

**MINUTES OF THE
EDUCATION INTERIM COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, September 21, 2011 – 8:30 a.m. – Room 445 State Capitol

Members Present:

Sen. Howard A. Stephenson, Senate Chair
Rep. Bill Wright, House Chair
Sen. Lyle W. Hillyard
Sen. Karen W. Morgan
Sen. Wayne L. Niederhauser
Sen. Aaron Osmond
Sen. Jerry W. Stevenson
Sen. Daniel W. Thatcher
Rep. Johnny Anderson
Rep. Patrice M. Arent
Rep. LaVar Christensen
Rep. Steven Eliason
Rep. Gregory H. Hughes
Rep. John G. Mathis

Rep. Kay L. McIff
Rep. Carol Spackman Moss
Rep. Merlynn T. Newbold
Rep. Jim Nielson
Rep. Val L. Peterson
Rep. Marie H. Poulson
Rep. Kenneth W. Sumsion

Staff Present:

Ms. Allison M. Nicholson, Policy Analyst
Ms. Constance C. Steffen, Policy Analyst
Ms. Angela Oakes Stallings, Associate General Counsel
Ms. Debra Hale, 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 Wright called the meeting to order at 8:45 a.m.

Ms. Jackie Evans, Research Director, Utah Taxpayers Association, informed the Committee that the Utah Taxpayers Association's annual report on school district spending is available online at www.utahtaxpayers.org.

MOTION: Rep. Arent moved to approve the minutes of the July 20, 2011 meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Rep. McIff, Rep. Newbold, Rep. Peterson, and Rep. Sumsion were absent for the vote.

2. Utah Futures Steering Committee Report

Mr. Terry C. Savage, Project Manager, Utah Futures Steering Committee (UFS Committee), explained the governor established the UFS Committee to make recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the education and career-planning website, www.utahfutures.org. He referred to a handout, "UtahFutures, Legislative Briefing, 21 Sept 11," that includes background information on and a time line for the UFS Committee. Mr. Savage also distributed a report, "UtahFutures.org Dashboard Report, July, 2011," which contains data on usage of the Utah Futures website.

Mr. Savage stated that the UFS Committee is working on collecting information in various ways, including conducting three sets of focus groups with the primary purpose of discovering the current expectations for the Utah Futures website. The UFS Committee will perform a gap analysis to determine what is available on the Utah Futures website, identify desired improvements, and determine how to best fill the gap between the two.

Dr. William Sederburg, Higher Education Commissioner, and Chair, Utah Futures Steering Committee, expressed enthusiasm for carrying the Utah Futures website to the next level.

3. Utah Schools Data Portal

Dr. Judy Park, Associate Superintendent, Utah State Office of Education (USOE), highlighted four major data projects. She distributed and discussed the handout "Utah eTranscript and Record Exchange (UTREx), Utah Data Alliance (UDA)."

Mr. John Jesse, Director of Assessment and Accountability, USOE, described the public education data gateway, which has four basic options: (1) school report cards; (2) complete school profiles, including public and private schools; (3) school comparisons; and (4) rankings of schools by selected criteria.

Dr. Larry Shumway, State Superintendent, noted that providing data is an expensive and time-consuming process for school districts and schools.

4. Calculation of High School Graduation Rates

Dr. Judy Park, Associate Superintendent, USOE, gave a slide presentation explaining how graduation rates are calculated by various entities and why there are differences in the reported rates. Dr. Park distributed a copy of her slide presentation "Graduation Rates" and a report on Utah's 2010 graduation and dropout rate "2010 Cohort Graduation and Dropout Rate Report."

5. Status Report: School Grading

Dr. Park updated the Committee on progress being made to develop recommendations for a school grading system. Legislation enacted in the 2011 General Session created a school grading system in which schools receive a grade of A, B, C, D, or F based on the academic proficiency and progress of a school's students. The State Board of Education was directed to make recommendations to the Committee on modifications to the school grading system. Dr. Park stated the State Board of Education will make recommendations to the Committee in November.

Supt. Shumway suggested that rather than pondering what consequences should be imposed on failing schools, it may be more productive to determine how failing schools can be assisted.

6. Report: Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind

Mr. Steve W. Noyce, Superintendent, Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (USDB), discussed a report that was sent to committee members in the mailing packet, "Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind, Annual Report for the Legislative Education Interim Committee, September 2011." Mr. Noyce also discussed a handout, "USDB Enrollment by Service Pattern," which shows the enrollment of USDB by the type of service received and grade level.

7. Annual Reports

Committee members received in the mailing packet annual reports on the State School Fund, foreign gifts to higher education institutions, the use of capital outlay increment monies, and the transfer of surplus technology equipment to schools. The annual reports were not discussed in the meeting.

8. Education Governance

Sen. Stuart Reid discussed a proposal to amend the Utah Constitution to modify the governance of the public education and higher education systems. He expressed concern that under the present system numerous entities share authority for governing education, resulting in no one assuming responsibility for educational results. Sen. Reid proposes that the governor be vested with greater authority and oversight of public and higher education.

9. Public Educator Evaluations

Due to time constraints, this item was not heard.

10. Other Items/Adjourn

MOTION: Sen. Thatcher moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously, with Sen. Hillyard, Sen. Neiderhauser, Rep. Anderson, Rep. Hughes, Rep. McIff, and Rep. Sumsion absent for the vote.

Chair Wright adjourned the meeting at 12:05 p.m.