

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

The meeting was called to order by Representative Denise Apt at
Chairperson

3:35 ~~xx~~ p.m. on February 9, 1987 in room 519-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Representative Robert D. Miller, who was excused

Committee staff present:

Avis Swartzman, Revisor of Statutes' Office
Ben Barrett, Legislative Research
Carolyn Rampey, Legislative Research
Alice Barron, Acting Secretary to the Committee

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Craig Grant, Kansas National Education Association
Sally Rogers, Kansas National Education Association, Staff Attorney
Jim Copple, Wichita Federation of Teachers, Legislative Director
Richard Funk, Kansas Association of School Boards, Assistant Executive Director
Gerald W. Henderson, United School Administrators of Kansas, Executive Director
Marian Russell, Teacher, Leavenworth
Arthena Massoth, Teacher, Leavenworth
Retta Reinoehl, Kindergarten Teacher, Olathe
Janet Blume, Kindergarten Teacher, Leavenworth
Wilma Gillespie, Teacher, Leavenworth
Kathy Ostrowski, Private Citizen, Topeka
Brilla Highfill Scott, United School Administrators, Associate Executive Director

Chairman Apt called the meeting to order with a request for a committee bill.

Representative Don Crumbaker requested a committee bill authorizing school districts to exceed the budget limitations prescribed for the 1987 - 88 school year by one percentage point with the increase being subject to protest petition. Representative Don Crumbaker moved that this bill be introduced as a committee bill. Seconded by Representative Bill Reardon. Motion carried.

Chairman Apt opened the hearings on HB 2098 concerning teachers; relating to hearings provided for upon termination or nonrenewal of contracts thereof; affecting the duties of the hearing committee and providing for a final decision; amending K.S.A. 72-5443 and repealing the existing section.

Representative Anthony Hensley introduced HB 2098 by describing it and expressing his support.

Craig Grant, Kansas National Education Association, asked that the committee report HB 2098 favorable for passage. Kansas National Education Association believes that the best change for both sides would be for any decision of a due process panel to be final.
(Attachment I)

Sally Rogers, Kansas National Education Association, spoke in favor of HB 2098, saying that passage of this law would serve to ensure that teachers in the state receive the due process to which they are entitled. (Attachment II)

Jim Copple, Wichita Federation of Teachers, supports HB 2098, believing it will enhance and strengthen the professional rights of the teacher.
(Attachment III)

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION,
room 519-S Statehouse, at 3:35 ~~am~~/p.m. on February 9, 1987

Richard Funk, Kansas Association of School Boards, asks that HB 2098 be reported unfavorably for passage because he feels it would make the hearing committee almost judicial in nature and in effect, take all local control away from the elected officials who make up the local school board. (Attachment IV)

Gerald W. Henderson, United School Administrators of Kansas, spoke in opposition to HB 2098 as yet another attempt to erode the authority and responsibility of local boards of education. (Attachment V)

Chairman Denise Apt asked if there were anyone else wishing to appear on HB 2098. There was not. The hearings on HB 2098 were closed.

Chairman Apt directed attention to HB 2103, concerning school districts; relating to the age of eligibility of children for attendance in kindergarten and first grade; amending K.S.A. 72-1107 and repealing the existing section.

Representative Clyde Graeber introduced HB 2103 by saying this bill is strongly supported and believed in by kindergarten teachers in his district. He believes there is merit to this proposal and benefit could be accomplished by the passage of this bill for young people of the state. By moving the qualifying age for entering kindergarten back from September to June, the older students entering kindergarten would be more trainable and better prepared to accept education. HB 2103 would be beneficial to our state and our children.

Marian Russell, teacher, spoke in behalf of HB 2103 because educational programs for children should be promoted in terms of the child's development, not in terms of what one thinks it ought to be. She said HB 2103 would give a child the gift of time. (Attachment VI)

Arthena Massoth, teacher, supports HB 2103 saying the present entrance age has built-in expectations and requirements that children cannot attain. (Attachment VII)

Retta Reinoehl, teacher, spoke in favor of HB 2103 pointing out younger children are not ready for the present kindergarten curriculum. She feels it would be better to wait a year and be sure the child is ready for the kindergarten experience, than to risk the unfortunate consequences of beginning before having developed the ability to succeed. (Attachment VIII)

Janet Blume, kindergarten teacher, expressed support for HB 2103 indicating the results of a survey of kindergarten teachers, principals, superintendants, and school nurses showed concern about kindergarten readiness. (Attachment IX)

Wilma Gillespie, teacher, emphasized the need for change in the entrance age for a kindergarten child and urged support of the committee for HB 2103. (Attachment X)

Jim Copple, Wichita Federation of Teachers, urged the adoption of HB 2103 as current research provided by the Educational Issues Department of the American Federation of Teachers and the National Institute of Child Development supports the principles and goals of HB 2103. (Attachment XI)

Craig Grant, Kansas National Education Association, supports HB 2103, because delegates to their state representative assembly overwhelmingly agreed with kindergarten teachers who brought this to their attention, that an extra three months of maturity would make a difference in the development of most youngsters. (Attachment XII)

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION,
room 519-S, Statehouse, at 3:35 ~~xx~~ p.m. on February 9, 1987.

