(Draft – Awaiting Formal Approval)

MINUTES OF THE EDUCATION TASK FORCE

Wednesday, June 26, 2013 – 9:00 a.m. – Room 445 State Capitol

Members Present:
President Wayne L. Niederhauser, Chair
Speaker Rebecca D. Lockhart, Chair
Sen. Gene Davis
Sen. Patricia W. Jones
Sen. Aaron Osmond
Sen. Stuart C. Reid
Sen. Howard A. Stephenson (electronically)
Sen. Stephen H. Urquhart
Rep. Jack R. Draxler
Rep. Francis D. Gibson
Rep. Keith Grover
Rep. Carol Spackman Moss

Members Absent:
Rep. Bradley G. Last
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 Lockhart called the meeting to order at 9:16 a.m. Rep. Last and Rep. Seelig were excused from the meeting.

MOTION: President Niederhauser moved to approve the minutes of the May 22, 2013, meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Rep. Grover was absent for the vote.

2. Alignment of Public and Higher Education with Economic Development Goals and Workforce Needs

Dr. John Krantz, Research Economist, Department of Workforce Services (DWS), reviewed a visual presentation, "Occupational Projections and Educational Requirements – The Bureau of Labor Statistics' Approach," on the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) method of assigning education levels to occupations, which is the method used by DWS. He explained that the BLS and DWS make 10-year projections of occupations, and an education level is assigned to each occupation to inform job seekers or individuals planning a career of the education requirements for each occupation. He added that the BLS assigns an education requirement to an occupation based on legal or licensing requirements or the typical educational level needed to gain entry into the occupation. Dr. Krantz concluded that, based on the BLS method of assigning education levels to occupations, 31% of the national workforce in 2020 is projected to be employed in occupations requiring postsecondary education or training.

Dr. Jeff Strohl, Director of Research, Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce (CEW), reviewed a visual presentation, "Measuring and Projecting Education and Employment Demand by Occupation and Industry," on the CEW's method of projecting employment and education demand. He explained that the CEW's projections of employment are similar to those of the BLS but slightly conservative in projecting a recovery. Dr. Strohl stated that the CEW projects education demand by looking at actual employment and the distribution of education within employment. He noted that, because of the variability of job functions within a given occupation and because different employers have many different requirements of education and training, workers in the same occupation can have substantially different education and training backgrounds. According to Dr. Strohl, using the actual education levels of employees in occupations yields a higher estimate of postsecondary education demand than using the BLS method of assigning education levels to occupations.

Dr. Strohl distributed a handout, "2020 Total Jobs by Occupation and Education Level," showing updated estimates of Utah jobs by industry, occupation, and education level in 2020 and reported that he is working with the state to refine education demand based on its economic development targets.

3. State Education Effort and Student Achievement in Utah and Peer States

Mr. Stephen H. Kroes, President, Utah Foundation, reviewed a visual presentation, "Utah's Academic Performance and K12 Funding Efforts," on studies conducted by the Utah Foundation on Utah student achievement compared to student achievement of peer states and Utah's public education funding effort. He also distributed the following reports: 1)"Utah Foundation – Utah Priorities Brief," and 2) "Utah Foundation – Research Report – School Testing Results: How Utah Compares to States with Similar Demographics."

Mr. Kroes explained that the study on student achievement among peer states compared trends in math and reading test scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress. He referred to the handout providing data showing that Utah's rank among states with similar demographic characteristics has trended downward since 1992. Mr. Kroes pointed out that Utah's public education funding effort has also declined. He stated that in 1992, Utah was ranked 8th among the states in public education revenues per $1,000 of personal income, and by 2011, Utah's rank dropped to 32nd.

4. Student Achievement as Measured by Internationally Administered Tests

Ms. Steffen reviewed a visual presentation, "Student Achievement on International Tests," which shows how students in different states and nations perform on internationally administered tests, the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study. Ms. Steffen explained that, based on how the U.S. and various states perform on the international tests and the National Assessment of Educational Progress, it may be possible to infer how Utah students may perform on the international tests. She indicated the general range in which Utah students may perform on the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study.

— Break for Lunch —

Chair Lockhart relinquished the chair to President Niederhauser.

5. Perspectives on Student Achievement

Dr. Richard West, Executive Director, Center for the School of the Future (CSF), Utah State University, reviewed a handout and visual presentation, "Perspectives on Student Achievement," on research conducted by the CSF revealing four conditions of learning that are highly correlated with academic achievement. According to Dr. West, the four conditions for learning are:

1) a clear understanding of high expectations for academic and behavioral performance;
2) presence of fundamental skills that give a student hope that expectations can be achieved if provided sufficient opportunities for practice;
3) a reasonable likelihood that efforts to meet the high expectations will be recognized and rewarded; and
4) the presence of an adult who can be trusted to provide help and support, if needed.

