

Approved: 2-7-94  
Date

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Rochelle Chronister at 3:30 p.m. on January 25, 1995 in Room 519-S of the Capitol.

All members were present.

Committee staff present: Ben Barrett, Legislative Research Department  
Avis Swartzman, Revisor of Statutes  
Lois Thompson, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Brenda Bennett, White Church Elementary, K.C., KS  
Kent Townsend, Shawnee Heights District  
Dave Weyhrauch, Seaman District  
Bill Jones, Shawnee Heights District  
Jack Bales, Council Grove Elementary  
Gary Allsup, Howard Wilson Elementary, Leavenworth  
Dr. Susan Myers, Pomona Elementary Middle School  
Ralph Krumins, West Indianola Elementary, Seaman District

Others attending: See attached list

Site Council members who are proponents of Quality Performance Accreditation (QPA) appeared before the education committee.

Brenda Bennett, parent and member of site council for White Church Elementary, Kansas City, spoke in support of QPA. By having site councils, each individual school can focus on the problems and needs of their particular school. Serving on the site council places her in a position to monitor the quality of education her children and others are receiving. (Attachment 1)

Kent Townsend, parent and current secretary of the Berryton School Site Council stated he believes that site councils are effective today. They afford parents the opportunity to become involved. His experience has been a positive one where the principal made every effort to see that the council was not stacked, nor dominated by staff or parents. "QPA is a new process and may need some refinement, but it certainly should not be shelved for previous accreditation models." (Attachment 2)

Dave Weyhrauch, teacher, Northern Hills Junior High School, Seaman School District, stated through innovative Site Councils, regular channels of communication have been opened between parents, teachers, business leaders and administrators. QPA allows ample room for site-based decisions regarding mission statement, choice of target areas for improvement and great flexibility in the method selected to determine success or failure. They have positively influenced staff development programs. More schools are focusing in-service training on QPA target area goals. More teachers across the state through conference connections are sharing their experiences with other teachers. (Attachment 3)

Bill Jones, parent, has served on the site base counsel for one year at USD 450, Shawnee Heights. He stated QPA as an educational improvement is worthwhile and should be continued. "Bringing school accountability and individual student performance to the building level is a brilliant idea. This is the area where the most good can be obtained at the lowest cost and in the shortest amount of time. . . Most businesses today have a comprehensive business plan with the expected results listed at the end. Education should follow the same example and Quality Performance Accreditation is a step in this direction. " QPA may need improving, but not discontinued. (Attachment 4)

## CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, Room 519-S Statehouse, at 3:30 p.m.  
on January 25, 1995.

Jack Bales, parent and Chairman of Site Council at Council Grove Elementary, a QPA pilot school in its fourth year, stated they are not as far along in the process as they wanted to be. Their biggest problem is trying to come up with a lot of enthusiasm in the community relative to the site council because there is already a strong level of satisfaction with the school's performance. It has been difficult to bring in other constituents from business and churches for this reason. They started with the QPA Sunshine Document which does not lay out constraints, but a framework process which can meet the needs of each attendance center. That is the value of a Site Council in terms of bringing forth the needs and targeting areas for improvement.

Gary Allsup, Howard Wilson Elementary, Leavenworth, serves on the School Planning Management Team which is the Site Council. It has been in effect for seven years; two years ago they took over the responsibilities for site council. He joined the site council because of concern for his children's education, to give a fresh perspective from someone other than a professional educator. It is a ten member site council with a building administrator, four teachers, school counselor and parent representatives. They do not have an independent business owner who will share his/her time. They meet every other Tuesday evening at least, some times every week. The council is a policy-making body not strictly an advisory council. They are governed only by the School Board and by the ethical/moral considerations which they come across. They too vote only by consensus. No officers of the council -- everyone is on equal footing. Agenda items can be brought by teachers, parents, administration or interested parties. Recent agenda items range from monitoring the lunch room, staff development, to proposal for a year round school program at Howard Wilson. Parent and community involvement are vital to the success of any educational system. Our educational systems cannot be allowed to operate in a complete vacuum and the schools must be responsible to society and the culture in which that school exists. He believes Site Councils to be an excellent tool to encourage exchange of information and provide an avenue for parents and community leaders to contribute substantially into the future educational system. Site Councils are an excellent idea and should be expanded in any possible way.  
(Attachment 5)