Kathy Ostrowski, private citizen, endorses HB 2103 because she believes children's readiness levels change within short time spans and changing entrance age for kindergarten children would benefit more children.
(Attachment XIII)

Richard Funk, Kansas Association of School Boards, opposed HB 2103, saying the established date works very well throughout Kansas.
(Attachment XIV)

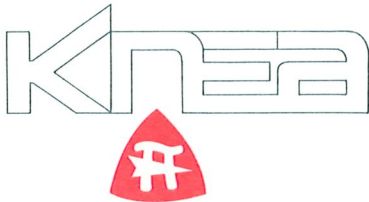
Brilla Highfill Scott, United School Administrators of Kansas, indicated the United School Administrators of Kansas has mixed feelings about HB 2103, but believe that regardless of the statutory age of entry there will be children who are ready for school and children who are not. (Attachment XV)

Following a period of questions and answers, hearings on HB 2103 were declared closed.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m. by the chairman. The next meeting will be Wednesday, February 11, at 3:30 p.m. in Room 519-S.

Craig Grant Testimony Before The
House Education Committee

February 9, 1987



Thank you, Madame Chairman. Members of the Committee, my name is Craig Grant and I represent Kansas-NEA. I appreciate this chance to visit with you about HB 2098.

A few years ago this legislature passed a change in the due process law which made unanimous decisions binding on both parties. We applauded the representatives for their action and hoped that this action would help alleviate some of our concerns about due process being afforded teachers who are terminated or nonrenewed if they have completed the three year probationary period. You will note--if you were on previous years' education committees--that Kansas-NEA did not bring this topic up for discussion for the last two legislative sessions. We wanted to see if the change would work. Unfortunately, we find that it has not done so.

Instead of alleviating problems, the change created a situation where there are no longer unanimous decisions by due process panels. As you remember, the teacher and the board each appoints a member to the panel and a neutral third person is also appointed. It has become quite evident that both sides are appointing panelists who will only vote for one side. We are asking that the legislature allow the panel's decision to stand and force both sides to abide by the decision.

The hue and cry of local control is always raised when this topic is surfaced. I would argue that local boards are still afforded the local decision making authority. The one catch is that these decisions should

Attachment I
House Education 2/9/87

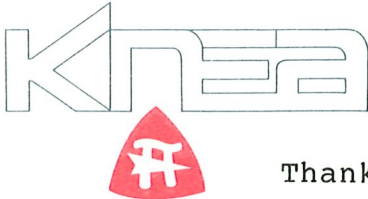
Craig Grant Testimony Before House Education Committee, 2/9/87, page two

not treat the individual teacher in an arbitrary or capricious manner. That protection should be afforded each and every public employee. The best way to handle any alleged arbitrary or capricious action is through the administrative procedures of a due process panel rather than through the expensive and lengthy court system. We find that court cases have increased rather than decreased under the new changes.

Kansas-NEA believes that the best change for both sides would be for any decision of a due process panel to be final. Many of the 2-1 decisions have been against the teacher while some have decided against the board. No matter which way it is decided, there is pressure to take the case to court. Both sides would be under less pressure if the decision were final.

Kansas-NEA asks that the committee report HB 2098 favorable for passage. We made a first step which did not work and now it is time to take the next step to guarantee due process for the teachers in this state. Thank you for listening to our concerns.

Sally Rogers Testimony Before
The House Education Committee
February 9, 1987



Thank you Madame Chairman. Members of the Committee, my name is Sally Rogers and I am the staff attorney at Kansas-NEA. I would like to thank you for this opportunity to speak to you about HB 2098.

The change in the due process law that took place several years ago and which made unanimous due process panel decisions binding was in theory, a good one. Unfortunately, the practical result of this change has been to ensure that there won't be any unanimous panel decisions. In short, the reverse of what was intended has taken place. Since the change in the law, the Kansas-NEA legal department has handled 27 due process cases, and consequently 27 hearings have taken place. Of those 27 decisions, there has been one unanimous, 3-0 decision. I believe this statistic speaks, rather loudly, for itself.

It is a reality that Boards of Education appoint to due process panels individuals who are sympathetic to their interests, as do teachers. By making 2-1 decisions binding, the neutral panel appointee will fulfill his/her intended role. By placing the focus on the neutral panel member, attempts to circumvent unanimous binding decisions by appointing partial panel members will be avoided. It will be much less important, to both sides to appoint an individual who will only vote for one side.

When the due process law was enacted, it was intended to be a method for reducing unnecessary litigation. The law providing for due process panels was intended to keep the process at the administrative level and out of the court system. Under the current status of the law, a Board of Education may reject a 2-1 panel decision in favor of the teacher, without explanation. In those types of cases litigation will undoubtedly follow. I might also add that it is quite discouraging to prepare extensively for a due process hearing, and receive a favorable decision, only to have that decision rejected by the Board of Education. Both sides invest a considerable amount of time and money and emotion in preparing for due process hearings. Consequently, it is only logical to afford the panel's decision some degree of finality.

