

**MINUTES OF THE
EDUCATION INTERIM COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, May 23, 2001 – 9:00 a.m. – Room 303 State Capitol

Members Present:

Sen. Howard A. Stephenson,
Senate Chair
Rep. Marda Dillree, House Chair
Sen. D. Chris Buttars
Sen. Karen Hale
Sen. David H. Steele
Sen. Pete Suazo
Sen. Michael G. Waddoups
Rep. Duane E. Bourdeaux
Rep. Afton B. Bradshaw
Rep. Judy Ann Buffmire
Rep. Margaret Dayton
Rep. James A. Ferrin
Rep. James R. Gowans
Rep. Bradley T. Johnson

Rep. Merlynn T. Newbold
Rep. Loraine T. Pace
Rep. J. Morgan Philpot
Rep. LaWanna Shurtliff
Rep. Matt Throckmorton
Rep. A. Lamont Tyler

Members Absent:

Sen. Bill Wright
Rep. Jeff Alexander

Staff Present:

Ms. Constance C. Steffen,
Research Analyst
Mr. Dee S Larsen,
Associate General Counsel
Ms. Wendy L. 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. Call To Order

Chair Dillree called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

MOTION: Rep. Pace moved to approve the minutes of April 18, 2001. The motion passed unanimously with Sen. Waddoups, Rep. Bourdeaux, and Rep. Throckmorton absent for the vote.

2. Consider Proposed Legislation, “Applied Technology Governance”

Rep. Ron Bigelow and Sen. Leonard Blackham distributed and reviewed changes made to draft legislation, "Applied Technology Governance." They emphasized that the bill establishes a process and is not a funding bill. Funding will have to be addressed through a separate bill.

Speaker Martin Stephens testified that he is in favor of the draft legislation.

Sen. Suazo requested that the committee be provided an organizational chart outlining the membership, structure, and lines of communication created by the draft legislation. He stated that some school districts have made substantial commitments to establish an applied technology center in the Salt Lake Valley. He expressed concern that the priorities outlined in the bill might slow down that effort.

Mr. Kim Burningham, State Board of Education, assisted by Mr. Rob Brems, State Office of Education, distributed and reviewed the board's position on the draft legislation. The board is opposed to the bill, because it shifts governance of applied technology centers to the Board of Regents whose main stewardship is with higher education. The board is concerned that the proposed legislation could result in secondary school students' needs being neglected.

Mr. Richard Maxfield, education consultant, distributed and reviewed his suggestions for delivering applied technology education. He recommended the addition of a self-help feature to the existing self-pacing feature. With this change, applied technology education could be delivered remotely to any location with the necessary equipment and tutor. He stated that most businesses meet those criteria. Applied technology education would move from a teacher-based system to a student-focused delivery system.

Ms. Karen Derrick, Utah School Boards Association, stated the board supports the State Board of Education's position. She expressed concern with the provisions of the draft legislation that outline the priorities for facilities to provide applied technology classes.

Mr. Charlie Johnson, Board of Regents, commended the sponsors for the draft legislation and noted that compromises were made by all entities. He stated that the regents, presidents, and commissioners are committed to working with all students and the legislature to make the applied technology education system work.

Mr. Rod Crockett, Provo City School District, stated that the district school board supports the position of the Utah School Board's Association.

Rep. Buffmire requested a statement from the State Board of Education noting their specific concerns and areas of support for the committee to review prior to a possible special session on applied technology education in June.

3. Impact of School Closures on School Choice

Ms. Steffen explained that the Salt Lake City School District Board has decided to close three elementary schools. Parents who have elected to enroll their children in Salt Lake City schools other than their neighborhood school are concerned that: 1) the schools they have chosen may be closed; and 2) opportunities for school choice will be limited after the school closures.

Ms. Katherine Biele, parent, stated that the closures threaten the continued existence of school choice in the state. She distributed and reviewed comments regarding the benefits of school choice. Ms. Katy Andrews, Ms. Jill Bader, and Ms. Julie Ulvestead, parents, expressed concern with the impact of the school closures on school choice.

Mr. Joel Briscoe, Salt Lake City School District Board, conceded that the closures create the potential to limit some students coming into the district from out of the city. He emphasized that school choice will still exist, just not in the abundance that it has existed.

Ms. Darlene Robles, superintendent of Salt Lake City School District, reviewed a handout from the Salt Lake City School District School Consolidation Committee. She stated the board not only is committed to maintaining school choice, but also to expanding it.

Mr. Gary Harmer, Salt Lake City School District, explained the school population in the district is shifting from the east side of I-15 to the west. He reviewed the district's position in not wanting to continue investing in fixed maintenance costs or rebuilding costs for buildings that will be filled by students coming from other districts, since all capital outlay comes from the local taxpayers, not from the state. He emphasized that where there are declining resident populations, school closure avoids waste.

Mr. Douglas Nelson, parent, stated that the major flaw with the board's plan is that schools with low resident enrollment become targets for school closure, instead of becoming targets for school choice.

Mr. Kerry Doane, parent, stated that the school closures force maximum neighborhood enrollment, thereby eliminating school choice. He stated that less than 10 percent of the total population will be able to use school choice.

Mr. Jared Ainsworth, parent, stated that the quality of education needs to be raised at schools not being chosen by parents for their children, before determining which schools are to be closed.

Ms. Ann Peterson, parent, expressed concern that residents are being forced to attend their local school.

Ms. Deborah Feder, parent, said she feared that the school closures may result in the elimination of some nationally recognized programs.

Mr. Tom Pilger, parent, stated the time frame for the school closures is too fast. He

expressed concern that class sizes are too large and funding for teaching is inadequate.

4. Adjourn

MOTION: Sen. Buttars moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m. with Sen. Steele, Rep. Ferrin, Rep. Johnson, Rep. Newbold, and Rep. Throckmorton absent for the vote.