Dr. Susan Myers, Principal, Pomona Elementary/Middle School, USD #287 West Franklin, is not a parent but does serve on a Site Council. USD #287 was accepted as a pilot district and has been involved in the QPA process for the past five years. She has seen the process from many perspectives and understands how the process has not only benefitted her school and district, but is having a positive impact on other schools in our State. . . "It takes change to improve anything. QPA gets the blame for a lot of things that boils down to just plain change. Some of the things about QPA that need analyzed and improved are paperwork, technology and software to make the process easier. She would like to see the State develop a program for statewide use of common software. "I certainly hope all our efforts have not been in vain and that QPA is here to stay."  
(Attachment 6)

Ralph Krumins, Chairman, Site Council, West Indianola Grade School, Seaman District #345, stated "the quality of education at our school is improving. It was very good already, with a fine staff, and excellent principal and highly motivated teachers. The site council give us a way to improve this good quality education. It allows our parents to get involved. . ." (Attachment 7)

The floor was opened to questions from the committee.

The meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 26, 1995.

## GUEST LIST

Committee: Education

Date: 1-25-95

NAME: (Please print)	Address:	Company/Organization:
Bill Jones	5735 SE 45 - Tecumseh	USD 450
Dusan Myers	3031 SW Burlingame Rd	USD 287
Kent Townsend	4720 SE Wisconsin	USD 450
Margaret Coder	Box 262 Lakeview, KS <sup>67860</sup>	Retired Teacher
Marsha Kent	P.O. Box 6164 KCK 66106	Taxpayer - Parent
Al Miller	5620 Folsom Merriam, KS <sup>66207</sup>	Taxpayer - Parent
Vic Braden	536 Schwarz, Lawrence KS <sup>66049</sup>	Site Council member - <sup>Elementary</sup> Pinckney
Hershel Poor	4387 Vermont Terr	Cit
Lynnett Wright	KSBE	
I.B. Soany Reader	KSBE	
Karen Couckli	Owensboro Park, KS	Senator James Leo
Jason Sabara	Wichita Heights Highschool	
Jenny Meckel	" " "	
Scott Abraham	" " "	
J.P. Over	Wichita Heights HS	
J. Wash	5301 N. Hillside	Rep. Schools (Wichita)
Sarah Morris	Wichita Heights HS	
Deather Dowers	" "	
Melissa Bonnard	Wichita Heights HS	
Gary Allsop	1921 Thornton Leavenworth KS 66048	Howard Wilson Elem. School
Diane Gjerstad	USD 259	Wichita
Myron Milton	USD 464	Tonganoxie
Ken Burgess	USD 464	Tonganoxie
Opal Harper	USD 464	Tonganoxie
Bob Johnson	Topeka	WV LAW SCHOOL



Linda Bennett  
White Church Elementary School Site Council  
Kansas City, KS

Parent Representative since January 1993.

Council members have not had any formal training. The council has used a "learn together as we go" approach.

Our Site Council has determined that our purpose is that of an advisory board that oversees the development of the school improvement plan, monitors the implementation of the plan, and evaluates the success of the plan.

Our Site Council is in the first year of the three year process for QPA. The remainder of this year will focus on developing the school profile for our first on-site visit in November of 1995.

#### Site Council composition

- 1 School administrator
- 2 Teachers
- 1 School Employee
- 1 PTA member
- 2 Business member
- 3 Parents

#### Site Council Officers

Chairperson  
Secretary

Nominated and elected annually by simple majority

All Site Council meeting dates are published in the yearly calendar and in the weekly newsletters. An invitation is extended each month in the weekly newsletter to any one interested in attending a council meeting.

#### Site Council Business since January 1993

Discussed in depth School Site Council Booklet  
Discussed in depth Kansas Quality Performance Accreditation Booklet  
Mission Statement - recommended shortening mission statement  
- recommended that the mission statement be included in the letterhead of the weekly newsletter

#### Set By-Laws for Site Council

Reviewed school handbook - made recommendations for changes, deletions, and additions

Surveyed parents of students, staff, and fourth/fifth students in Spring of 1993. Surveys were sent home with the students attached to weekly newsletter. The surveys were returned to the school with the student. We received about a 70% response from parents. Staff surveys were completed during weekly faculty meeting and student surveys were completed during school hours.

- identified strengths and weaknesses
  - Strengths - positive climate
  - high expectations

House Education  
Attachment 1  
1-25-95

- high quality of instruction
  - high parental support
- Weaknesses
- progress report
  - parent conferences
  - fund raising and lack of accountability
  - school lunches
  - early dismissal

Each weakness was addressed by Site Council.