Finally, I believe the issue of local control raised by opponents of HB 2098, is simply not an issue. Local school boards possess no less decision making authority under the proposed changes in the law, than they presently possess now. Those panel decisions which are truly arbitrary and have no basis in fact are still subject to judicial review.

Kansas-NEA asks that this committee report HB 2098 favorably for passage. Passage of this law would serve to ensure that teachers in the state receive the due process to which they are entitled. Thank you for listening to our concerns.

Wichita Federation of Teachers

Local 725, American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL NO. 2098

James E. Copple
Legislative Director
Wichita Federation of Teachers

The American Federation of Teachers welcomes any effort that will enhance and strengthen the professional rights of the teacher. House Bill No. 2098 addresses an issue that the current law ignores. The issue is the right of a teacher to have his/her case heard before an impartial board, and then, to have the decision of that board stand as binding for all parties. It is an issue, that if corrected, will give hearing boards authority along with their current responsibility. All parties will stand to benefit by changing the current law. If the law remains the same, then what is left, as primary beneficiary, is the arbitrary character associated with the right of a school board to ignore the opinion of a hearing board whose decision is not unanimous. Professionals deserve more from their employers. The teachers of the state of Kansas are prepared to forego unanimity in such decisions, if they could be assured that the decisions of the impartial board were binding.

I see the following advantages to House Bill No. 2098.

1. It is consistent with national efforts to afford the vocation of teaching full rights and privileges associated with being professionals. The professional teacher should have the right to enter a hearing with the knowledge that the board who has the responsibility to hear his/her

case also possesses the authority to act upon his/her case.

2. School Boards will no longer be placed in the awkward position of determining the final outcome of a case when the decision is not unanimous. This will be a positive step in removing tension that can emerge between boards of education and teachers.

3. It is expedient and fair. The current review process of a the board of education prolongs the hearing procedure by at least 30 days. The decision of the hearing board is binding except as the teacher and the board wish to resolve the issue in district court. This is a fair alternative to the binding decision of a board of education when the hearing board's decision is not unanimous.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable reading of House Bill No. 2098.

KANSAS
ASSOCIATION



OF
SCHOOL
BOARDS



5401 S. W. 7th Avenue Topeka, Kansas 66606
913-273-3600

TESTIMONY ON H.B. 2098

by

Richard Funk, Assistant Executive Director
Kansas Association of School Boards

February 9, 1987

Madam Chairman and members of the committee, we appreciate the opportunity to testify today on behalf of the 302 members of the Kansas Association of School Boards. KASB is opposed to the amendments offered in H.B. 2098. The hearing committee, as constituted by amending K.S.A. 72-5443, would become almost judicial in nature. This was not the intent of the statute. The intent is to give an employee an opportunity to present items of fact before an impartial committee. It was always assumed that the local board was partial and therefore the teacher had no opportunity other than the district court in which to tell "their side of the story."

By acting favorably on H.B. 2098 you will make a 2-1 opinion by the hearing panel binding upon the local board. In effect, you take all local control away from the elected officials. We watered down K.S.A. 72-5443 by making a 3-0 decision binding upon the local board. This is a further attempt to dilute the power vested in the local board by the voters of the district.

I ask you to report H.B. 2098 unfavorably for passage.

Attachment IV

House Education 2/9/87



HB 2098

Testimony presented before the House Education Committee
by Gerald W. Henderson, Executive Director
United School Administrators of Kansas

February 9, 1987

Madam Chairman and members of the committee. United School Administrators of Kansas must speak in opposition to HB 2098 as yet another attempt to erode the authority and responsibility of local boards of education.

Current law requires that local boards adopt the opinion of the hearing committee if that opinion is unanimous. It is the view of our association that in less than unanimous opinions the final decision must remain with elected officials who are responsible to the voters of a district.

We respectfully ask that you report HB 2098 unfavorably.

GWH/ed

Attachment V
House Education 2/9/87

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE, I THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK IN BEHALF OF HOUSE BILL 2103. I AM MARIAN RUSSELL AND MY TEACHING CAREER OF THIRTY YEARS RANGES FROM PRE-SCHOOL TO JUNIOR HIGH CLASSES. FOR THE PAST FOURTEEN YEARS, I HAVE BEEN A KINDERGARTEN TEACHER IN LEAVENWORTH. I WOULD LIKE TO TALK ABOUT . . .

THE DEVELOPMENTAL POINT OF VIEW

INTELLIGENT ATTENTION TO THE CRITICAL TIME A CHILD'S LIFE, HIS INITIAL ENTRANCE TO SCHOOL, IS LONG OVERDUE. OFTEN TEACHERS HAVE BEEN CRITICIZED FOR NOT LOOKING TO RESEARCH FOR GUIDANCE IN ALL ENDEAVORS. THE GESELL INSTITUTE OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT HAS BEEN CONDUCTING RESEARCH FOR OVER SIXTY YEARS: AND THEIR RESEARCH SHOWS THAT SCHOOL READINESS IS BASED UPON THE BIOLOGICAL-MATURATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF EACH CHILD.

