

Minutes of the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee
March 22, 2006
Room 404, Capitol
Boise, Idaho

Co-chair Shawn Keough called the meeting to order at 12:15 p.m. Attending the meeting were Senators John Andreason, Bert Marley, and Kate Kelly, and Representatives Margaret Henbest, Maxine Bell, Debbie Field, and Donna Boe. Also present were staff members Rakesh Mohan, Director, and Margaret Campbell, Administrative Coordinator, and all other OPE staff.

Attending the meeting, among others, were the following people

- Representatives: Julie Ellsworth
- Budget and Policy Analysis: Matt Freeman
- Department of Correction: Thomas Beauclair, Director
- Department of Education: Dr. Marilyn Howard, Superintendent, and staff
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation: Michael Graham, Administrator, and staff
- Council on Developmental Disabilities: Marilyn Sword, Executive Director
- Boise State University: Ross Borden
- Department of Health and Welfare: Dave Butler

MINUTES

Representative Field moved to approve the minutes of the March 9, 2006, meeting. Senator Kelly seconded the motion; it passed unanimously by voice vote.

TOPIC SELECTION

Co-chair Keough called on Mr. Mohan to discuss OPE workload and new evaluation requests. Mr. Mohan said the office had 12 follow-up reports to do and would complete as many as possible before the end of the 2007 legislative session. The office had not yet started two assignments: lessons learned from ISIMS and healthcare taskforce contract oversight. Mr. Mohan said he wanted JLOC and the office to play a prominent role in the oversight of the healthcare contract, approved by JLOC at its last meeting, to make sure the contractor product met standards of evaluation. He briefed the committee on four topics requests: Sheltered Workshops, Comparison of Prison Costs: Private versus Public, Higher Education Student Indebtedness, and Public Education Average Daily Attendance.

Co-chair Keough said the request from Senator Goeddes on average daily attendance in the public education system seemed to be a different request from the attachment by Dr. Marilyn Howard, Superintendent of Public Instruction, and called on Senator Marley to clarify. Senator Marley said the goal of the evaluation request was to provide recommendations for evenly applying the policy of average daily attendance across the whole education system. Senator Andreason said this concern was ongoing and recently arose in Senate Education Committee when it appeared that two different schools had received full credit for average daily attendance of students who were attending partial day classes at both places.

Representative Boe indicated the House Education Committee had a concern with funding of the whole education system, including charter schools and virtual academies, and whether the current system was equitable to traditional schools. Senator Marley suggested an evaluation could address attendance and other areas statewide, but discouraged a focus on issues relating to funding at this point.

Representative Henbest recommended moving the Sheltered Workshops request down on the priority list until Legislative Audits completed follow-up work on one of their findings from a previous audit.

Representative Field proposed moving the Department of Correction comparison request down on the priority list until other correction issues were stable. She suggested polling germane committee chairs for evaluation topic requests because she was not sure the current topic requests would be helpful to the Legislature next session.

Senator Kelly asked about the topic of higher education student indebtedness. Mr. Mohan reviewed the Legislative Council discussion that precipitated the request. Senator Kelly indicated the request did not meet the typical criteria for an evaluation, and Representative Bell said the request was not a program for which the state was responsible to fund, with the exception of scholarships.

Representative Henbest moved to conduct as many follow-up reports as possible in the next six months; conduct an evaluation of lessons learned from ISIMS in conjunction with a follow-up report on public education technology initiatives; start the healthcare taskforce contract; and prepare a scope of the public education evaluation. Senator Marley seconded the motion.

Senator Marley requested the scope of public education include two approaches—a narrow scope of average daily attendance and a broad scope of issues Dr. Howard had outlined. The Oversight Committee could meet later to decide which scope to pursue.

The committee discussed Representative Field's request to poll germane chairs on evaluation requests. Co-chair Keough said she did not want to raise colleagues expectations given OPE's current workload. She suggested completing some of the follow-up reports and then surveying the legislative body. However, members indicated a need to send the request while concerns were still on germane committees' minds and before the Legislature lost several chairs due to retirement.

The motion to conduct follow-up reports, ISIMS lessons learned, healthcare taskforce contract, and to prepare scopes of the public education evaluation passed unanimously by voice vote.

Co-chair Keough directed staff to send a letter to germane chairs and leadership that identified important topic criteria for an evaluation and asked for topic requests that JLOC could consider at its next meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

Representative Henbest said house bills 832 and 833 were printed in the House Ways and Means Committee earlier in the week. The bills created a substance abuse interagency committee and reconfigured the Board of Health and Welfare.

Representative Henbest said that as a result of the Health and Welfare Management report, legislators had indicated interest in establishing an Ombudsman where state employees could take concerns that were not related to grievance procedures. She would forward the suggestion to the Commerce and Human Resource Committee.

The Oversight Committee adjourned at 1:05 p.m.