

**MINUTES OF THE**  
**Task Force on Learning Standards and Accountability in Public Education**  
October 9, 2000 -8:30 a.m. - Room 223 State Capitol

**Members Present:**

Sen. Howard A Stephenson, Chair  
Rep. Jeff Alexander, Chair  
Sen. Karen Hale  
Sen. L. Steven Poulton  
Rep. Loraine Pace  
Rep. Karen W. Morgan  
Rep. LaWanna “Lou” Shurtliff  
Rep. John Swallow  
Jill Kennedy  
Kim Burningham  
Ila Rose Fife  
Linda B. Ogden  
Lt. Gov. Olene S. Walker

**Staff Present:**

Mr. Bryant R. Howe, Research  
Analyst  
Mr. James Wilson, Associate General  
Counsel  
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 –**

Rep. Alexander called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

**MOTION:** Rep. Shurtliff moved to approve the minutes of September 25, 2000. The motion passed unanimously.

**2. Performance Standards for Elementary Math, Science, and Language Arts and Secondary Math and Science –** Dr. Barbara Lawrence, Coordinator, Testing and Evaluation, Utah State Office of Education, distributed and reviewed the preliminary results of the process used to establish performance standards for the Criterion Referenced Tests (CRT). The purpose of establishing a performance standard is to determine what score on a CRT represents what level of proficiency of the content being assessed. She emphasized that the recommendations to be presented to the task force are based on the recommendations of a group of educators that her office convened. The final recommendations may be different, based on input from individuals in her office and the State Board of Education.

It was recommended that a “mastery” terminology be adopted in describing the various proficiency levels. The recommended terms, from highest to lowest, are: “mastery,” “near mastery,” “partial mastery,” and “below partial mastery.”

Dr. Lawrence explained that the purpose of the cut scores is to define the overall proficiency of a student in a particular subject. Each cut score is the “cut off” point between a given proficiency level. The group of educators working with Dr. Lawrence developed definitions of each proficiency level. In establishing the cut scores for the various proficiency levels, the group used two methods: a “contrasting groups study” and a “modified bookmark”.

Dr. Lawrence presented, but did not distribute, the preliminary cut scores for elementary language arts, science, and mathematics. She also presented, but did not distribute, the percent of students in each proficiency level in grades three through six and certain secondary school grades on a statewide basis for certain CRT tests administered in the spring of this year.

Each time a new CRT is developed, the process of performance standard setting will be repeated so there will be a difference in the level of difficulty from test to test. She stated that teachers have varying perceptions of what constitutes a given proficiency level. This means that there will be a learning curve before they all reach a better and more unified understanding. She noted that the level of application on the secondary level is not the same as is on the elementary levels. She reviewed several sample performance descriptors, noting that teachers write the assessments. The performance descriptors are used to show where remediation is needed or where teachers need to review or increase focus.

**3. Response from State Office of Education to Task Force Decision Tree on Establishing an “Acceptable Level of Performance”** – Dr. Steven O. Laing, Superintendent of Public Instruction, distributed and reviewed a modified version of a document originally given to the task force at its last meeting. This document describes the possible decisions and options for the task force to consider when establishing “an acceptable level of performance” for schools, as required under HB 177. Dr. Laing explained that his office had taken this document and made some recommendations on how the task force could possibly proceed.

Dr. Laing suggested that the final responsibility for establishing acceptable levels of performance be given to the State Board of Education, in consultation with local boards of education. The task force should give recommendations to the legislature and to the State Board of Education. He said that students and then schools should be the first focus of acceptable levels of performance. Dr. Laing also reviewed several data elements that should be used when establishing levels of performance and how various data elements should be weighted. He noted that the results for certain student groups that should be disaggregated. Finally, it is his recommendation that more than one year of data should be used to establish an acceptable performance level. Progress over time should also be considered.

**4. Report of the State Board of Education Required Under Subsection 53A-3-602.5 (3) Regarding Proposed Additional Data Elements for School and School District Reports** – Mr. Gary Carlston, Deputy Superintendent, reviewed recommendations regarding school and school district performance reports. The State Board of Education recommends retaining the

following indicators: advanced placement and concurrent enrollment, chronic absence, class size, college entrance exam, course taking, and dropouts. "Chronic absence" should be changed to "attendance rate" and information on course taking patterns should be available on the web site.

Dr. Carlston also recommend retaining mobility indicators, parent attendance at SEP/SEOP, reading at grade level, staff qualifications and test scores. With regards to reading scores, it is recommendation of his office that reading at grade level be extended to the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. In addition, enrollment (in total and by demographic subgroups) and limited English proficiency (LEP) should also be included in school reports.

Time in school missed for extracurricular activities should be deleted from reporting requirements. Dr. Carlston reported that the following data elements proposed in H.B. 177 should not be included: attendance by day and period, grades, health and safety indicators, keyboarding, portfolios and surveys, and reading at home and parent volunteer hours.

Dr. Lawrence reviewed the student profile as indicated on the Utah Performance Assessment System for Students (U-PASS) school performance report. She noted that it is in the process of being redesigned. She indicated there is also a classroom level report which gives the teacher good diagnostic information. The intent is that the information would be available for teacher, parent, and school use, but not be publicly reported. They do recommend reporting the U-PASS School Performance Report. Dr. Lawrence emphasized that the disaggregated information would differ from school to school.

Sen. Poulton asked about the availability of classroom level data. Dr. Laing said that classroom level data will be compiled but is not included in school and school district reports. However, it is considered to be public information and will be available upon request.

Dr. Laing reviewed the recommended state-established acceptable level of performance for schools. He said that meeting the state-established acceptable levels of performance means the school has made a sufficient magnitude of gain toward reaching the performance standards, or has met other specified standards. More information is needed before determining the actual percentages of students reaching those levels. He said it also includes the percent of students meeting reading levels and the percent of students with better attendance rates during their time in school. He indicated that a school would be listed as below the accepted level if do not meet the performance standard or show sufficient magnitude of gain or they show decline for two consecutive years. Dr. Laing stated that they recommend using a median effect score to determine the magnitude of gain because it is more fair to smaller schools or small disaggregated groups.

Concern was expressed by some of the task force members for the low cut scores proposed in order to attain the "near mastery" and "mastery" levels. The state office personnel noted that they too had concerns, and reminded the task force of the preliminary status of these

recommendations. They asked for more direction from the legislature. Mr. Burningham and others felt that the levels would naturally move higher over time.

**5. Other Business –**

Rep. Alexander lead a discussion about questions that came up in the UEA conference on Oct. 6, 2000. The State Board staff responded to questions from the task force.

The next meeting for the Learning Standards and Accountability in Public Education Task Force is scheduled for Monday, October 23, 2000 at 8:30 a.m.

**MOTION:** Sen. Hale moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 11:29 a.m.