THE DEVELOPMENTAL POINT OF VIEW MEANS UNDERSTANDING THAT GROWTH IS ORDERLY, STRUCTURED, PREDICTABLE. BECAUSE A CHILD IS A LIVING ORGANISM, HE IS SUBJECT TO THE SAME LAWS OF GROWTH AS EVERY OTHER SPECIES IN NATURE AND HAS A CYCLE OF DEVELOPMENT PECULIAR TO HUMANS IN GENERAL. IN THIS WAY, HE IS LIKE EVERY OTHER CHILD.

THE DEVELOPMENTAL POINT OF VIEW MEANS RESPECTING THE FACT THAT EVERY CHILD HAS HIS OWN RATE AND PATTERN OF GROWTH PECULIAR TO HIM. IN THIS WAY, HE IS DIFFERENT FROM EVERY OTHER CHILD.

THE DEVELOPMENTAL POINT OF VIEW MEANS ACCEPTING THE CHILD AS A TOTAL ACTION SYSTEM: HIS PHYSICAL, SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND INTELLECTUAL COMPONENTS DEPENDING UPON AND SUPPORTING EACH OTHER. THESE COMPONENTS ARE NOT SEPARATE, AND ONE CANNOT BE STRETCHED AHEAD OF THE OTHERS WITHOUT UPSETTING AN INTRINSIC AND INTRICATE BALANCE.

THE DEVELOPMENTAL POINT OF VIEW MEANS APPRECIATING THAT READINESS FOR ANY GIVEN TASK HAS ITS ROOTS IN THE BIOLOGICAL-MATURATIONAL MAKE-UP OF THE CHILD. WE CAN NEITHER PRODUCE IT, HURRY IT, NOR IGNORE IT. WHEN A CHILD IS READY, HE WILL BE BORN . . . WALK . . . TALK . . . READ.

THE DEVELOPMENTAL POINT OF VIEW MEANS PROMOTING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN IN TERMS OF DEVELOPMENT AS IT IS, NOT IN TERMS OF WHAT ONE THINKS IT OUGHT TO BE.

THE DEVELOPMENTAL POINT OF VIEW MEANS WALKING HAND IN HAND WITH NATURE. IT IS A RESPECT FOR THE TOTAL HUMANNESS OF CHILDREN.

SUCCESS IN LIFE IS OUR PRIME GOAL. SUCCESS IN SCHOOL IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY. THE HOUSE BILL 2103 IS A CONSIDERATION YOU HAVE THAT WOULD BENEFIT THE SUMMER CHILDREN. IT WOULD BE A GIFT OF TIME--ONE OF THE MOST PRECIOUS GIFTS WE CAN GIVE A CHILD.

"HOLD CHILDHOOD IN REVERENCE, AND DO NOT BE IN ANY HURRY TO JUDGE IT FOR GOOD OR ILL . . . GIVE NATURE TIME TO WORK BEFORE YOU TAKE OVER HER TASK, LEST YOU INTERFERE WITH HER METHOD . . . A CHILD ILL TAUGHT IS FURTHER FROM VIRTUE THAN A CHILD WHO HAS LEARNED NOTHING."

ROUSSEAU

Ladies and Gentlemen of the House Education Committee, I would like to thank you for this opportunity to speak in behalf of House Bill #2103. I am Arthena Massoth from Leavenworth and have taught school 20 years (18 have been in Kindergarten).

That a problem exists with the entrance age of children is quite clear. Educators always hope that when children are chronologically ready for Kindergarten they will be ready intellectually, emotionally, and physically, but this is not always the case.

I would like to mention some of the ways schools are dealing with this problem.

1. First, more and more states are moving the cutoff dates back so children are older when they enter school.

2. Secondly, schools can use a screening process to determine children's readiness to enter Kindergarten. Oklahoma just passed a State law that states all Kindergarten children must be screened before entering school. They feel children must be identified for school entrance by their MATURITY LEVEL not CHRONOLOGICAL AGE. This process takes personnel and equipment that are in short supply. Also parents have told their children they are going to Kindergarten when they are five and if they are screened and told differently, the child and parents are both disappointed.

3. Thirdly, parents can hold their too young children another year before entering them in school (however, only a few parents are willing to do this). The right kind of Pre-schools or Head-Start programs (with play emphasized) and good home enrichment experiences are often very helpful and prevent undue stress, frustration, and failure.

4. Fourth, parents are beginning to push their schools to reduce academic pressures in the early grades by not stressing academics the first year in school.

5. A fifth consideration and one chosen by many schools, is to assign developmentally unready children to a special Kindergarten and/or have a transition room between Kindergarten and First grade. The Pre-Kindergarten is good, but the Transition Room follows a year of failure before the child has a year of success.

