

## MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Senator Dwayne Umbarger at 1:38 p.m. on March 14, 2001 in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Committee staff present:       Avis Swartzman, Revisor of Statutes  
                                      Ben Barrett, Legislative Research Department  
                                      Carolyn Rampey, Legislative Research Department  
                                      Judy Steinlicht, Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:    Gary Sherrer, Lt. Governor  
  Dale Dennis, Deputy Commissioner, State Dept. of Education  
  Craig Grant, KNEA

Others attending:            See attached list.

Lt. Governor Gary Sherrer thanked the Committee for taking the time to listen to the Governor's proposal and for having an open mind attitude. He feels that it is very necessary to consider and discuss this plan. The philosophy of the Governor on the tax increase is simply that anyone that has seen the budget projections would understand that there is just not enough money to increase education funds. If anyone is serious about doing anything about funding education, we must have new revenues. The base budget has never equaled inflation since its inception and this plan for the first time will exceed the cost of inflation. We are facing teacher shortages and this proposal will allow for better teacher salaries and will make teaching more attractive. The program is designed to encourage better performance and to reward excellence. The number of certified teachers will greatly increase because it will become worthwhile. Lt. Governor Sherrer also stated that sometimes we seem to focus on only the children that are not performing up to grade level, but we need to remember that the majority are doing well. We have one of the highest graduation rates in the nation and we have one of the highest rates of kids who leave high school and go directly to college. We need to make sure that we offer those kids classes to challenge their capabilities. This program does not micromanage or mandate, the schools all have different challenges and school populations, it gives local control. The Lt. Governor believes now is the time that we must pass a plan to fund education. The Governor and Lt. Governor will be taking the plan out to the public. The Lt. Governor and the Governor believe the support is out there.

Lt. Governor Sherrer summarized the Governor's proposal which is detailed in the Governor's letter and attachments dated March 13, 2001. ([Attachment 1](#))

Dale Dennis, Deputy Commissioner, State Board of Education presented a summary page of Governor's Graves proposal. ([Attachment 2](#)) His second presentation, is a computer printout which compares the 2000-01 general fund budget to current law for the 2001-02 school year and the Governor's enhanced school finance plan for the 2001-02 school year. ([Attachment 3](#))

Craig Grant, KNEA, presented a poll taken in each congressional district which shows that 65% would support a tax increase and 35% would not support a tax increase. ([Attachment 4](#)). The most popular reasons for raising taxes were for higher teacher salaries, lower class sizes, and increased funding for special education. Increases in sales tax and alcohol/tobacco taxes were the most popular.

Chairman Umbarger adjourned the meeting at 1:33 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled on March 15, 2001.