Dr. West asserted that the research of the CSF indicates that the presence of the four conditions for learning account for a greater portion of variance of academic achievement than socioeconomic status. He also explained that the presence of the four conditions of learning explains the achievement gap between ethnic groups, because in the same schools and classrooms, the percentage of ethnic minority students reporting the presence of the four conditions of learning is lower than the percentage of white students reporting the presence of the four conditions of learning.

Dr. Martell Menlove, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, reviewed a handout, "Key Elements Contributing to High Student Achievement – Internal to the School," on the following key elements internal to the school that contribute to high student achievement:

1) strong school leadership that establishes a culture of high expectations for all students and staff and aligns resources to support student learning priorities;
2) high quality instruction for all students that is aligned with Utah core standards;
3) appropriate assessments that inform data-driven decision making;
4) targeted interventions that meet individual student needs, which may include high quality extended learning time opportunities, digital learning tools, reduced class size, mentors, counselors, and early intervention; and
5) high quality professional development that is specific, differentiated, delivered in relevant and effective ways, and includes effective follow-up with instructional coaches to ensure instructional implementation.

Mr. Rob Brems, President, Utah College of Applied Technology (UCAT), attributed UCAT's high completion rates to its relationships with local employers who hire UCAT graduates. Mr. Brems indicated that if employer demand for trained workers diminishes, UCAT terminates the training program. For example, he noted, UCAT terminated construction trades programs during the recession, but now that building construction is picking up, it may be time to reinstate those programs.

Lieutenant Governor Gregory Bell identified the following key strategies for improving student achievement and the public education system:

1) increase high school graduation rates by intervening with students at risk for dropping out on a one-on-one basis;
2) implement differential pay to attract high quality teachers;
3) provide job and career counseling to junior high and high school students;
4) employ technology to allow students to learn the way they learn; and
5) enhance funding for public education.

Lt. Governor Bell suggested that raising the gas tax be considered, because the additional revenue would free up General Fund money for higher education, thereby reducing higher education's reliance on the Education Fund.

Mr. Dave Buhler, Commissioner of Higher Education, reviewed a visual presentation on the key elements of student success at the higher education level. According to Commissioner Buhler, a higher education system that contributes to high student achievement:

1) is market-driven;
2) is affordable and efficient;

3) effectively leverages technology;
4) is innovative;
5) has the capacity to accommodate growth in student enrollment; and
6) has strong state support.

Ms. Peggy Jo Kennett, President, Utah School Boards Association, and member, Board of Education, Jordan School District, identified the following critical components of increasing student achievement:

1) a focus on the weighted pupil unit and full funding of enrollment growth so that schools may attract great college graduates;
2) paid time and resources to provide teachers with information and an opportunity for discussion about new expectations, such as computer-adaptive testing, school grading, evaluations, and technology;
3) local flexibility in the implementation of programs and mandates to meet the needs of unique demographics and challenges;
4) deliberate alignment of resources, time, money, personnel, software, and equipment directed to mastery of key standards; and
5) accountability for the use of funds and the alignment of funds with strategic goals for student achievement.

Dr. McKell Withers, President, Utah School Superintendents Association, and Superintendent, Salt Lake City School District, discussed a visual presentation, "Key Elements Contributing to Student Success." He showed data on language arts test scores disaggregated by race/ethnicity and economic status. Dr. Withers explained that the gap in performance among students is largely attributed to poverty. According to Dr. Withers, key elements contributing to student success are:

1) a long term plan and commitment with adequate resources;
2) world-class standards with local control and collaboration;
3) strategic investments for students, families, and teachers;
4) effective teachers, leaders, and support staff; and
5) the inclusion of all stakeholders in the process.

Ms. Kim Frank, Executive Director, Utah Charter Network, distributed "Utah Charter Network" and "The Competitive Effects of Charter Schools in Utah." She stated that research conducted by Dr. Mike Martineau of the University of Utah shows that when competition for students exists due to the presence of charter schools, the percentage of students in traditional public schools who are proficient in math and language arts increases. Ms. Frank reviewed the high achievement of students enrolled in early college high schools and reported that the success of early college high schools is due to:

1) individual student measurements;
2) individual student relationships;
3) investments in teacher development;
4) focus on mission, culture, and curriculum;
5) incentives for students and teachers; and
6) small school size.

Mr. Chris Bleak, President, Utah Association of Public Charter Schools, identified what contributes to student achievement in charter schools, including:

1) local governance and financial decision-making, which gives parents and students a greater sense of ownership and understanding of the goals of the school;
2) the charter, which requires a school to clearly explain its mission;
3) the charter school board's and director's ability to structure its workforce; and
4) using data to shape decisions.

Ms. Sharon Gallagher-Fishbaugh, President, Utah Education Association, urged the task force members to read the handouts she distributed:

1) "Transforming Teaching, Connecting Professional Responsibility with Student Learning," which describes how teaching needs to be changed, including preservice education, evaluation, and compensation; and
2) an article from *The Washington Post*, by Valerie Strauss, updated May 29, 2013, entitled "How School Reform Preserves the Status Quo - and What Real Change Would Look Like," which points out the shortcomings of school reform over the past 20 years.