6. Sixth, another alternative is repeating a grade. This has been found to work under certain conditions, but by stressing failure the child is less likely to produce positive results.

We feel the present entrance age has built-in expectations and requirements that are simply "TOO MUCH TOO SOON FOR TOO MANY YOUNG CHILDREN." A sure prescription for trouble is making learning stressful. Too often we attack the child's attitude by saying, "He could do better if he would", when it would be more accurate to say, "He would do better if he could."

I have given you the possible actions schools can take to provide for the "unready child", however, we feel if the entrance age was moved to June 1, the number of unready children would be less and give children that all IMPORTANT POSITIVE START. Most of all, the children could see their first year in school as a year of positive experience and feel successful (often a good indicator of CONTINUED ACADEMIC SUCCESS.)

After 20 years of observing younger children struggle, I wholeheartedly support this bill and hope you will too.

Thank you again for letting us come before you and explain why we think the entrance age for Kindergarten should be moved from September 1 to June 1.

Arthana Massoth
Kindergarten Teacher
USD #453
Leavenworth, Kansas

In its report entitled Becoming a Nation of Readers, the commission on reading states, "Based on the best evidence available at the present time, the Commission favors a balanced kindergarten program in reading and language that includes both formal and informal approaches. The important point is that instruction should be systematic but free from undue pressure. We advise caution in being so impatient for our children that we turn kindergartens, and even nursery schools and daycare centers, into academic bootcamps." Yet, more and more, teachers are being required to apply a first grade curriculum to kindergarten children, and younger children are especially not ready for this tougher curriculum.

Children having birthdays in June, July, and August are the youngest students in our classes. They should be given more time before beginning formal schooling to explore and discover, to be creative, fantasize, verbalize, play and learn informally. Waiting an extra year to begin kindergarten would give them time to acquire adequate language, motor and perception development and/or adequate social and maturation adjustment.

I have had a few parents, especially parents of sons who would have turned five years of age during the three months prior to the present September 1 cut-off date, who have held their sons out of kindergarten an extra year until the age of six. Each of these children has been very successful, both academically and socially in his kindergarten year and has gone on to first grade performing in the higher reading groups. On the other hand, those students who entered kindergarten as the youngest in the class most often experienced a great deal of frustration academically, and often developed social/behavioral problems. Another year before coming to kindergarten would have given these children time to further develop the needed learning modalities, including expressive and receptive language, fine motor skills, and visual and auditory skills to master the abstract and concrete concepts introduced in the kinder-

garten program. Instead, these children came when they were younger and experienced a great deal of frustration or even failure.

Young five year olds do not possess the fine muscle control necessary to write numbers and letters restricted to lines, or to draw an angle in a simple shape like a triangle. Even children who, according to their parents, "can write all their numerals," often do so laboriously, printing them backwards, and in various sizes, and grasping the pencil so hard you fear it will break. Younger students also have difficulty attending; they are easily distracted from the task at hand. A great deal of time must be given to these students to develop better eye contact and improve listening skills.

Giving children work that requires much close attention before their eyes are ready for it can result in nearsightedness that would otherwise not occur. Studies have shown that those children whose close work is limited until after age six have a lower incidence of nearsightedness at age ten than do the general population.

I feel that whether or not a child falls in love with learning in the school setting is strongly influenced by whether his or her experiences in kindergarten have been successful, or if they have been frustrating. Kindergarten sets the pace for the years to follow. If a child gets off to a slow or unhappy start, the gap between age and achievement level widens as the years go by. Thus, the student may fall behind as much as a year or more in achievement by the time he is in the intermediate grades.

Finally, children who are bright but physically unable to perform certain tasks grow increasingly frustrated in school. Allowing children to enter school according to developmental age rather than chronological age is very important. Moving the cut-off date back to June 1 will greatly benefit these younger students. It would be far better to wait a year and be sure the child is ready for the kindergarten experience, than to risk the unfortunate consequences of beginning before having developed the ability to succeed.

Ladies and gentlemen of the House Education Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you in favor of HB 2103. Since giving testimony on this bill last year, we wanted to obtain the views of Kindergarten teachers across the state, so we surveyed the Kindergarten teachers of Kansas. A copy of our survey is attached to my testimony. Here are the results: 211 out of 304 school districts responded, which was 70%. 500 of 1053 surveys sent out were returned, which was 47%. On question #1 (Do teachers find that children with summer birthdays show signs of immaturity?), 79% said yes, 13% said no, and 8% were undecided or had no comment. On question #2 (Do they show signs of stress?), 71% said yes, 21% said no, and 8% were undecided or had no comment. On question #3 (Do they favor the cutoff date moved back to June 1?), 67% said yes, 28% said no, and 5% were undecided or had no comment. On question #4 (Would they be in favor of a statewide developmental screening device?), 81% said yes, 16% said no, and 3% were undecided or had no comment.