- identified areas needing improvement - computer instruction
- cleanliness

Sent out school district parent survey in Fall of 1993. There was only about a 50% response. The school district analyzed the results. Our school results were similar to the districts. Sent survey to sixth grade students who attended our school the previous year. We received about 18 responses from the 46 surveys sent.

Asked Parent Teacher Association to host an Open House for the area businesses. Invitations were sent and about 7 business persons attended.

Studied 1994-1995 School Improvement Plan by Effective Schools Team

- math
- reading
- community involvement

Studied The School Profile For Kansas City, Kansas Schools and reviewed a sample profile. Discussed what to include in our school profile.

Preparing for Spring of 1995 parent survey to include in school profile.

#### Why Site Council Is A Positive Addition To The Educational Atmosphere Of Our School -

I support Site Councils in our schools. I feel that, when a school district has several schools, district decisions are based on what would be best for the district as a whole. The makeup of individual schools is different from building to building and a district decision is not necessarily in the best interest of every school. Each school has differing degrees of community involvement, school pride, discipline, student recognition, focus on learning, and high expectations. Each school has a distinct set of strengths and weaknesses. In addition areas needing improvement are subject to the value placed on certain aspects by the community of that school. By having site councils, each individual school can focus on the problems and needs of their particular school. Improvements and enhancements can be implemented in that schools best interest.

I serve on the Site Council at my children's school because I feel parent involvement in their children's education develops successful children. I feel that parents are the first and most important teachers in their child's life and it is their parental responsibility to ensure their child's success. I have a personal stake in the success of White Church Elementary School so it very important to me to be in a position where I can monitor that quality of education my children and other children are receiving.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my opinion on Site Councils in the school.

## TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Kent Townsend  
Topeka, KS

January 25, 1995

Thank you Chairwoman Chronister and members of the committee for allowing me the opportunity to speak to you today.

My name is Kent Townsend. I am here today to talk about Site Based Councils and Quality Performance Accreditation (QPA) from a parent's perspective. I am an involved parent in my children's school. I have served on the Parent Teacher Organization, the Shawnee Heights Advisory Panel for Education, the Berryton School Site Council as chair, participated in the Kaw Valley Education Consortium, and this year I serve as the secretary of the Berryton School Site Council as well as participating in sub-committees of the site council.

I believe that site councils are effective in schools today. Site councils have afforded parents the opportunity to become involved. I have read several accounts of how site councils have been ineffective, stacked, or controlled. I can honestly say that this has not been my experience. Since our school began the site council process in January 1993 I have been an active participant. I served as the first chair of the site council. Our principal took every effort to make sure that the council was not stacked. Our by-laws are set up such that the council is not dominated by staff or parents. The positions of chair and vice-chair cannot both be filled by parents or staff but must be a parent (or patron) and a staff member (exclusive of the principal). The vice-chair moves to the chair in the second year of their commitment. Decisions are made by 100 percent consensus. This was intentional because we felt that education was too important for a 51 to 49 percent vote on issues. If one person wishes to hold up an issue, that person may do so by not consenting to agree. In addition, no item may be brought up for consensus without being on the agenda for two months to ensure that all may participate in the discussions. All sub-committees, except for the staff development sub-committee, are headed by parents. Parents get as involved as they want, and learn as much as they want. We do not, nor want to, micro-mange the activities of the school.

A mission statement was drafted and presented to the site council, to parents through several different communications media, and to local groups through personal presentations. After a lengthy process the mission statement was adopted.

The site council developed the school profile. The school profile sub-committee was headed by a parent. The process took eighteen months and in no way was unduly influenced by staff. There was equal representation on the committee by parents and staff. In fact, the involvement of parents led our document to be designed so that it can be read and understood by parents. We asked questions about what this or that means, had teachers provide a glossary, define all of their programs and typical class activities. Parents became involved, learned what the different assessments were, how they worked, and provided many of the interpretive analyses that went into the document. We felt, as parents, that we had as much of an obligation to the success of the school profile as did the teachers. We took ownership. We provided advice and council. We did this by targeting areas where performance was lower than we wanted for our children. We learned a great deal in the process and gained a new respect for teachers and the work that they do.

