

MINUTES

Government Operations & Audit Committee



Senator Dean Wink, Chair
Representative Ernie Otten, Vice Chair

**Fifth Meeting, 2023 Interim
Wednesday, November 8, 2023**

**Room 414 – State Capitol
Pierre, South Dakota**

The fifth meeting of the 2023 Interim Government Operations and Audit Committee (Committee) was called to order by Chair Wink at 9:00 a.m., November 8, 2023, in room 414, State Capitol Building, Pierre, South Dakota.

A quorum was determined with the following members answering the roll call: Representatives Duba, Peterson, Reisch, Bartels, Otten and Senators Nesiba, Wheeler, Hunhoff and Wink. Senator Reed was excused.

Staff member present was Kelly Mikkelsen, IS Audit Manager for the Department of Legislative Audit (DLA).

NOTE: For purpose of continuity, the following minutes are not necessarily in chronological order. The bulleted items below each agenda item are documents sent out by the Committee.

Approval of Minutes

Representative Reisch moved, seconded by Representative Otten, the minutes of the October 19, 2023 meeting be approved ([Minutes 10-19-23 Doc.1](#)). Motion prevailed unanimously on a voice vote.

Item 1 – Department of Education to provide an update on the progress with the SD Educator Portal-Educator Certification renewal process.

- [Letter to Education.2](#)

Kathryn Blaha, Director of the Division of Accreditation and Certification (Division) with the Department of Education (DOE) was present to address the Committee. She provided the role of the Division and advised that they met their deadlines in the recently completed certification renewal season. Ms. Blaha advised they processed a record number of applications this year at 4,654 compared to the previous record of 4,089. A majority of those applications were processed after the go-live date of the new system. The higher number of applications suggests there are more teachers moving into the teacher candidate pool.

Dr. Joseph Graves, Secretary of the DOE was present to address the Committee. He discussed the challenges faced by the Division including the new software program for the certification system, a shortened processing season, system duplications requiring manual corrections, more time processing a higher number of applications left less time to provide good customer service, increased flexibility in certification requirements leads to more complications and processing time, and staff shortages at DOE.

Dr. Graves then provided the solutions the Division is pursuing, including being fully staffed, working with the software vendor and the Bureau of Information and Telecommunications (BIT), providing a Frequently Asked Questions document available online, and using additional DOE staff to help in areas needed. Dr. Graves advised for the new accreditation period beginning January 1, 2024, they are looking at adding an Ombudsman to the Department, continuing to work with the vendor and BIT, and developing a series of tutorial videos.

Dr. Graves also discussed bringing forth legislation to move Suicide Prevention Training from a certification requirement to an accreditation requirement, discontinuing the Coaching Endorsement, participating in a workgroup of school districts using international teachers, and continuing to enhance the software system.

Committee members inquired about the number of pending applications, the Division's process of following up with incomplete applications, who was involved with choosing the new software, if the LEAN process was utilized, why there were so many issues with the software, and the impact to teacher pay.

Representative Otten moved, seconded by Representative Reisch, to adopt DOE's report. The motion passed 8-0 on a roll call vote.

Item 2 – Department of Social Services and the Department of Human Services to provide an update on the Dakota at Home program and address the concerns provided by the Committee

- [Letter to DSS Doc.3](#)
- [Letter to DHS Doc.3a](#)
- [Representative Duba Bullet Points Doc.3b](#)
- [Dakota At Home Presentation Doc.3c](#)

Shawnie Rechtenbaugh, the Cabinet Secretary of the Department of Human Services (DHS) was present to address the Committee. She provided the [Dakota At Home Presentation](#) and background on Dakota at Home administered by DHS. She provided examples of recent call scenarios received through Dakota at Home. Ms. Rechtenbaugh also addressed the 2018 study performed by the Legislative Research Council and DHS's written response in 2020.

Heather Krzmarzick, Director of the Division of Long Term Services and Supports (LTSS) with DHS was present to address the Committee. She explained the Intake Specialist with DHS are credentialed as Certified Community Resource Specialists in Aging and Disabilities.

Mary Johnle, Medical Eligibility Program Administrator for Economic Assistance in the Department of Social Services (DSS) was present to address the Committee. She explained that they have Benefits Specialist to assist with the application process. They follow up with the applicants or Dakota at Home if there are concerns regarding the application coming back. At this time, DSS does not track the number of applications not returned.

Committee members asked questions about Intake Specialist training, if they coordinated with discharge planners, how they compare with other states, timeframes to get results, the process for following up on applications not received back, duplication of services, collaboration of resources, and the outcomes of referrals.

Representative Reisch moved, seconded by Representative Otten, to approve the report provided by DHS and DSS. The motion passed 7-2 on a roll call vote.

A motion was made by Senator Wheeler to adjourn, seconded by Representative Bartels. The motion passed on a voice vote.

DRAFT