We heard from Superintendants, Principals, school nurses, but mostly from Kindergarten teachers, the people who work most closely with children this age. Their comments show a concern about Kindergarten readiness and what we are and aren't doing about it. A child's introduction to the school system is critical. Disappointing experiences during the early school years can have a dramatic impact on the later school years. Since 1957, when Sputnik provided the impetus for the "curriculum shove-down", the problem of early entrance has grown. Much of what used to be taught in first grade is now taught in Kindergarten. Children at ages 4 and 5 have a genuine need to play, and the quality and quantity of the time they spend playing are later seen (or observed to be lacking) in their creative thought, ability to make decisions, and potential for coping with

stressful situations. Many pediatricians are expressing concern about the increase of stress-related symptoms seen in young children. Studies on teenage suicides show an alarming increase and correlation with summer birthdays. Are we asking for too much too soon?

We all want success for our students! When a child enters formal schooling with the maturity and development he/she needs in order to cope and learn, he/she can be more assured of that success. As the policymakers of Kansas, you can help to insure that success by passing this bill---at no cost to the state or its taxpayers!

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Blume

Janet Blume
Kindergarten Teacher
Leavenworth, Kansas

Kindergarten Readiness Survey

Name (optional) _____
School _____
School address _____

School District _____
Years experience teaching Kindergarten _____

Do you believe that those Kindergarteners you've had in your classes who've turned five during the summer months (June, July, August) prior to the beginning of school are generally immature and lack the necessary development for success in the Kindergarten year?

yes no Comments _____

Do you feel that these children born in the summer months show signs of stress because they're placed in Kindergarten before they're ready?

yes no Comments _____

At the present time, according to Kansas law, children who reach their fifth birthday on or before September 1st are eligible for Kindergarten. Do you believe this date should be moved back to June 1st?

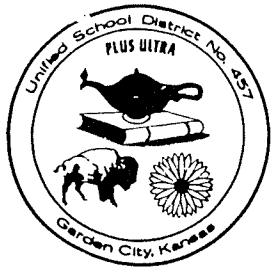
yes no Comments _____

Would you favor the use of a statewide adopted developmental screening device to determine a child's readiness for Kindergarten?

yes no Comments _____

Additional comments _____

Thank you for your input! Please return this survey to: Janet Blume, 1313 Delaware, Leavenworth, Kansas, 66048, by January 1, 1987.



Unified School District 457

201 Buffalo Jones Avenue • Garden City, Kansas 67846 • (316) 275-9656

November 26, 1986

SUPERINTENDENT

CHARLES O. STONES

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENTS

DR. RONALD J. LANTAFF

Administration & Personnel

DR. ROBERT C. CREAMER

Instruction & Research

ROBERT H. RAGAN

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KAREN A. TANNER

DUANE S. WERNER

Janet Blume
1313 Delaware
Leavenworth, Kansas 66048

Dear Janet:

Strong feelings are held by me regarding questions asked on your readiness survey. Your efforts in this venture are very important.

The average child needs to be a minimum of six years and six months old before the formal reading process is begun. The more ready a child is, the greater the chance for success in school experiences.

We would in no way think of telling a family or expecting a child to cut a specific tooth on a certain month and year of a child's life. We are not disturbed if a child has not cut a tooth at the same time as the neighbor's child. To force a child to read is about as successful as attempting to force a child to cut a tooth. The problem in forcing a child to read results in failure or poor self-image, leading to frustrations and failure in the future.

If evaluation instruments are proven to the degree that they are reliable, I would strongly support such evaluations. It could be that a backup procedure could be designed to check the student who scored poorly on the test but whose parents questioned the validity in that particular instance.

If you share the findings of your survey, please send me a copy.

Sincerely,

Charles O. Stones
Superintendent of Schools

COS/km

To: Whom It May Concern

Re: Age Requirement for Kindergarten

Our daughter's birthday is in August, she entered kindergarten at the age of five. Some mornings she was reluctant to go to school. When she had papers which were less than perfect she did not want her older sister and brother to see them. Both of the above behaviors had not occurred when she attended pre-school.

At Thanksgiving vacation she returned to pre-school and started kindergarten the following year. She is now fifteen and is socially well-adjusted, truly wants to attend school, and is in advanced science and math courses.

We feel these successes are a result of her maturity before beginning kindergarten and continuing the grades.

Sincerely,

Jeanette Merna Roe

Jim and Merna Roe

- ATTACHMENT 5 March 3, 1986
HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Attachment X
House Education 2/9/87

House Education Committee:

I am writing this letter in reference to moving the Kindergarten entrance date back to June 1. I am a native Kansan with twenty years experience in First grade and Kindergarten teaching.

I have had the opportunity over these past years to observe children who have had success and failure. The overwhelming majority of failures were students with June, July or August birthdates. My teaching experience has been in school districts with above average students in ability and social background.

The past five years I have been involved in helping parents understand the developmental aspect to success in school. I am certified to give the Gesell Maturity Test for children in our school district. I am encouraged that some parents are beginning to see that success in school is directly related to a child's maturity. It is very frustrating for a highly intelligent child to not achieve high success in school due to immaturity of organization, attention span, and fine motor skills.