*House Education  
Attachment 2*

Page 1  
1-25-95

Quality Performance Accreditation (QPA) has been given a bad reputation, generally. It has been broadly defined by such phrases as: "transformational outcome based education", "behavior oriented education", "destroying family values". I will not contest that in some places this may be true. To the extent that extreme curriculum are in place, controls either at the local level or in the implementing legislation should be considered. However, let me assure you that this does not happen everywhere. A thorough reading of the eight state outcomes does not find these concerns. Implementation of broad goals, that allow for local control also allow for local interpretation, and the involvement of concerned parents and patrons is essential.

Consider where we were and where we are headed. Accreditation was based on the resources put into the system, not what came out of the system. Children were passed up to the next grade with the full knowledge that they could not read or do math. QPA is designed to accredit schools on the ability of children to do what is required for that grade level. QPA is designed to require that teachers have all the skills necessary to teach and that districts provide training opportunities. QPA requires an integrated curriculum be used to teach essential skills. QPA requires that world class standards be met. QPA requires that schools become community learning centers. Essentially, in my opinion, the State Board of Education has articulated as accreditation standards what schools have always attempted to do — to teach children and prepare them for participation in society. Technically, outcomes based education has always existed. However, QPA also allows for the process of holding teachers and administrative staff accountable for the performance of students entrusted to their educating care.

Is everything about QPA practical? No. Not every student will get A's or B's. Carried too far, the philosophy that all students can learn potentially allows students to put off studying for tests because they know that the test can be taken a second time. This is not acceptable. Students that cannot learn, or advance with their peers, has not been addressed. Does a student stay in school till they get it right? We have to realize that some kids are going to graduate with a "C" average and some are going to drop out. Not every student will grow up to be a world class engineer, carpenter, or whatever career you want to pick. Making schools learning communities is not clearly defined and may be cost prohibitive. There is, admittedly, some controversial language in the outcomes. However, terms like divergent thinking, confrontation resolution, and collaborative activities is exciting. I want my children to find new solutions to old problems and realize new problems when they arise and to know when someone may not be telling the whole truth or both sides of a story and know how to work with them to get at the truth or a resolution. I want my children to be physically fit and know how their bodies work. If there is great concern about the potential of the teaching of "values" and needing to meet a certain "values" standard upon graduation, then remove those criteria — not the whole accreditation process. Each parent is responsible for the morals and values that their children grow up with, not the school. You must remember that teachers are, and always have been, role models for our children and implicitly pass on their values to our children every day by the way they interact with them.

Education is a complicated process and some things seem missing from this dialog. Shouldn't this discussion include what we require the teachers to teach and to be? Shouldn't we be discussing what teachers are not able to teach because of state or federal requirements?

Every standard set for graduation is, by default, the minimum expected results for students. I prefer to know that my child's school meets accreditation standards because the children are learning, not because there are so many books in the library or so many square feet per student. I prefer to be involved in the process, not left out. QPA is a new process and may need some refinement, but it certainly should not be shelved for previous accreditation models.

Thank you for your time. I will be happy to answer any questions.



## "Is Quality Performance Accreditation improving schools?"

Please consider the following teacher observations:

1. The State Board of Education has succeeded in opening regular channels of communication between parents, teachers, business leaders, and administrators through innovative Site Councils. This alone has fueled improvement through a growing sense of ownership in the success of schools by all concerned. School profiles, which represent input from all stakeholders, have been built with mutually agreed-upon indicators of quality and describe the school environment in some detail. Evidence of many types is gathered to form a composite picture of a school: a) disaggregated student performance scores on both local and standardized tests, b) attendance and discipline referral rates, c) clearly defined and recorded basic skills attainment data, d) range and depth of current teaching approaches in use, and e) the surveyed perceptions of a school by its students, parents, and staff.

2. Quality Performance Accreditation places great importance on the mission of each individual school. The mandate allows ample room for site-based decisions regarding a concise mission statement, some flexibility in choice of target areas for improvement, and great flexibility in the means selected to determine success or failure of target interventions. Our State Board of Education recognizes the uniqueness of each school and the fact that you engender commitment through "grass roots" involvement no matter how much time and effort is required in the process. This is not to suggest, however, that schools are left entirely free of basic parameters and procedures. The state assigns each school district an outcomes consultant. Our junior high school has been capably guided by Jennifer Hewitt and several other experts assembled by our local steering committee. Our school may perhaps be atypical, but none of the education consultants we've approached have declined to serve on our advisory team.

