

**DPO Education Caucus Minutes**  
**Zoom**  
**Sunday, December 6, 2020**

**1. Welcome/Introductions**

**2. Old Business**

- **Update on Education Bills/Workgroup (this topic was covered below by Senator Frederick)**

**3. New Business: Guest speakers re. Upcoming legislative session**

- **Senator Lew Frederick: upcoming education bills**

Next session will be a reset – reset the education system, including looking at how we assess assessments and the way that has been used in the past. Task force to look at that. Education is more than what happens in a classroom and on a test ... the connection between ed and what happens in the real world to families (housing, health, working together, making things available to students and parents). Hope to start focusing on student “learning” as opposed to student “outcomes” i.e. re-examine what is the purpose of education. Additionally mentioned the importance of citizenship, liberal and visual arts, and respect for trades: the “outcomes” of education should not be focused only on what makes the most possible money. We need talented plumbers, electricians, performing and visual artists as much as we need talented folks in the STEM field.

Recent legislative successes mean we will now have some money for early learning and CTE. Higher ed. continues to need support, and especially Community Colleges.

Senate Ed. Committee will be chaired by Sen. Dembrow next session and he believes that House Ed. will be chaired by Rep. Alonso Leon. Sen. Frederick will co-chair Education Subcommittee on Ways and Means. None of this is 100% final as committees are still being organized but should be finalized soon. Plans for some sort of Joint Education Committee to look at COVID related issues, as well as other issues. The Senator mentioned his recent tour of Jackson County and the losses from fire to so many families in Phoenix.

*Q: What is the status of Student Success plans? We are supporting what is currently in place. Change will be difficult and adding almost impossible. The walkout put an end to several proposals that were going to be passed and it will be hard to get back.*

*Q: How do we have our voices heard? Do not use mass mailings ([change.org](https://www.change.org), Action Network, etc.) to contact legislators. Speak personally with legislators, or send them personally crafted emails. If you want to organize a message, look at your affiliations, link and coordinate our efforts with other groups (the more the merrier) and ask people to do that personal outreach. Limit suggestions to 1-2 and be very clear and very brief.*

*Q: Regarding Distance Learning and in particular Edge platform: How widespread is this and who is deciding what platforms to use? There appears to be some form of "spy system" embedded in some of the software being disseminated and used for distance learning (it looks and discerns whether student's eyes are wandering and assesses background information – literally, things like what is on the wall and the titles of books on display, etc). Senator Frederick says he has a bill that is cautioning against using platforms that may be gathering data without student knowledge, to better vet these products.*

The Senator also has at least 5 other bills currently in Legislative Counsel about education: Two bills to eliminate some state required testing, one for the early grades (K-2)

and the other for end of high school tests that are not federal requirements; a bill which will ask for a true audit of costs of our current state assessment system, a bill to eliminate the sunset on the Student Bill of Rights (Opt Out) bill (HB 2655 passed in 2015); and a bill to return the Superintendent of Public Instruction to an elected position.

- **Laurie Wimmer, OEA Government Relations Consultant: OEA legislative priorities**

Ms. Wimmer shared OEA's ambitious 2021 agenda, which falls into work on three categories of improvements:

(1) **Education funding and quality:** Budget at TRUE current service levels, protect Student Success Act; fund community colleges; invest in our pre-K children; protect students from privatized/poorly regulated virtual vendors (abysmal success rates and gross exploitation – 33% graduation rates and lower – their "personalized learning" is essentially machine learning that kicks teachers to the curb); ensure appropriate assessment policies; and ensure revenue policies respond to pandemic-related shortfalls.

(2) **Workforce protection:** Ensure safe & healthy working/learning environments (not just safe reopening, but also mental health and gun safety measures); universalize health care for part time CC faculty; ensure class size is a mandatory bargaining subject; protect educator retirement

(3) **Meaningful equity:** Recruit/retain educators of color; abolish biased EdTPA credentialing system; enhance racial justice policies inside and beyond education; double the poverty weight in the State School Fund distribution formula; support the 2021 Fair Shot Agenda.

CTE teachers need realistic hours of experience and not some jimmyed policy that puts a lot of non-teachers into the role of teacher. Measure 98 will be fully funded next year while the Skill Centers will be cut.

- **Possible coordination with Healthcare Caucus regarding school safety**

Most of this discussion was postponed until next meeting. A joint resolution with Healthcare Caucus was discussed briefly. Information from the [Ready Schools, Safe Learners](#) (Oregon Department of Education) document was shared.

*Q: What is being done to guarantee safe reopening (with emphasis on upgrading ventilation systems, providing PPEs, and developing protocols to be followed)?* Sen. Frederick – We talk about it all the time in all venues, but we aren't making the decisions – just asking the questions and raising the questions. Ms. Wimmer -- \$250 million needed for safe reopening, but at the moment there is not one cent in the governor's budget for it; strident pressure is being applied to the governor and the State Superintendent to open NOW by different groups around the state.