

**MINUTES OF THE
EDUCATION INTERIM COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, November 9, 2005 – 8:00 a.m. – Room W135 House Building

Members Present:

Sen. Howard A. Stephenson, Senate Chair
Rep. Margaret Dayton, House Chair
Sen. Patrice M. Arent
Sen. D. Chris Buttars
Sen. Karen Hale
Sen. Mark B. Madsen
Sen. David L. Thomas
Rep. Ron Bigelow
Rep. LaVar Christensen
Rep. John Dougall
Rep. James A. Ferrin
Rep. James R. Gowans
Rep. David L. Hogue
Rep. Kory M. Holdaway
Rep. Gregory H. Hughes

Rep. Bradley T. Johnson
Rep. Carol Spackman Moss
Rep. Merlynn T. Newbold
Rep. LaWanna "Lou" Shurtliff
Rep. Stephen H. Urquhart

Members Absent:

Rep. Duane E. Bourdeaux

Staff Present:

Ms. Constance C. Steffen, Policy Analyst
Mr. Phillip V. Dean, Policy Analyst
Mr. Dee S Larsen, Associate General Counsel
Ms. Glenda S. Whitney, Legislative Secretary

Note: A list of others present, a copy of related materials, and an audio recording of the meeting can be found at www.le.utah.gov.

1. Committee Business

Chair Stephenson called the meeting to order at 8:15 a.m.

Rep. Dayton recognized and thanked the staff secretary's son, SPC Christopher Whitney for his service in Iraq during the past year. SPC Whitney will return home on Monday, November 14, 2005.

MOTION: Rep. Hogue moved to approve the minutes of the October 19, 2005 meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Sen. Buttars, Sen. Thomas, Rep. Gowans, Rep. Moss, and Rep. Urquhart were absent for the vote.

Supt. Patti Harrington, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, updated the Committee on the "No Child Left Behind" waiver requests. She spoke about her meeting with Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings and indicated her willingness to extend flexibility to Utah. Supt. Harrington noted that the federal Department of Education has stated it will withhold monies from schools, if an SEA (State Education Agency) does not impose consequences on schools in which English language learners fail to make adequate progress.

2. K-3 Reading Improvement Program

Mr. Paul Kohler, Director of the Policy Center at WestEd, and Mr. Reino Makkonen, Research Assistant, WestEd, made a presentation on WestEd's analysis of the K-3 Reading Improvement Program. At the request of State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Patti Harrington, WestEd conducted an independent analysis of the program. The analysis was not funded by the State Board of Education. Copies of their

presentation; their report, "WestEd Analysis of Utah's K3 Reading Improvement Program;" and an executive summary of the report were distributed to committee members.

Mr. Makkonen noted that the report describes the implementation of the K-3 Reading Improvement Program along with first-year results. WestEd looked at the year-end Annual Reading Proficiency Reports provided by participating Utah school districts and charter schools as well as reports provided by the USOE (Utah State Office of Education).

Supt. Harrington responded to questions regarding the report on the K-3 Reading Improvement Program.

3. Consider Proposed Legislation, "Reading Requirements for Student Advancement"

Rep. Karen Morgan, distributed and reviewed proposed legislation, "Reading Requirements for Student Advancement." She noted that the bill requires that pupils in first through third grades read at grade level prior to advancing to the next grade, with certain exceptions. She introduced Mr. Dale Porter, Principal, Dixie Downs Elementary School, St. George, Utah and Ms. Holly Langton, parent, who assisted her in the presentation.

Mr. Porter discussed concerns with students not achieving at grade level and not meeting the required standards. He discussed mediation and intervention in the schools and explained the steps they took in working with students and parents in meeting the needs of each child. He spoke in support of the legislation.

Ms. Langton expressed concern over her daughter's personal experience with not acquiring reading and writing skills in the elementary years. She spoke in support of the legislation, noting that this proposed program might have caught her daughter's needs at an early age.

MOTION: Rep. Holdaway moved to continue with the next agenda item. The motion passed unanimously with Sen. Buttars, Sen. Thomas, Rep. Dougall, Rep. Johnson, Rep. Newbold, and Rep. Urquhart absent for the vote.

4. Report of Governor's Working Group on Student Achievement

Mr. Tim Bridgewater, Chair, Working Group on Student Achievement, asked those in the audience who participated with the working group to stand and be recognized for their effort and involvement. He made a presentation, "Governor Huntsman's Working Group on Student Achievement," and distributed copies of the presentation. He reported on the working group's findings and reviewed recommendations to improve the academic achievement of disadvantaged students.