*House Education  
Attachment 3  
1-25-95*

3. Since the QPA process is ongoing it has positively influenced staff development programs. It is apparent that more and more schools are taking greater care to focus in-service training on QPA target area goals and monitoring their implementation in classrooms. It seems more teachers across the state through conference connections are sharing their experiences with other teachers in other districts. New technologies are being adapted to meet the accountability demands which are considerable, but there is optimism that if the software or counting mechanism necessary is not available now it soon will be. Tracking specific sub-groups or charting selected behaviors will become a more routine occurrence in every school seeking this accreditation.

4. While it may inevitably be true that only a modest sample of actual classroom learning will be accurately reported, the simple fact that potentially valid evidence of significant growth is being gathered and discussed is reassuring indeed. It means educators, parents, students, and all citizens can better withstand the waves of criticism and media attention by having a stated mission, predetermined targets, agree-upon indicators, extensive data or, in brief, an articulate plan to "hang our hats upon".

January 25, 1995  
David Weyhrauch  
Northern Hills JHS  
Topeka, KS 66617

Bill Jones  
5735 Southeast 45th St.  
Tecumseh, Kansas 66542

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. My name is Bill Jones and I am from Topeka, Kansas.

Thank you for your time for listening to me on my views as to why I think Quality Performance Accreditation should continue. I am a parent of 4 children. I served on the site base counsel for one year at Unified School District 450/Shawnee Heights in Topeka.

Quality Performance Accreditation as an educational improvement is worthwhile and should be continued. Bringing school accountability and individual student performance to the building level is a brilliant idea. This is the area that the most good can be obtained at the lowest cost and in the shortest amount of time. The input from parents, students, teachers, and the business community, enhances the improvements while keeping a flexible operational plan moving.

Is there something wrong with outlining a set of goals and then listing the results that are expected? This is part of Quality Performance Accreditation. Most businesses today have a comprehensive business plan with the expected results listed at the end. Education should follow the same example and Quality Performance Accreditation is a step in this direction.

In no way does Quality Performance Accreditation advocate the "watering down" of traditional basic skills, quite the opposite, they are to be enhanced and improved upon. In addition to the basics, Quality Performance Accreditation addresses an even greater focus, that is, using higher thinking skills that will be needed for the future. By expanding and integrating curriculum through the use of traditional basic skills, a higher level of reasoning and problem solving can be accomplished. This will give the students the ability to compete in a global market.

The statement that there is no competition or everyone comes out the same is just not true. Quality Performance Accreditation encourages competition. If a district is taking the approach that students are like cookies and all need to be turned out the same, it is making a big mistake and is not understanding Quality Performance Accreditation as the state has proposed it. These "cookies" or children will attain mastery of skills at different intervals. Some are "done" sooner than others and move on to more challenging goals, but they are not all the same.

There has been much criticism on Quality Performance Accreditation recently. Much of it is not justified. Quality Performance Accreditation has been revised several times and most of the language has been changed or removed that had unintended comments or unclear statements, but many of the unrevised versions are still being quoted by the opposition. The plan was to be flexible by design and will continue to change along with improvements as long as it is a viable document. Please read the 8 accreditation outcomes as they are listed today (it has been quoted that as many as 20 outcomes were required by the state, not only 8). How can anyone disagree with the process? Are some of the complaints coming from the old documents?

Paper flow and the amount of time it takes to complete, has been a strong complaint of Quality Performance Accreditation. It is true, there should be some streamlining and improvement on how the data is gathered, possibly through additional or improved technology. Quality Performance Accreditation is a data driven program and it would be impossible to get the feedback to the students, educators, and schools without the data input. It is imperative that reliable data is collected so that educators can target specific problem learning areas and improve upon them.

Does Quality Performance Accreditation need improving? Yes, but not discontinued. Revisions can easily be applied as they have been in the past. This is a workable community project for our kids and to give it up now would put us back in time which we have so little of.

Bill Jones  
Higher Education  
Attachment 4  
1-25-95

## Site Council Comments

Good afternoon, my name is Gary Allsup and I am here as a parent member of the School Planning and Management Team for Leavenworth's Howard Wilson Elementary School. The SPMT serves as the school's site council

I am a relatively new to the SPMT only having been a member since September 1994. I have had two children in Howard Wilson since August 1993.

I am not entirely sure in what information you are interested, so I would first like to tell you why I am a member of the Howard Wilson SPMT, Second a little about how our SPMT functions and last offer a few comments about Site Councils in general.

