

**MINUTES OF THE
TASK FORCE ON LEARNING STANDARDS AND ACCOUNTABILITY
IN PUBLIC EDUCATION**

August 16, 1999 - 9:00 a.m. - Room 405 State Capitol

Members Present:

Sen. Howard A Stephenson, Chair
Rep. Tammy J. Rowan, Chair
Sen. Karen Hale
Sen. L. Steven Poulton
Rep. Jeff Alexander
Rep. Kevin S. Garn
Rep. Karen W. Morgan
Rep. LaWanna "Lou" Shurtliff
Jill Kennedy
Kim Burningham
Lt. Gov. Olene S. Walker
Linda B. Ogden
Ila Rose Fife

Members Absent:

None

Staff Present:

Mr. Bryant R. Howe,
Research Analyst
Mr. James Wilson, Associate General Counsel
Ms. Heather Hobbs, Research Assistant
Ms. Wendy Bangerter, Legislative Secretary

Note: A list of others present and a copy of materials distributed in the meeting are on file in the Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel.

1. Task Force Business –

MOTION: Rep. Rowan suggested amendments to the August 2, 1999 minutes. Ms. Fife suggested amendments to the June 21, 1999 minutes. Rep. Rowan moved to approve the minutes of June 21, July 12, and August 2, 1999 meetings as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

Sen. Stephenson referred to the summary list of e-mail responses indicating educators' feelings about accountability prepared by Rep. Rowan. Rep. Rowan explained the summary and how the responses were quantified.

2. Utah State Parent Teacher Association -- Juneil Lyon, PTA, reviewed data on a parent survey taken at a PTA convention held in May, 1999. The survey included questions regarding expected achievement standards and the communication of the results of assessment tests to teachers and parents. She expressed the need for parents to understand what the core curriculum is, what assessments are, and the results of those assessments. They also need to understand the consequences of not achieving set standards. She stated that PTA strongly supports efforts to ensure quality education through the analysis of curriculum to guide expectations. She urged the task force to carefully examine core standards and assessments, keeping in mind financial realities and the importance of parent/school partnerships.

Barbara Smith, PTA, reviewed the purpose of assessment and the positive results of Student Education Plans (SEPs) and Student Education and Occupation Plans (SEOPs). She emphasized the PTA's support for parent inclusion and support in the SEP and SEOP process. She reviewed the SEP and SEOP conference and framework, as well as the recommendations for 1999-2000. She stated

that the SEP and SEOP process is a positive way to give students ownership of their education and to connect parents to their student's education. She reviewed desired results and the need for an individual plan for each student. Adequate time is an important element to make these conferences effective. Additional funding is needed to provide the teacher time to prepare and to meet with students and parents.

The task force discussed the need for improvement in communicating test results to parents. They also discussed the benefits of SEP's and SEOP's. Sen. Stephenson reviewed the history of the Legislature mandating the SEP and SEOP process.

Colleen Taylor, President, PTA, reviewed the national standards for parent/family involvement programs. She noted that good communication, good parenting skills, parents creating learning environments at home, parental involvement at the school through volunteerism, parents involved in school decision-making and advocacy, and strengthening schools, families, and student learning through community collaboration are all important elements to involving parents and family and making children the center focus.

3. Presentation from Provo School District on Standards and Accountability Initiative –

Dr. Patti Harrington, Assistant Superintendent, Provo School District, distributed and reviewed the time line of standards and benchmarks that Provo City School District uses. She noted resources from other districts around the country that Provo used to set their benchmarks and reviewed the resolution adopted by Provo School District Board of Education. She emphasized that their students do not graduate or move beyond set "gateways" until they have met all the standards. Gateways are set up at the second/third grade level and students do not pass if they cannot read. The gateway at the fifth grade helps teachers to be accountable for their teaching. Gateways at 8th and 11th are also critical points at which to judge a student's progress. She explained that by moving transcripts to the middle schools, the middle school students become accountable for their middle school education.

Some of the tools they use are "One-to-One Reading" programs, after-school tutoring, summer preparation for high school, and extended school hours. Ms. Harrington also explained that they expect parents to provide a safe learning environment at home, service to the school, and to review homework. Developmentally delayed students are held to specific standards set by their Individualized Education Plan (IEP). She noted that Provo's inservice training for teachers begins with principals helping teachers learn what a good classroom and teacher looks like. She stated that the needed funding for this program was placed on a tax request referendum, which failed, but noted that the parents are still very supportive of the program. She encouraged the state to set standards of accountability and allow them to make site-based decisions for local situations and needs. She spoke favorably about H. B. 312, but noted it does not have enough funding to accomplish all it could do.

The task force discussed the viability of sanction and rewards.

4. Update on Survey of District Testing Directors, Class Level Criterion Reference Scores, Secondary Criterion Reference Test Scores -- Ms. Heather Hobbs, Research Assistant distributed and reviewed the latest revision of the chart showing district compliance with Section 53A-3-602. She also distributed a report compiling school district reports to questions about accountability, standards, and the use of standardized test scores.

Mr. Bryant R. Howe, Research Analyst, reviewed the number of elementary schools with class level CRT scores by school district for the 1997-1998 school year and explained the compilation process.

5. Review and Discussion of Task Force Issues --

Mr. Howe distributed to the task force a document entitled "Key Decisions in Designing a Standards Based Accountability System." This document contains proposed working definitions, proposed assumptions, and proposed issues for the task force to consider.

The task force discussed the proposed assumptions and working definitions, and made some amendments to them.

MOTION: Rep Rowan moved to accept the proposed working definitions and the proposed assumptions contained in the document as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Other Business

The task force discussed the conference planned for September 7-8, 1999. Many expressed concern that the timing was not good for educators to attend, that the cost was excessive for its intended purpose and that there may be other alternatives that could serve the same purpose. They also felt there was not enough time allotted for feedback from the public.

MOTION: Rep. Morgan moved to have the task force vote on their support of the conference. Rep. Morgan withdrew her motion.

Rep Rowan noted there needs to be multiple ways to get the message out to the public and to the teachers. She updated the task force on the conference speakers and estimated costs so far. Sen. Stephenson stated that the conference gets the attention of the educators and begins the inclusion of the public and other interested groups.

MOTION: Rep. Morgan moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously at 12:50 p.m.