Ms. Cathy Ortega, Superintendent, Ogden School District, discussed how implementing the recommendations would have an impact on student achievement. She indicated that all students can be successful and indicated if high standards are set for students, they can achieve and will achieve.

Dr. Karen Johnson, Assistant Professor of Education, University of Utah, addressed the research that has been done in certain districts. She said demographics in many school districts are changing. She said there is a need to bring in faculty that is reflective of a student population.

Rep. Dayton stated another point of view. She noted that she was frustrated with the implication that a good teacher has to be a certain color. She said we should judge people on their abilities and not the color of their skin, whether they are teachers or students. The role of our schools is not to do social engineering, it is to find the best qualified teachers regardless of their gender or color and put them where they can do the most good. She stated her goal is not to focus on peoples' differences, but how we can all work together to help students achieve.

5. Highly Impacted Schools

Sen. Stephenson distributed and reviewed a handout, "Highly Impacted Schools -- Preliminary Proposal." He explained that the proposal focuses on improving student achievement in highly impacted schools, including full day kindergarten and providing teacher incentives.

6. Consider Proposed Legislation, "Utah Basic Skills Competency Test Alternatives"

Mr. Larsen distributed and reviewed draft legislation, "Utah Basic Skills Competency Test Alternatives." He explained that the bill provides alternatives to the Utah Basic Skills Competency Test for adult education students who want to attain a regular high school diploma.

Mr. Murriy Meszaros, USOE, commented on GED (General Educational Development) testing and indicated that it is more rigorous than the Utah Basic Skills Competency Test.

Supt. Harrington commented on the proposed legislation and noted that the State Board of Education has not taken a position on the bill at this time.

Ms. Mary Shumway, USOE, spoke to the issue and noted questions to consider for testing. She indicated that the GED would be more rigorous and appreciated the flexibility with the GED. She explained that the Utah Basic Skills Competency Test is offered only two times a year and suggested offering the test on demand for adult education students. She introduced Ms. Marty Kelly as the new adult education director.

Ms. Kelly distributed a handout, "Fact Sheet Utah Adult Education," and noted that their mission is to empower individuals to become self-sufficient with skills necessary for future employment and personal success.

7. Consider Proposed Legislation, "Utah Basic Skills Competency Test Remediation"

Sen. Stephenson distributed draft legislation, "Utah Basic Skills Competency Test Remediation."

Ms. Steffen reviewed the draft legislation. She explained that the bill creates the Basic Skills Education Scholarship Program which provides scholarships for supplemental instruction to students who have not passed the Utah Basic Skills Competency Test.

MOTION: Rep Dayton moved to delete "scholarship" and insert "stipend" throughout the bill. The motion passed unanimously with Sen. Buttars, Sen. Thomas, Rep. Moss, Rep. Shurtliff, and Rep. Urquhart absent for the vote.

8. Transfer of Credits from Accredited Educational Institutions

Sen. Buttars distributed and reviewed proposed legislation, "Secondary School Amendments." He explained that the bill establishes requirements for acceptance of credits awarded by accredited schools and the Electronic High School and establishes requirements for the Electronic High School.

Supt. Harrington responded to questions on transfer of credits earned at accredited educational institutions.

MOTION: Sen. Buttars moved to adopt "Secondary School Amendments" as a committee bill.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION: Rep. Dougall moved to continue with the next agenda item. The motion passed with Sen. Stephenson, Rep. Dayton, Rep. Christensen, Rep. Ferrin, and Rep. Johnson voting in opposition. Sen. Madsen, Sen. Thomas, Rep. Gowans, and Rep. Urquhart were absent for the vote.

9. State Board of Education Report

Chair Stephenson noted that S.B. 154, "Public Education Amendments," enacted in the 2003 General Session, directed the State Board of Education to study various ways of improving public education and to make reports to the Committee in 2003, 2004, and 2005.

Supt. Harrington distributed and reviewed the report, "S.B. 154 - Passed by the 2003 Legislature - Status of Requirements and Assignments." She reported on the requirements in place for improving public education.

10. Teacher Recruitment and Retention

Mr. Ray Timothy, State Board of Education, distributed and reviewed "Educator Quality, Recruiting and Keeping Teachers." He reported on the State Board of Education's study and recommendations regarding enhancing teacher recruitment and retention.

11. Other Items / Adjourn

MOTION: Rep. Dayton moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously with Sen. Madsen, Sen. Thomas, Rep. Christensen, Rep. Gowans, Rep. Hughes, and Rep. Urquhart absent for the vote. Chair Stephenson adjourned the meeting at 11:58 a.m.