

**MINUTES OF THE
EDUCATION TASK FORCE**

Tuesday, August 27, 2013 – 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. – Room 445 Capitol Building

Members Present:

President Wayne L. Niederhauser, Senate Chair
Speaker Rebecca D. Lockhart, House Chair
Sen. Gene Davis
Sen. Patricia W. Jones
Sen. Aaron Osmond
Sen. Stuart C. Reid
Sen. Howard A. Stephenson
Sen. Stephen H. Urquhart
Rep. Jack R. Draxler
Rep. Francis D. Gibson
Rep. Keith Grover

Rep. Bradley G. Last
Rep. Carol Spackman Moss
Rep. Jennifer M. Seelig

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. Task Force Business

Chair Niederhauser called the meeting to order at 1:15 p.m.

MOTION: Speaker Lockhart moved to approve the minutes of the June 26, 2013, meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Sen. Davis, Sen. Jones, Sen. Stephenson, Rep. Gibson, and Rep. Moss were absent for the vote.

2. Review of Reported Elements of Student Achievement

Ms. Steffen reviewed the document "Elements Contributing to High Student Achievement," which was included in the packet. She explained that the document contains the comments made by various education stakeholders at the June 26 meeting and is grouped by the elements identified. She also noted that the list is organized in the order of the most commonly stated elements, followed by the order of the presenters.

Mr. Kory M. Holdaway, Associate Director, Utah Education Association, stated that, although he believes there is no silver bullet to accomplish high student achievement, teacher quality is key, and funding professional development of teachers would make a difference. He thanked the task force for its continued discussion on the matter.

Ms. Melissa Marler, Focus Ogden, stated that she would like to see subcategories of the elements contributing to high student achievement as well as useable solutions.

Dr. Martell Menlove, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, reiterated the commitment of the Utah State Office of Education to improve education for Utah's children and collaborate with the task force to do so. He also committed to provide any needed data that would assist in this process.

Ms. Christie Moore, parent, Utah County, stressed that parents engaged with their children need their rights protected in order to have the greatest effect on their children. She expressed her concern with some people's goal of closing the achievement gap by providing at-risk children with early childhood education and focusing on at-risk students at the expense of other students.

The task force discussed ways to utilize stakeholder comments in shaping future action and agenda items.

MOTION: Sen. Reid moved to empower the chairs to identify individuals and groups and write a letter inviting them to meet and come to a consensus on prioritizing the most important in-classroom elements affecting student achievement, and report back to the Task Force. The motion passed unanimously. Sen. Urquhart was absent for the vote.

3. Education Governance

Ms. Stallings reviewed a handout "Public Education Governance Structures" in which she described the constitutional and statutory provisions related to governance of public education, including the procedures and duties of various entities involved in public education in the state.

Mr. Michael Clara, member, Board of Education, Salt Lake City School District, expressed his frustrations with his local school board and the district superintendent. He described problems he had in a meeting of the board. He concluded that Utah's local school boards must assume their leadership roles more assertively and with greater dedication and be more accountable as guardians of educational excellence and equity.

Ms. Jodee C. Sundberg, Vice President, Board of Education, Alpine School District, gave her perspective on her district's superintendent and the role of her local school board members. She explained how the Utah School Boards Association trains new school board members.

Ms. Nicholson reviewed and discussed information from the documents "State Education Governance Models (2013)" and "State Education Governance," which were included in the packet, including various models of governance in other states, recent changes to governance models, and how each state's own individual characteristics and history have most likely shaped their current governance model.

Ms. Stallings resumed her presentation by referring to the document "Higher Education Governance Structures," which lists statutory and constitutional provisions related to governance, including the procedures and duties of various entities in higher education in the state.

Ms. Nicholson referred to a document on page 37 of the packet, "The Authority of State Boards of Postsecondary Education," and discussed various models of governance of higher education in the states. She stated that there is probably not one ideal model of governance for every state and that each state must evaluate its goals and needs and determine the correct governance structure that fits those goals and needs.

Ms. Gayle Ruzicka, President, Utah Eagle Forum, stressed her concern that members of the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) are not elected by the populace but chosen by the governor to be on the ballot. She also stressed the need for school boards to listen to the opinions of parents and felt that there is no veto of decisions of the USBE. She expressed her appreciation for legislators listening to her comments.

Mr. Holdaway expressed his concern with the lack of accountability of the USBE and shared concerns related to changing to partisan election of USBE members.

Sen. Reid, in lieu of presenting as scheduled on the agenda, asked that the task force read an editorial that will explain his position.

4. Other Items/Adjourn

MOTION: Sen. Osmond moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously with Sen. Davis, Sen. Urquhart, and Rep. Grover absent for the vote.

Chair Niederhauser adjourned the meeting at 5:00 p.m. io