

**Minutes**  
**LEGISLATIVE AUDIT COMMISSION**  
**March 8, 2022**

Members Present:

Representative Connie Bernardy  
Representative Sondra Erickson  
Representative Rick Hansen  
Representative Nels Pierson  
Representative Duane Quam  
Senator Nick A. Frentz  
Senator Mark W. Koran

Members Absent:

Representative Tina Liebling  
Senator Michelle Benson  
Senator Mary Kiffmeyer  
Senator Matt D. Klein  
Senator Ann H. Rest

Senator Koran, Chair, called the Legislative Audit Commission (LAC) meeting to order at 8:34 a.m. The purpose of the meeting was to release the Office of the Legislative Auditor's (OLA's) evaluation, *Minnesota Department of Education's Role in Addressing the Achievement Gap*.

Judy Randall, Legislative Auditor, explained that the achievement gap has been a top concern in Minnesota, especially when the Federal Reserve said that Minnesota has the largest achievement gap in the nation. Ms. Randall said there is not a common understanding of what an achievement gap is and state law does not define it or how to measure it. Ms. Randall introduced Sarah Delacueva, Evaluation Manager for OLA's Program Evaluation Division, to provide a presentation on the report. Ms. Delacueva gave background information on the achievement gap and discussed the Minnesota Department of Education's (MDE's) administration of four K-12 education initiatives related to the achievement gap: (1) World's Best Workforce, (2) Achievement and Integration for Minnesota, (3) American Indian Education, and (4) Regional Centers of Excellence. Additionally, she described the recommendations made by the evaluation.

Senator Koran invited Heather Mueller, MDE Commissioner, to respond to the evaluation. Ms. Mueller thanked the OLA staff for their time and effort put into the evaluation. She said that MDE agrees with the report's assessment and findings that they are best positioned to help districts and schools close the achievement gap; however, she said that there are sections of the report where MDE disagrees. Ms. Mueller also discussed program funding and the constraints on the department's ability to reallocate funding to specific programs.

After discussion, including questions and answers, between members and the commissioner, Senator Koran adjourned the meeting at 9:56 a.m.

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Senator Mark W. Koran, Chair

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Shelly Gilb, Recording Secretary