I am also the mother of a child whose birthday is June 24. His father and I decided to delay his entrance to school because of that. It has been a very wise decision. Because of his maturity, he is a very well adjusted and capable student in all areas.

I also hope that the entrance date would be enforced so that children transferring from other states would not be allowed to enroll into first grade unless they met maturation testing provided by the school district.

Sincerely,

Barbara Erzen

Barbara Erzen
Kindergarten Teacher
USD #207
Fort Leavenworth

February 21, 1986

To: House Education Committee

We would like to address the bill that has been proposed regarding moving the entrance date back gradually for Kindergardeners to enter school.

We are parents of a daughter who has an August birthday. We elected to not send her to school when she turned five as her birthday was only fifteen days prior to the beginning of school that year. We have never and will never regret the decision to hold her back as school is exciting and fun for her. At the same time she has an advantage over some classmates in regards to maturity level both socially and physically. We would definitely be strongly in favor of this bill from personal experience.

Thank you for your attention.

Bob Strano,
School
Administrator

Bob Strano

Tamra Strano,
Teacher and Parent

Tamra Strano

Wichita Federation of Teachers

Local 725, American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL NO. 2103

James E. Copple
Legislative Director
Wichita Federation of Teachers

Current research provided by the Educational Issues Department of the American Federation of Teachers and the National Institute of Child Development supports the principles and goals of House Bill No. 2103. Chronological readiness and learning readiness are two very different things when it comes to evaluating whether or not a child is prepared for formal education.

Louise Bates Ames of the Gesell Institute of Human Development of New Haven, Conn., has argued "all too many children do start school before they are ready. As a result, their entire school experience may be compromised." Many children entering kindergarten and first grade, whose birthdays fall in the Summer, are being placed in a no-win situation. All involved in the child's education, from teacher to parent, are frustrated when the child's behavioral age is different from his/her peers. The child is being prepared for failure. That is a situation that will follow the child throughout their education.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), in a research study of 27,807 white nine year olds, found "that only 10 percent of those in the oldest twelfth of their class (January Birthday in a state with a December 31 cutoff) are a year behind their expected grade placement, compared to over 30 percent of those in the youngest

(1)

Attachment XI

twelfth." Research would suggest that this academic disadvantage continues through the eighth grade.

What this does to the younger child's self esteem is often irreparable. Parental frustration, often directed toward the school, would be significantly diminished with a favorable reading of House Bill No. 2103. Parents want their children to succeed. Passage of this Bill would increase the chances of our kindergartners and first graders achieving both academic success and developing positive attitudes toward school.

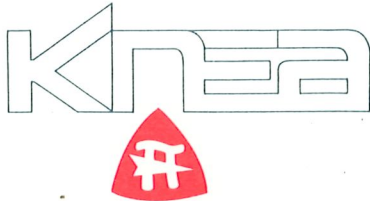
We urge the adoption of House Bill No. 2103.

I would be more than happy to provide the committee further research on the subject before us.

Quotes are from "Ready or Not" by Louise Bates Ames. Published in the Summer, 1986 issue of the American Educator.

Craig Grant Testimony Before The
House Education Committee

February 9, 1987



Thank you, Madame Chairman. Members of the Committee, my name is Craig Grant and I represent Kansas-NEA. I appreciate this opportunity to visit with the committee about HB 2103.

This is the second year in a row that this issue has been brought before this committee. A year ago Kansas-NEA had not taken an official position on the topic. Between then and now the interested and concerned kindergarten teachers, many of whom are here today, brought the idea to the floor of our state representative assembly. Our delegates overwhelmingly agreed with these teachers that the extra three months of maturity would make a world of difference in the development of most youngsters. The delegates voted to support the concept of moving the starting age of youngsters back to June 1.

I am sure that some could argue that their children are ready at 4½ for school. That could be true; however, it is the exception rather than rule. We want our children to start school when most are at the readiness level to begin formal schooling. Chances for success are much better when the child is ready.

Other conferees will give you much more information about this issue. Kansas-NEA does support them in their attempt to change the starting dates. Thank you for listening to our concerns.

Attachment XII
House Education 2/9/87

2/9/87

House Committee on Education

Honorable Representatives,

I speak to you today as a well educated person and a mother, endorsing HB 2103. This bill proposes to raise the minimum age of school admission.

As a mother of three, I have chosen to be at home for my young boys while they are becoming whole persons. And for the last seven years I have intensely researched both the history of education and theories of child development.

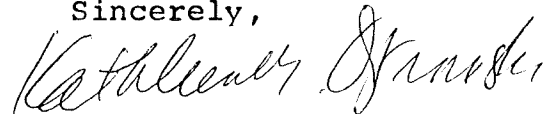
My resulting belief is that children are sent to school much too early for their own good. And I sincerely hope this nation, as a whole, will come around to this although there are economic trends that work adversely to this prospect.