#1 First and foremost I joined SPMT because of concern for my children's education. My wife and I were concerned about the quality of public education in Leavenworth and have therefore been somewhat involved in school activities since shortly after our arrival in town. When I was asked to join the SPMT, it seemed like a natural progression.

As a parent without formal training in the education field, I hope that I am able to contribute to the success of the SPMT and also offer a unique and useful point of view.

[#2] Second, I would like to tell you a little Howard Wilson's SPMT

It is comprised of 10 members including...

- A) Building administrator
- B) Four teachers
- C) School Counselor
- D) Four parent representatives

and four subcommittees each chaired by a SPMT member...

- A) Public Relations
- B) Academics
- C) Staff Development
- D) Social

We meet at least every other Tuesday evening and the Council has been in place for approximately seven years.

Our Council is different from most others across the state in that it is an policy making body as opposed to an advisory committee.

SPMT actions are governed only by school board policy as well as legal and ethical concerns

*House Education  
Attachment 5  
1-25-98*

Decisions are arrived at through consensus instead of voting. In trying to reach consensus we try to keep the kids foremost in our minds. The decisions that we may make may not always be the best for teachers or parents, but we strive to make sure they are best for students. The meetings are not highly structured but follow a posted agenda. Minutes are kept to ensure documentation of our activities.

Agenda items brought by anyone.. Parents, teachers, administrator, etc. The last agenda item for each meeting is a round table in which each member is asked for comments or discussion on any item of concern.

Recent agenda items have ranged from monitoring the lunch room to staff development and from building plans to consideration of year round school

The only school matters outside of SPMT purview are specific personnel matters

[#3] In conclusion, I would like to leave you with a couple of comments about site councils in general

First, I am truly excited about the accomplishments of the Howard Wilson SPMT.

I feel that parent and community involvement is integral to quality education

Our education system cannot be allowed to operate in a vacuum. Our schools must be responsive to the needs and the society and culture in which they exist.

I believe site councils to be an excellent tool to encourage the exchange of information and to provide an avenue for parents and community leaders to contribute substantial input into the current and future educational system.

A number of pros and cons exist regarding the authority and purview of such councils. I believe these decisions better left to the individual jurisdictions. But the bottom line is they serve a valuable function and should be encouraged at every opportunity.

I would be happy to expand on any specific item of interest.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide to speak with you.

January 25, 1995

Dr. Susan Myers, Principal  
Pomona Elementary/Middle School  
U.S.D.#287 West Franklin

I have had the opportunity to be involved in the Quality Performance Accreditation (QPA) process for the past five years. Our district, U.S.D.#287 West Franklin, applied for and was accepted as a pilot district. The school in which I am principal was selected as a pilot school. My staff and I are now in our fourth year of the process and are scheduled to have our accreditation visit March 14 of this year.

In addition to being involved in the pilot process, I have been trained through the State to serve as a QPA On-Site Chairperson. I currently serve as the chair of six school in three districts as well as serve on an on-site team for another school in another district.

I have seen the process from many perspectives and understand how the process has not only benefited my school and district but is having a positive impact on other schools in our State.

QPA is a vehicle which drives school improvement. The process has enabled our school to have a common mission and goals. Prior to QPA, our district was working in the area of school improvement. We had building goals, worked on a K-12 curriculum with a scope and sequence and learner objectives for each subject area, and spent time "looking" at norm reference test results. The QPA process brought a focus and sophistication to our efforts in school improvement. We have an agreed upon mission and have written learner exit outcomes to fulfill this mission. Everyone on staff is involved and communicating. We now have the whole picture. Staff sees (more than ever before) how each grade's outcomes are dependent upon the last. We work as a team, not as separate entities. We look at test data together and formulate areas of strengths and weaknesses. Never before the QPA process did we put together our data in such a way as to see where we were, where we had come from and where we needed to be heading. The school profile, required in the process, has been the document that facilitated this. Decisions are now made based on actual data rather than "gut" feeling. Building the school profile was a lot of work and continues to challenge me in terms of time and sophistication of available software. However, the end results - data driven decision making, makes the time well spent.

Our staff of Pomona Elementary and Middle Schools now has a focus. We talk the same language. We are moving in the same direction. Our school improvement plan was written by us. We saw our needs, decided upon research based strategies and aligned staff development to meet the needs of our school improvement plan. Our district has always operated in a site based decision making mode. QPA fit this perfectly. The process actually empowered the building even more by putting the bulk of staff development in our control.

