



STATE OF ARKANSAS

House of Representatives



NEWSLETTER FROM REP. Tara Shephard DISTRICT 79

February 28, 2023

DAILY SUMMARY FOR TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2023

On Tuesday, the House Education Committee began hearing testimony regarding SB294. This bill creates the LEARNS Act.

This bill outlines several educational reforms including raising the minimum teacher salary to \$50,000 a year and raising current teacher salaries by \$2,000.

SB294 requires that students be reading at a 3rd-grade level before advancing to the 4th grade. It also calls for 120 reading coaches to be deployed statewide and supplemental educational services for students struggling to read.

The bill creates the Education Freedom Account. In a three-year phased-in approach, the account would offer universal school choice to all parents by the 2025-2026 school year.

It also offers high school students the option of a career-ready diploma and requires high school students to complete 75 hours of community service before graduation.

The committee continued to hear public comments on the bill into the evening, but will not take any action Tuesday.

The House will reconvene on Wednesday at 1:30 p.m. The House Education Committee is expected to convene again 15 minutes upon adjournment of the House.