

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Minutes

The eighteenth meeting of the Education Committee convened at 2:00 P.M., Tuesday afternoon, February 26, 1963 in the auditorium of the Topeka High School, 800 West Tenth Street, with Chairman Bower presiding. All the members were present except Messrs. Dreiling and Teter.

The meeting was called for the express purpose of hearing opponents of mandatory unification of school districts.

Chairman Bower welcomed the visitors and asked that each be as brief as possible. The following persons appeared and spoke before the Committee:

Mr. Wayne Luedke, School Board member from Colony, felt that the bill is designed to relieve schools financially where there are large enrollments and small valuations, that local control should not be taken away as it would result in loss of interest in schools and that 750 students will not be an improvement -- 100 to 200 is an ideal number for high schools.

Mr. Harold Borcelt, School Board member, Zenda, Kingman County, felt that the bill is mandatory and gives the State Superintendent dictatorial powers over the school system; that people in the service class paid little property tax making the taxing of schools unfair.

Mr. J. K. Ryman, School Board member, Geuda Springs, explained their per pupil costs which he felt were high and pointed out their transportation problem; he stated further that their schools were giving adequate education without consolidation.

Mr. George Cole, Superintendent of Schools, Herndon, cited his opposition to the bill and stated emphatically that he was against the removal of local controls of the school, that it was dictatorial and took away our American freedoms, and that he would fight if necessary.

Mr. E. J. Wilson, County Superintendent, Douglas County, Lawrence, stated they look at this bill as a permissive type of procedure and felt that the moratorium should be extended to two years; he stated further that he didn't see how their school situation could be improved very much.

Mr. Ralph Titswort, School Board member, Beloit, felt that the law we have now is sufficient for unification with 180 consolidations last year. He discussed the paying of teachers according to ability and Kansas' rank among other States in education.

Mr. Henry Schrock, Hutchinson, urged the extension of the past democratic school system and felt that unification would mean rising costs without bringing about a better product, that schools should be left in the hands of the community. He feared unwholesome moral effects of large schools.

Mr. Carl Wolf, School Board member, Geuda Springs, disliked the planning board set up in the bill feeling that some schools would not be represented fairly and that the 750 student figure was unrealistic; he stated further that they had made many improvements and the bill was not needed.

Mr. Leonard Schamber, Rooks County, District Jt. Damar, felt the bill was powered by a minority group and that there is no need for the bill;

he cited the value of small schools and stated that with the population explosion the emphasis should not be on closing schools. He stated further that some kind of unification was necessary but should not be compulsory; he asked the legislature to do some serious thinking on this bill.

Mr. Milton Stensas, Norway, stated that they are unifying districts and that the bill represents money rather than education, with rural people being asked to pay for the city schools; that it is nothing more than dictatorship.

Mr. Verl Young, Munden, felt the bill pertains only to finances; he cited juvenile delinquency arising from large high schools and stated that they had very few drop outs from their small high schools; he felt that much citizenship could be developed in four years.

Mr. Pete Hawkinson, Blue Valley High School, Blue Valley, felt that the 750 student figure in the bill was unreasonable, and gave the situation in his area.

Mr. Edgar Reed, Solomon High School, Solomon, felt that they were consolidating and that a compulsory bill was not needed.

Mr. Dale Dunlap, Johnson County felt that the bill was financial rather than educational and urged the Committee to consider local conditions of grades 1 through 12. He cited the special need in their area concerning the planning board in order to receive fair representation.

Mr. Wm H. Rice, Franklin County, invited Mr. Angell to show members of the committee to a map of their school districts, of which they are not proud, planned by a lawyer; he wanted to know who would pay for the school districts.

Mr. L. A. Dubbs, Ransom, spoke about his small town and told that he didn't like unification either, but pointed out that the Committee had softened the bill to a great extent. He urged them to agree to unify, that it would give them their last chance to be controlled by the community in which they live and sit at the bargaining table.

Mrs. Peggy Huggins, Olathe felt unification was bad for the schools, controlled by minor groups and heading K.S.T.A. She cited a California survey by lay people which opposed unification. She felt if unification was beneficial then it need not be mandatory; she urged local control of the schools.

The meeting adjourned at 4:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted

By John D. Bower
Chairman