

**MINUTES OF THE
EDUCATION INTERIM COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, October 17, 2007 – 9:00 a.m. – Room W135 House Building

Members Present:

Sen. Howard A. Stephenson, Senate Chair
Sen. Margaret Dayton, Senate Vice Chair
Rep. Gregory H. Hughes, House Chair
Sen. Lyle W. Hillyard
Sen. Patricia W. Jones
Sen. Mark B. Madsen
Sen. Ross I. Romero
Rep. Sylvia S. Andersen
Rep. Craig A. Frank
Rep. Kory M. Holdaway
Rep. Bradley G. Last
Rep. Rebecca D. Lockhart
Rep. Carol Spackman Moss
Rep. Merlynn T. Newbold
Rep. LaWanna "Lou" Shurtliff

Rep. Kenneth W. Sumsion
Rep. Stephen H. Urquhart
Rep. Mark A. Wheatley

Members Absent:

Sen. Curtis S. Bramble
Rep. Brad L. Dee
Rep. James R. Gowans
Rep. Patrick L. Painter

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 9:07 a.m.

MOTION: Rep. Frank moved to approve the minutes of the September 19, 2007 meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Rep. Urquhart was absent for the vote.

2. Report of the New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce

Mr. William E. Brock, former U.S. Senator from Tennessee, U.S. Trade Representative, Secretary of Labor, and member of the New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, discussed the report "Tough Choices, Tough Times," which was distributed in the mailing packet. The report is a two-year study by the Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, which was formed to examine the challenges of preparing the workforce for an increasingly competitive global economy.

The Commission's recommendations include the following:

- (1) provide early childhood education to assure that children are ready for school;
- (2) increase teacher salaries to recruit the best and brightest college graduates;
- (3) offer different benefit options to teachers, including different retirement programs;
- (4) contract out the operation of public schools, and compensate schools based on performance;
- (5) give additional support to disadvantaged students; and
- (6) use standardized diagnostic tests to assess the progress of students.

Mr. Ronn Robinson and Mr. Ray Uhalde, National Center on Education and the Economy, were available to respond to committee members' questions.

3. Consider Proposed Legislation, "Mathematics, Science, and Technology Education Task Force"

Sen. Howard Stephenson referred to the 2008 General Session draft legislation, "Mathematics, Science, and Technology Education Task Force," which was distributed in the mailing packet. He noted that the bill creates a task force to review issues related to mathematics education. Mr. Larsen gave an overview of the bill.

Sen. Dayton distributed and commented on the handouts, "Math Problem - A Primer on Utah's Math Standards Issue with Appendix (Second Addition)," and "Singapore vs. Utah."

State Superintendent Patti Harrington commented on the number of students taking remedial courses. She reported that 80 percent of recent Utah high school graduates enrolled in Utah colleges are taking college level math courses, and 20 percent are taking remedial math courses. She acknowledged that math CRT (Criterion-Referenced Test) scores are not adequate, and that math education in grades 4 - 6 especially needs to improve.

Rep. Lockhart suggested amending the draft legislation that creates a two-year task force to a one-year task force.

MOTION: Rep. Newbold moved to support the task force concept, and to bring the bill back for further consideration at the next meeting. The motion passed with Sen. Romero, Rep. Moss, and Rep. Wheatley voting in opposition. Rep. Anderson, Rep. Shurtliff, and Rep. Urquhart were absent for the vote.

4. Consider Proposed Legislation, "Students with Disabilities Diploma Requirements"

Sen. Howard Stephenson asked Ms. Steffen to distribute and review the 2008 General Session draft legislation, "Students with Disabilities Diploma Requirements (Version 3)."

Ms. Steffen noted that the bill addresses requirements to pass a basic skills competency test to obtain a high school diploma.

Supt. Harrington responded to committee members' questions on the draft legislation.

Sen. Patricia Jones explained the purpose of the bill.

Ms. Jan Ferre, Legislative Coalition for People with Disabilities, asked to have an opportunity to view the draft legislation.

Sen. Jones requested that she and other legislators continue to work on the bill to prepare it for the 2008 General Session.

5. State School Fund Report

Chair Stephenson noted that, as required by statute, the Committee will receive the annual report on the State School Fund.

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Mr. Ed Alter, State Treasurer, and Mr. Richard Ellis, Deputy State Treasurer, gave an overview of the report, "State School Fund Report - Fiscal Year 2007," which was distributed in the mailing packet.

6. Other Items / Adjourn

Sen. Stephenson identified proposed legislation that the Committee may hear in the November meeting.

MOTION: Sen. Dayton moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously with Sen. Hillyard, Sen. Jones, Sen. Romero, Rep. Hughes, Rep. Moss, Rep. Shurtliff, and Rep. Wheatley absent for the vote.

Chair Stephenson adjourned the meeting at 11:52 p.m.