

**MINUTES OF THE
EDUCATION INTERIM COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, October 21, 2015 – 7:30 a.m. – Room 30 House Building

Members Present:

Sen. Ann Millner, Senate Chair
Rep. Bradley G. Last, House Chair
Sen. Jim Dabakis
Sen. Aaron Osmond
Sen. Howard A. Stephenson
Rep. LaVar Christensen
Rep. Bruce R. Cutler
Rep. Steve Eliason
Rep. Francis D. Gibson
Rep. Eric K. Hutchings
Rep. David E. Lifferth
Rep. Carol Spackman Moss
Rep. Michael E. Noel
Rep. Marie H. Poulson
Rep. V. Lowry Snow

Members Absent:

Sen. Stephen H. Urquhart
Rep. Justin L. Fawson
Speaker Gregory H. Hughes
Rep. Daniel McCay

Staff Present:

Ms. Tiffany A. Stanley, Policy Analyst
Ms. Allyson R. Goldstein, Policy Analyst
Ms. Victoria Ashby, Associate General Counsel
Ms. Tracy J. Nuttall, Associate General Counsel
Ms. Rebekah Bradway, Associate General
Counsel
Ms. Debra Hale, Legislative Assistant

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 Last called the meeting to order at 7:36 a.m. Sen. Urquhart, Rep. Fawson, Speaker Hughes, and Rep. McCay were excused from the meeting.

MOTION: Sen. Millner moved to approve the minutes of the August 19, 2015, meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Sen. Osmond, Rep. Cutler, and Rep. Noel were absent for the vote.

2. Statutorily Required Reports

Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (53A-25b-201)

Mr. Joel Coleman, Superintendent, Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind; Ms. Michelle Tanner, Educational Director, Utah Schools for the Deaf; and Ms. Carolyn Lasater, Associate Superintendent, Utah Schools for the Blind, briefed the committee on the statutorily required report, "Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind."

Youth Suicide Prevention Programs and Parent Seminar on Mental Health, Bullying, and Safety (53A-15-1301 and 53A-15-1302)

Ms. Cathy Davis, Youth Suicide Prevention Specialist, Utah State Office of Education, and Mr. Jeremy Christensen, Assistant Director, Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health, Department of Human Services, briefed the committee on the statutorily required reports regarding state suicide prevention programs.

Ms. Davis and Mr. Christensen responded to questions from the committee.

Mr. Brad Smith, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, in response to committee discussion regarding personal information that is revealed to a school counselor or other employee, referenced Utah Code Section 53A-13-302 and stated that a school counselor must obtain parental consent prior to discussing certain sensitive matters with a student.

Early Interactive Reading Software (53A-17a-167)

Ms. Jennifer Throndsen, Literacy Coordinator, Utah State Office of Education, and Dr. Jon Hobbs, President, Evaluation and Training Institute, briefed the committee on the statutorily required report regarding early interactive reading software and reviewed a visual presentation, "Early Reading Software Program Results." They explained that only 13% of the schools using the software implemented the software with fidelity, meaning that the software was used in accordance with the provider's dosage recommendations (amount of time using the software). Because of the low percentage of schools implementing with fidelity, they explained, it is difficult to draw conclusions from the evaluation results, which found that the software had a statistically significant positive impact on student learning in kindergarten and first grade, but not in second and third grades.

Ms. Throndsen and Dr. Hobbs responded to questions from the committee.

UPSTART (53A-1a-1007)

Ms. Throndsen and Dr. Hobbs briefed the committee on the statutorily required report regarding UPSTART and responded to questions from the committee.

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) Action Center – Math Technology Programs (63N-12-208)

Ms. Tammy Goetz, Director, STEM Action Center, and Dr. Sarah Brasiel, Associate Director, Active Learning Lab, Utah State University, briefed the committee on the STEM Action Center's statutorily required report, including the third-party evaluation of the math technology programs administered by the center. Dr. Brasiel addressed a visual presentation, "K-12 Grants for Digital Mathematics Technology," and reported that the evaluation results indicate that using the software with fidelity (in accordance with the provider's dosage recommendations) results in much stronger, statistically significant impacts on student learning. Ms. Goetz reported on how the evaluation results will be used to inform implementation moving forward.

