

**MINUTES OF THE
EDUCATION INTERIM COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, September 19, 2012 – 2:00 p.m. – Room 30 House Building

Members Present:

Senate Chair Howard A. Stephenson
House Chair Francis D. Gibson
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. John G. Mathis
Rep. Carol Spackman Moss
Rep. Merlynn T. Newbold
Rep. Jim Nielson
Rep. Val L. Peterson
Rep. Marie H. Poulson
Rep. Kenneth W. Sumsion

Members Absent:

Rep. Gregory H. Hughes
Rep. Kay L. McIff
Rep. Bill Wright

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 Stephenson called the meeting to order at 2:40 p.m.

MOTION: Sen. Osmond moved to approve the minutes of the August 15, 2012, meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Sen. Hillyard, Rep. Arent, Rep. Christensen, Rep. Newbold, and Rep. Peterson were absent for the vote.

2. Students at Risk of Academic Failure

Ms. Steffen briefed the committee on 2012 General Session S.B. 151, “Students at Risk of Academic Failure,” which directs the committee to conduct a study of programs to assist students at risk. She reviewed an Education Policy Brief regarding these programs, which had been included in the committee’s mailing packet.

Ms. Glenna Gallo, Director of Special Education, State Office of Education (USOE), distributed “Carson Smith Special Needs Scholarship,” which reviewed one of the programs to assist students at risk of academic failure. Ms. Gallo reviewed data on this program regarding program funding, the number of applications for scholarships, and the number of scholarships awarded annually.

Ms. Lynda Simmons, former principal and school district employee, described her experiences with the Carson Smith program from the time it was first implemented. She suggested there should be support, training, and rewards for those making a positive difference in the lives of students at risk.

Ms. Judi Clark, Executive Director, Parents for Choice in Education, spoke regarding her organization's support for the Carson Smith program and how the organization works with parents whose children have unique learning issues and request access to academic assistance. She stated that there is a lot of interest in the Carson Smith scholarships among the families with whom she works.

3. High Quality Preschool

Sen. Osmond provided a visual presentation "High Quality Preschool Project" describing the impact of the Granite School District (GSD) project as a strategy to address school readiness and academic achievement for at-risk children. He recognized the concerns of the project and addressed them in the presentation. Sen. Osmond also distributed a handout "Public Education: Special Education Analysis" containing a comparison of total statewide special education average daily membership and total statewide expenditures from FY 2006 to FY 2011.

Dr. Mark Innocenti, Director of Research and Evaluation, Center for Persons with Disabilities, Utah State University, distributed a handout "Summary of the Early Reading First (ERF) Study in the Granite School District (GSD)." He also distributed the following charts: "Granite School District: Early Reading First Evaluation" illustrating the increase in the average receptive and expressive abilities in students who had participated in the GSD program, "GSD Preschool Services - PPVT Standard Scores - ERF Student Group" illustrating an increase in student scores before and after the GSD program, and "2011 3rd Grade CRT Scores" comparing education proficiency by third grade of GSD students who had attended standard preschool and GSD students who had attended the high quality preschool.

Ms. Brenda S. VanGorder, Director of Preschool Services, GSD, referred to Sen. Osmond's visual presentation by describing the components of a high quality preschool. She informed the committee that GSD's Title 1 preschool program has been successful in closing the achievement gap between high-income and low-income students. She noted that children who are at risk for school failure and who receive high quality early education can overcome potential special education eligibility and remain in general education, resulting in significant savings for the state.

Sen. Osmond reviewed draft legislation "High Quality Preschool Project" (2013FL-0027-003), which was included in the mailing packet, and detailed the proposed intentions of the bill.

4. Report: UPSTART

Dr. Claudia Miner, UPSTART Program Director, Waterford Institute, referred to "UPSTART Outreach Activities," included in the mailing packet, giving an annual report on the UPSTART pilot program, a home-based educational technology school readiness program. She also distributed "Thank You for UPSTART!" a book of thank-you notes from parents whose children were participants in the 2012 UPSTART program.

5. Report: School Grading System

Dr. Judy Park, Associate Superintendent, USOE, distributed an overview of the “Utah Comprehensive Accountability System.”

Sen. Niederhauser stated that the School Grading System study is still in process and that the committee received an update in the August interim meeting.

6. Report: Teacher Quality/Public Education Employment Reform

Dr. Sydnee Dickson, Director of Teaching and Learning, USOE, distributed “USOE - Educator Licensing Data” and discussed a visual presentation “Educator Evaluation: Improving Instruction in Utah Schools.” She reported on teacher quality in the state and how the Utah State Board of Education is implementing educator and administrator evaluations, as required by 2012 General Session S.B. 64, “Public Education Employment Reform.” She listed the Utah State Board of Education’s goal of more rigorous performance standards for all educators and administrators in educational leadership, effective teaching, and student performance.

7. Retirement of State Superintendent and Discussion of Replacement Procedures

Chair Stephenson distributed and reviewed two handouts “Superintendent Hire: Slow it down & do it right” and “Utah Code 53A-3-301. Superintendent of schools – Appointment – Qualifications – Term – Compensation.”

Ms. Debra G. Roberts, Chair, USOE, described the importance, duties, responsibilities, and obligations of a state superintendent. She added that USOE’s plan is to appoint a new superintendent in time to interact with Superintendent Shumway before he leaves office and then to interact with legislators and represent the state’s educational priorities at the 2013 General Session.

Dr. Larry K. Shumway, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, expressed his honor in serving the state education system.

8. U-PASS Reporting Requirements

Ms. Steffen distributed “School Performance Report Data Reported for the 2010-11 School Year” and reviewed the reporting requirements and school-, district-, and state-level data of various Utah Code cites.

Dr. Park distributed and reviewed a handout “School Performance Report - Components - Annual Filing - 53A-3-602.5,” which included Utah Code cites, dates and reports, links to those reports, and comments on the reports.

Superintendent Shumway stated that USOE’s intent is to make this information more transparent and accessible to the public. He asked the committee to consider the high costs of these requirements and which data are the highest priority for being able to make good policies for education.

Chair Stephenson distributed “Utah State Literacy Improvement Efforts” and “The Nation’s Report Card - Reading - 2011 State Snapshot Report” for Utah public schools, Grades 4 and 8.

Mr. Myron Mickelsen, Superintendent, Sevier County School District, commented on the progress and successes of computer-adaptive testing in his district.

9. Reports

Since all reports were included in the mailing packet, Chair Stephenson encouraged the committee to review them and notify staff members with questions or comments.

10. Federal Funds Sequestration

Mr. Bruce Williams, Associate Superintendent, USOE, distributed “Implications of Federal Sequestration on Public Schools” and discussed the implications of sequestration on state public education and funding.

Mr. Spencer Jenkins, Assistant Commissioner, Public Affairs, Utah System of Higher Education, distributed “Potential Impact of Federal Sequestration on Higher Education in Utah” and defined sequestration and its potential impact on higher education funding.

11. Other Items / Adjourn

MOTION: Rep. Anderson moved to adjourn the meeting.

In the absence of a quorum, Chair Stephenson ruled the meeting adjourned at 6:22 p.m.