Southern Region Leadership Conference
Arkansas Legislative Session
2017 and Beyond

Dr. Tony Prothro
Executive Director
ASBA
June 15, 2017
2017 Legislative Session

- Was predicted to be the most difficult session on record for Public Education.
- Would have taken the final deal before the session began
- Better than expected outcomes
- Still a rough session with many controversial and tense events
- Many needs of public schools not met
ASBA Legislative Packet

- Started working on it summer of 2015
- Most of the Bills were successful
- Positive Bills from ASBA in addition to the combined efforts of many entities (finance, voucher, etc...)
ASBA Legislative Package Bills

Arkansas School Boards Association
HB1144 — Automated School Bus Cameras

- Addresses exterior mounted automated bus cameras capturing traffic flow during bus stops
- Intent is to help reduce school bus passing violations
- Requires a school district or charter school to provide automated bus camera footage, if available, to law enforcement upon request
- Allows that evidence to be used by law enforcement or the courts in prosecution of those violations
HB1523 — Board Vacancy for Failure to Train

- Creates a vacancy if a board member fails to receive the required training within the time period specified in statute (district no longer received probationary citation)
- Requires superintendent to prepare a report for the regular January board meeting that reflects the training hour status of each member
- Member(s) not having required training have 30 days to correct
- Member not allowed to participate in official board business until issue corrected
- Exception for extreme medical issues or military
- If not corrected, vacancy filled in same manner as other vacancies
HB1552 — Amends Lifetime Teaching License

- Allows educator to apply for a lifetime teaching license at any age if requirements are met
- Educator must have retired from active teaching under:
  1) §§ 24-7-701 – 60 years old with at least 5 years experience or
  2) §§ 24-7-702 – any age with at least 25 years of experience or
  3) §§ 24-7-704 – any age with at least 5 years experience and meeting disability requirements
- Upon application for and receipt of lifetime license, educator no longer must reapply or pay licensure fee
- Also removes PD requirement for holder of lifetime license prior to re-entry into the profession
HB1632 — Verification of Proper Zone

- Intent is to ensure board candidates:
  1) Identify the proper position number on the petition
  2) Live in the proper zone to be a qualified candidate for the open position

- Clerk will not accept petition for candidacy unless both above requirements are met

- Addresses same issues with write-in candidates
Other Topics of Discussion

- School Funding (about 1% foundation funding increase)
- Unsuccessful voucher bill
- Now have a charter school facility takeover law
Other Topics of Discussion (Continued)

- PLSB-like entity for school board accountability
- Bill introduced in 2017
- Might be feasible in lieu of recall votes
- Social media has changed the landscape
- It may be a necessary component in today’s environment
School Board Elections

- School Boards now elected in Primary or General Election
- Whole new group of people voting for school board positions
- Message may be lost when mixed with other candidates
- Increased costs associated with higher turnout
- Must get message conveyed to all voters
- What is your tagline?
2019 Session

- The session will be determined by who sits in the seats at the Capitol and the intensity of lobbying efforts.
Report Card of Votes

- Determine how your current legislator voted on important public education issues.
- How did they measure up?
- What will you do in preparation for the 2018 elections?
2018 General Elections

- Meet with potential candidates in the interim. Get on record their stance on public education policy.
- Get behind those candidates who you believe will support strong public education.
- Hold them to their promises.
“Those who choose to not take part in the political process are subsequently governed by those who do”
“In any moment of decision, the best thing you can do is the right thing, the next best thing is the wrong thing, and the worst thing you can do is nothing.”

Theodore Roosevelt
Thank you!

Dr. Tony Prothro