<td>Districts</td>
<td>Rest of the State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Involved in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consolidation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n = 99)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>63.7%</td>
<td>65.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 8</td>
<td>30.9%</td>
<td>30.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 8</td>
<td>49.3%</td>
<td>52.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Rural Reforms in Other States

- What strategies are being used around the country to address school funding / equity issues?
- Is Arkansas following national trends in addressing rural issues?
- Are there unique tools that can be used to address rural education issues and funding equity issues?
What should be done next?

- More research to understand changes
- Other ideas being negotiated:
  - More funding reform
  - More reorganization
  - More charter schools
  - More accountability of schools / teachers
  - Pre-packaged programs (e.g. Success for All)
Any Questions?

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