Ms. Gallagher-Fishbaugh emphasized the following points:

1) respect is the number one thing teachers need;
2) best practices have to be grounded in research;
3) teachers need job-embedded professional development with time for teachers to collaborate and work together; and
4) resources are needed to adequately fund public education.

She concluded by stating that the Legislature should not micromanage but hold schools accountable.

Ms. Judi Clark, Executive Director, Parents for Choice in Education, discussed the following ways to improve student outcomes:

1) implement a student-centric learning model that emphasizes competency and use innovative solutions to support that model, such as digital learning and the integration of technology in the classroom to create personalized learning;
2) provide parents with a choice of high quality options;
3) establish accountability and transparency to determine the most efficient use of resources; and
4) modify the use of education funds, including allowing funds to follow the student and providing equitable funding for charter schools.

Ms. Liz Zentner, President, Utah Parent Teacher Association, stated that research identifies the following three key elements for student success:

1) high quality teachers;
2) parental engagement; and
3) family, school, and community partnerships.

Ms. Zentner distributed two handouts,"National Standards for Family-School Partnerships" and "Ready, Set, Lead!" which describe standards for family, school, and community partnerships. She offered the following suggestions to enhance the three key elements for student success:

1) establish more effective preservice training for teachers;

2) provide ongoing professional development for teachers;
3) reduce class size or provide teacher assistants;
4) provide early intervention such as all-day kindergarten and preschool.

She added that parent surveys have indicated support for the new core standards, a tax increase for education, and education in the arts.

Mr. John Milliken, Board of Directors, United Way of Salt Lake, distributed and reviewed a handout, "Collective Impact – A Unique Approach to Community Problem Solving," on a model for leveraging community resources to improve student learning. Mr. Milliken described how the United Way helps to coordinate resources for at-risk children and their families at school-based community centers. He reported how test scores of students at schools where the community centers are located have increased and urged the Legislature to make grants available for the community centers.

Mr. Kris McFarland, Vice President, Human Resources and Organizational Development, Workers Compensation Fund of Utah, and Ms. Stephanie Vierig, Recruiter, Human Resources, Nelson Laboratories, discussed what they look for when hiring new employees. Mr. McFarland stated that the technical skills are a given, but what is more important are characteristics such as integrity, creativity, and being able to work together to solve problems. Ms. Vierig said she recruits primarily workers in the age range of 18 to 30 years. She primarily looks for a great attitude and willingness to learn. She stated that their workers need math and science skills, as well as business skills.

Ms. Karen Crompton, President and CEO, Voices for Utah Children, distributed "2013 Data Book State Trends in Child Well-Being." She noted that Utah's peer states, as identified by Mr. Kroes, are ranked among the top five states in child well-being, and Utah is ranked 14th. All of the peer states invest significantly in early childhood education, according to Ms. Crompton, and she urged the Legislature to do the same to improve the readiness of at-risk children.

Mr. Peter Cannon, member, Board of Education, Davis School District, speaking for himself, made the following suggestions to improve academic achievement:

1) provide maximum choices of citizens, such as allowing transportation funds to be used to transport students to a school other than the neighborhood public school;
2) provide maximum flexibility to local education agencies;
3) provide moral education;
4) move decision-making to the school level; and
5) avoid locking the education system into fixed ways of doing things.

Ms. Kelly Colopy, Chair, Board of Directors, Utah After School Network (UAN), distributed a handout describing the UAN's goal of improving outcomes for children and youth through high-quality expanded learning opportunities. She also distributed a handout, "Why Afterschool Programs Matter to Law Enforcement," and stated that UAN programs increase student engagement and decrease problem behavior, especially for Utah school-aged children who are responsible for taking care of themselves after school.

Ms. Allyson Williams, parent, expressed concern with the great emphasis placed on test scores and added a word of caution regarding assumptions made about test scores. She asserted that a great emphasis on testing negatively affects teachers by discouraging their willingness to be helpful and causing them to be competitive instead.

Ms. Autumn Cook, parent, expressed a sense of discomfort regarding task force material that appears to try to redesign the educational system and places too strong of an emphasis on alignment with education and workforce goals.

Ms. Melissa Marler, parent, Focus Ogden, Ogden School District, suggested that meetings be held within each school district involving representatives of the organizations that spoke in this meeting, members of the Legislature, and the district's teachers and administrators to discuss the educational issues of the district. She said those issues could then be reported to the task force at subsequent meetings.

6. Other Items/Adjourn

MOTION: Sen. Reid moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Speaker Lockhart, Sen. Davis, Sen. Jones, Sen. Urquhart, Rep. Gibson, and Rep. Grover were absent for the vote.

Chair Niederhauser adjourned the meeting at 4:42 p.m.