

**MINUTES OF THE  
LOCAL ISSUES TASK FORCE**

Tuesday, August 21, 2007 – 2:00 p.m. – Room W110 House Building

**Members Present:**

Sen. Carlene M. Walker, Co-chair  
Rep. Aaron Tilton, Co-chair  
Sen. Scott D. McCoy  
Sen. Howard A. Stephenson  
Rep. John Dougall  
Rep. Janice M. Fisher  
Rep. Julie Fisher  
Rep. Gregory H. Hughes  
Rep. Todd E. Kiser  
Rep. Karen W. Morgan

**Staff Present:**

Joseph Wade, Policy Analyst  
Phillip V. Dean, Policy Analyst  
Robert H. Rees, Associate General Counsel  
Angela D. Oakes, Associate General Counsel  
Wendy Bangerter, Legislative Secretary

**Note:** A list of others present, copy of related materials, and an audio recording of the meeting can be found at [www.le.utah.gov](http://www.le.utah.gov).

**1. Committee Business**

Chair Tilton called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

Chair Tilton announced the revision to the agenda. He explained the rules for the public comment portion of the meeting.

**3. Consideration of draft legislation "Interlocal Agreement Participant Requirements for Creation of New School District"**

Rep. Karen Morgan explained 2008 General Session, H.B. 1002, "Interlocal Agreement Participant Requirements for Creation of New School District."

**MOTION:** Rep. Dougall moved to favorably recommend 2008 General Session, H.B. 1002, "Interlocal Agreement Participant Requirements for Creation of New School District" and to adopt it as a committee bill. The motion passed with Sen. Stephenson voting in opposition.

**2. Consideration of Legislation Regarding Equalization of Funding for School Capital Outlay in Counties of the First Class**

Rep. Hughes reviewed changes made to draft legislation, "School Capital Outlay Equalization," since the August 14, 2007 joint meeting with the Education Interim Committee.

Handout "First Class County Equalization Option - .0009 rate" as prepared by the Office of Legislation Research and General Counsel was also distributed to the task force members.

Mr. Dave Buhler, Salt Lake City Council, distributed and reviewed a draft resolution opposing equalization of funding for school districts.

Mr. Doug Nelson, Salt Lake City Board of Education, spoke in opposition to the draft legislation. He

reminded the task force members that it takes funding to rebuild schools just as it does to build new ones.

Mr. Eric Jergensen, Salt Lake City Council, expressed the need to study this issue further before making a decision.

Mr. Mark Maxfield, Salt Lake City School Board, commented on the WPU, which equalizes funding. He reviewed some of the specific needs Salt Lake School District has that other districts do not. He is not opposed to equalization, but feels the need to study how they would handle the impact.

Sen. McCoy reviewed several options for equalizing funding.

Mr. Mckell Withers, Salt Lake City School District, spoke in favor of a statewide equalization program. He distributed and reviewed "What Does County Equalization Mean for Salt Lake City?" He encouraged the Legislature to not take action on this issue during the special session.

Mr. Stephen Ronnenkamp, Superintendent of Granite School District, encouraged the Legislature to study equalization further. He noted that this bill is just a redistribution of funds, but raises no new capital funds. He expressed concern that a decision is being made quickly in a special session. He feels there is time to study the issue further and to create and fund a better statewide bill.

Sen. Stephenson questioned why the state couldn't equalize the property tax just as is done with the income tax.

Rep. Janice Fisher spoke in favor of further study of the equalization issue before a decision is made.

Ms. Heather Bennett, Salt Lake City School Board, spoke in favor of equalization and offered her services to work on equalization statewide. She feels this bill does not accomplish equalization.

Task Force members asked clarifying questions of the speakers.

Mr. Steve Peterson, School Board's Association and Superintendent's Association, addressed a legal question from the Utah Constitution indicating that political subdivisions of the state can access and collect taxes for their own purposes, not for others' purposes.

Ms. Krista Dunn, Murray City Council, expressed concern for the elderly population and the impact of higher taxes to them. She spoke in favor of increased funding to all districts to take care of growth, not just moving money around from district to district.

Sen. McCoy stated that equalization for equalization's sake will not close the gap between the haves and the have nots. He also stated that increased funding is needed.

Seeing no further comments, Chair Tilton closed the public hearing. He informed the audience that this issue is not new, that it has been discussed for several years. He stated that the task force has been meeting this year since May to learn about and address this issue.

The task force members discussed specifics of the bill.

Sen. Stephenson explained an amendment he will be presenting at tomorrow's special session. He distributed and explained "Distribution of Property Tax Base, Enrollment Growth, and Total Enrollment" and "Taxable Value per Enrolled Student." Both showed the disparity from county to county in assessed valuation per student and student growth and enrollment. He addressed the need to have a safety net in place if the district split ballot goes forward.

#### **4. Adjournment**

**MOTION:** Sen. McCoy moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Tilton adjourned the meeting at 3:55 p.m.