Dr. Brasiel and Ms. Goetz responded to questions from the committee.

3. Digital Teaching and Learning Task Force Report

Mr. Dave Thomas, Vice Chair, Utah State Board of Education, and Chair, Digital Teaching and Learning Task Force, and Ms. Angie Stallings, Associate Superintendent, Policy and Communication, Utah State Office of Education, presented to the committee a funding proposal and master plan for a statewide digital teaching and learning program, in accordance with 2015 General Session S.B. 222, "Digital Teaching and Learning Program Proposal." They distributed and reviewed a booklet, "Utah's Master Plan," and a visual presentation, "Essential Elements for Technology Powered Learning."

Mr. Jeff Mao, Senior Director, Common Sense Education, highlighted aspects of the master plan and how the approach relates to his experiences implementing a similar initiative in Maine. He stated that this

initiative is well timed, primarily because the federal government currently has a grant program in place to help cover infrastructure costs if matching funds are provided by the state.

4. Draft Legislation Related to Kindergarten

Rep. Snow presented draft legislation "Optional Enhanced Kindergarten Amendments" (2016FL-0487/006), which modifies the funding structure of the existing program and provides an additional \$10,000,000 appropriation. He distributed a handout, "Optional Extended-Day Kindergarten (OEK) – Washington County School District," and reviewed a visual presentation, "Possible Implications of Early Intervention – Enhanced Kindergarten."

Rep. Snow and Ms. Kathy Petersen, Title I Director, Washington County School District, responded to questions from the committee.

MOTION: Rep. Cutler moved to accept draft legislation "Optional Enhanced Kindergarten Amendments" as a committee bill.

The committee discussed the need for additional time to debate the bill.

WITHDRAWAL OF MOTION: Rep. Cutler withdrew the motion.

Rep. Eliason presented draft legislation "Fees for Supplemental Hours" (2016FL-0486/007), which provides a local school board or charter school governing board with the authority to charge a fee for supplemental hours of instruction to students who are kindergarten age. He responded to questions from the committee.

5. Student Assessments

Dr. Richard K. Nye, Associate Superintendent, Data, Assessment, and Accountability, Utah State Office of Education, reviewed a visual presentation, "Assessment," and began by discussing the role of student assessments, state and federal assessment requirements, and the amount of time students spend taking assessments mandated by the state or federal government. He stated that an assessment can be used to inform accountability, but that the most important use for an assessment is to inform learning. He reviewed actions taken as a result of 2014 General Session H.C.R. 7, "Concurrent Resolution Urging Development of Methods to Minimize Excessive Testing and its Negative Impacts on the Schoolchildren of Utah," including:

- 1) Shortening writing prompts, training local education agencies to minimize the length of testing sessions
- 2) Providing professional development on Student Assessment of Growth and Excellence (SAGE) formative assessments
- 3) Discontinuing certain tests after 2015

Dr. Nye concluded by reviewing potential options for moving forward, including reducing the number of grade levels required to take the SAGE summative assessment in lower grade levels, exploring the possibility of replacing the SAGE summative assessment with the ACT in upper grade levels, and emphasizing formative assessment systems.

Mr. Jake Heidrich, Principal, Clinton Elementary School, Davis School District, explained that he holds weekly meetings with grade-level teaching teams to look at assessment results and adjust instruction through reflective planning. He described a visual presentation, "The Circle of Instruction."

Dr. Brady Donaldson, Literacy Specialist, Salt Lake School District, reviewed a visual presentation, "Using Student Data to Increase Student Learning" and explained how assessment is used to inform instruction within the district.

Dr. Sara Jones, Director, Education Excellence and Government Relations, Utah Education Association, discussed the appropriate balance between assessment for accountability purposes and assessment for learning purposes and stated that the current approach is too heavily skewed in favor of accountability purposes.

Ms. Patty Hession, Olympus High School Community Council, distributed a letter from the council addressing the council's concerns regarding testing. She indicated that testing consumes too much learning time and creates undue stress on teachers and students. She also highlighted challenges associated with the parental opt-out law.

6. Other Items/Adjourn

MOTION: Sen. Millner moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Sen. Dabakis, Sen. Osmond, and Rep. Gibson were absent for the vote.

Chair Last adjourned the meeting at 11:08 a.m.