The most salient point I might bring to your attention is the change in children's readiness levels within short time spans. Some babies walk at 9 mos. and others at 15 mos. Some talk well at 18 mos. and others not well til 3 yrs. Yet all these children are healthy and "on schedule."

So it is with the desire to excel at school-type activities. Not only do experts agree that this desire varies according to age, they repeatedly demonstrate a variance by sex. A higher minimum age partially recognizes this and it is a step in the right direction.

I have included an article which shows some of the common ideas USD 501 administrators are exposed to. I would be happy to bring other pertinent research from my files, should you request it.

Sincerely,



Kathleen Ostrowski
1929 Medford
Topeka, KS 66604
913-235-0416

Attachment XIII

House Education 2/9/87

Speaker says poor learners are made, not born

By ROGER AESCHLIMAN
Capital-Journal education writer

There are good students and there are poor students. It's true and that's the bad news. The good news, Topeka Unified School District 501 administrators heard Tuesday, is that the condition isn't permanent.

"Some teachers are going to hang their heads and say 'That kid just can't do it'. Well I can't buy into that. We must reject the idea that some children can't learn," Gordon Mortrude, professor of education at St. Cloud State University in St. Cloud, Minn., said. Mortrude addressed the administrators as part of USD 501's before-school in-service training.

There are myths: minorities can't learn; impoverished children or those from one-parent families can't learn; handicapped children can't learn. Wrong, wrong, wrong, Mortrude said.

"Take the poor learners and put them in with the good learners and give them the right

environment and they become more and more alike in their ability," he said. The opposite, however, also holds true.

"Make them uncomfortable in an uncomfortable environment and the differences are

"All teachers must be made to realize the awesome power to teach someone to like something or dislike something . . ."

— Gordon Mortrude,
professor of education

pushed further and further apart," he said.

Motrude has focused his studies and appearances on school discipline and has developed his own insights into education, he said. Rather than attempting to teach the administrators new methods for schooling, his point was to raise issues, forcing the officials to

think about the problems and possible solutions.

A recent study of students with low math scores took the students away from drills and repetition and had the students working problems about used cars and groceries.

"And you know what? Their improvement went straight up . . . If they see no application of the work, no need for the study, no use for the skill, why should they buy into it?" he asked.

Schools, like it or not, have become the place in society where children are taught values, morals and norms in addition to reading and writing, he said. School is where children are "turned on" or "turned off" for life.

"All teachers must be made to realize the awesome power to teach someone to like something or dislike something for the rest of their lives. Wow! That's awesome, isn't it?" Mortrude said.

And if just one generation of students decides they don't want the knowledge, the

skills, the values and the heritage of the people living before them, "that society is coming down. Now. Therefore we have to make sure what we are teaching them has value and is useful," he said.

There are problems with the system of education in the United States, he said. One, there is a lack of interpersonal relationships between students and teachers. Two, males and females are different and mature at different speeds; current education treats boys and girls alike. Three, educators don't share the joys and frustrations of the profession. Four, likewise, little information about children and schools is shared by teachers with communities. Five, teachers have low self-esteem as people and little self-respect for their profession.

Administrators, with teachers and communities, can solve those problems, he said. The first step has to be for all educators to profess that all children can learn and be taught, he said.

KANSAS
ASSOCIATION



OF
SCHOOL
BOARDS



5401 S. W. 7th Avenue Topeka, Kansas 66606
913-273-3600

TESTIMONY ON H.B. 2103

by

Richard Funk, Assistant Executive Director
Kansas Association of School Boards

February 9, 1987

Madam Chairman and members of the committee, we appreciate the opportunity to testify today on behalf of the 302 members of the Kansas Association of School Boards. KASB is opposed to the provisions amending K.S.A. 72-1107. We believe that the entrance date for first grade should remain September 1. Through the years we have played with this date, making a child eligible earlier and earlier. At what point do we stop? The problems that are used as an excuse for amending present statute will always be present. We have established a date that works very well throughout Kansas. Let us not make any changes. I ask you to report H.B. 2103 unfavorably for passage.



HB 2103

Testimony presented before the House Education Committee
by Brilla Highfill Scott, Associate Executive Director
United School Administrators of Kansas

February 9, 1987

Madam Chairman and members of the committee:

United School Administrators of Kansas has mixed feelings about HB 2103. We can appreciate the desire of the bill's proponents to increase the probability of readiness to enter first grade by increasing age requirements.

We believe that regardless of the statutory age of entry there will be children who are ready for school and children who are not. Simply put, the teachers and administrators of Kansas' schools will continue to deal with the individual needs of the children who enter the schoolhouse door just as they presently do.

It would seem that a move to delay school entry for certain children while we encourage earlier involvement by others is not being philosophically consistent. This committee heard testimony last week in favor of meeting Federal guidelines by adding 3 year olds to the definition of pre-school-aged exceptional children. Is it then appropriate to delay, by legislation, the entry of the "normal" students into the first grade?

Brilla Highfill Scott
Associate Executive Director

BHS:mfw

Attachment XV
House Education 2/9/87