

BUDGET REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Minutes of the 3rd Meeting of the 2023 Interim

August 2, 2023

Call to Order and Roll Call

The 3rd meeting of the Budget Review Subcommittee on Education was held on August 2, 2023, at 10:30 AM in Room 154 of the Capitol Annex. Representative Bobby McCool, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Representative Bobby McCool, Co-Chair; Senator Matthew Deneen, Co-Chair; Representative Kim Banta, Co-Chair; Representative James Tipton, Senator Stephen West, Representative Shane Baker, Representative Tina Bojanowski, Representative Adam Bowling, Representative Derrick Graham, Representative Josie Raymond, and Representative Killian Timoney.

Guests: Dr. Aaron Thompson, President, Council on Postsecondary Education; Lee Nimocks, Senior Vice President and Chief of Staff, Council on Postsecondary Education; Travis Muncie, Executive Director of Data, Research, and Advanced Analytics, Council on Postsecondary Education.

LRC Staff: Seth Dawson, Justin Smith, Ethan Williams, and Amie Elam.

Council on Postsecondary Education Update

Representatives from the Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) were present to discuss postsecondary education goals, an assessment of Kentucky Students' Right to Know website, college affordability, and strategies to engage adult learners.

In response to a question from Representative Timoney, Dr. Thompson stated that the most vital steps to reaching CPE's 60x30 goal are increasing enrollment and completion rates and obtaining more out-of-state students and adult learners. He added that in order for students to be ready to enter the workforce they must be equipped with the necessary employability and technical skills.

In response to a question from Representative Tipton, Dr. Thompson said that the website for Kentucky's Students' Right to Know has been helpful to parents and students; however, not many people are aware of the resource. He said CPE's goal is to increase the visibility and use of the site.

In response to a question from Chair McCool, Dr. Thompson said that campuses do not have control if a student chooses to take out a loan. He added that campuses and financial aid offices can intervene by educating students and ensuring they do not borrow beyond their actual needs.

In response to a question from Representative Graham, Dr. Thompson answered that the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is a complicated form to fill out and that students

and families need to be better educated on the process of completing the form much earlier than junior or senior year of high school.

In response to a question from Representative Tipton, Dr. Thompson said that the FAFSA form is supposed to be simplified prior to December 2023. Dr. Thompson said that school counselors have extreme caseloads and that three out of every five college students has a mental health or behavioral issue. These issues make it difficult for counselors to focus on educating students on issues like financial aid. He added that the total cost of education is not just related to tuition. He said these costs include living expenses, such as housing, transportation, and food. All of these living expenses are reflected in the total unmet need after financial assistance is applied.

In response to a question from Representative Raymond, Dr. Thompson said the Kentucky Education Excellence Scholarship is not keeping up with the needs of students, especially low-income students. He added the importance of looking at merit-based and needs-based state scholarships holistically to see what can be done to meet student needs. Dr. Thompson said that a student's high school GPA is a much better predictor of student readiness than ACT scores. He added that campuses becoming test-optional gives them the ability to be more creative in how they help students once they are accepted.

In response to a question from Representative Tipton, Dr. Thompson said that CPE is focused on expanding competency-based education, especially for the adult learner population. He stated that using three-hours of seat time to award credit is an antiquated system.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the subcommittee, the meeting adjourned at 11:50 A.M.