As a building principal, I am a member of our school's Site Council. I am favorably impressed with what our council has achieved. The council (consisting of 10 members, 5 staff and 5 patrons) work together monthly on instructional issues related to the QPA process. We have always had a Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) and this is a wonderful group of people. However, our site council opens up a new door for

*House Education  
Attachment 6  
1-25-95*

added parental input. Three members of each school site council at each of our districts attendance centers serve as a District Steering Committee and have recently developed District Exit Outcomes. This group has been a balanced committee and works productively.

I have so far commented favorably on the QPA process and what it has done for Pomona Elementary/Middle Schools. I have also seen the same effects in the various attendance centers I have visited as chair of the QPA on-site visits. It's exciting to see teachers, site council members and administration working together actively studying their programs and basing decisions to improve their school on data.

It takes change to improve anything. QPA gets the blame for a lot of things that boils down to just plain change. Our teachers in Pomona recognize the need to continually evaluate our programs and find the QPA process a valuable tool for school improvement.

There are things about QPA that need to be analyzed and fine tuned. Paperwork is often cited as a major concern. The paperwork that is most time consuming for me is also the paperwork that generates valuable information for school improvement. This is data collection and analysis. Fortunately, advances in technology and new software is making this process easier.

I would like to see the State possibly develop a program so that we would have common software to be used state wide. This has already been done in terms of our annual report. Perhaps this would be extended to other reports contained in our school profiles such as test data (State Assessment).

The QPA document has undergone several revisions in an effort to meet varying responses and concerns in our state. It would be beneficial now that we have been in the process several years that the document stabilize. This is also true of our State Assessments. Information gathered from the assessments is beneficial. It can be very challenging in terms of analysis when the tests change from year to year.

The QPA process has helped Pomona Elementary/Middle Schools develop over the last four years in a positive direction for staff, parents and students. I certainly hope all our efforts have not been in vain and that QPA is here to stay.

Testimony - Given January 24, 1995

Ralph Krumins

Chairman - West Indianola Grade School Site Council

Seaman District #345

Thank you for the opportunity to share my views today.

In my opinion, Site Councils are invaluable to improving the schools in Kansas. They are an invitation to parents to again be involved in an advisory roll in the schools that their children attend. They are making a difference in how children taught. They are making a difference in what children are taught, and they are making a difference in how parents and school staffs communicate.

Without the opportunity to be involved in site councils, there is no opportunity for parents to truly be involved in Kansas schools.

- 1) Parents are very busy. More families need two incomes to maintain their current standard of living. So parents do not have as much time to be involved.
- 2) Teaching methods and ideas are becoming more sophisticated.
- 3) This society is expecting more specialization, and parents often feel they are not knowledgeable enough to offer ideas or advice.

Parents need to be invited back into the schools. Just like those people who belong to my church, but only send their kids to Sunday School and do not attend themselves. We need to get the parents involved.

Should it be legislated? - Absolutely!

If we had school vouchers or a competitive school system, parents would be able to choose where their kids go to school. This one has an emphasis on math, this one on the arts, and this one on music. Another one might even offer prayer to start the day, and another one might offer in-school day-care and specialized parenting classes.

But we do not have an opportunity to have schools compete for our business. We have only two choices, private or public. So far this has meant either more money, moving or accepting at face value what is offered us.

In addition to involve yourself with the school before now, took a very farsighted administrator, or an unusually intrusive parent with a serious personal agenda. Parents views were welcome as long as your did not stay too long and were not too emphatic. Not that the staff did not try to solve special problems and answer questions. There just was not a facility for parents and staff to work together to improve the quality of education.

What have we done so far? Please note that we are not far along in the QPA process. We are still working on our school profile and still a long way from our first audit.

House Education  
Attachment 7  
1-25-95



1) We took a survey of parents of our students. The areas covered were:

- Curriculum
- Progress Reports
- Discipline
- Parent/School Communication
- Facilities and Equipment

This gave us a place to start, and now through our efforts we are practicing the process the Japanese call Kaizen. The never ending, continual, relentless small step progress to perfection.

- 2) We changed our parent teacher conferences to make them much more effective.
- 3) We changed our back-to-school orientation classes to make them more effective.
- 4) We found a process to acquire more computers inexpensively and improve our ability to provide technology to our students.
- 5) We improved our PTO/Parent communication.
- 6) We found out that many parents thought the class sizes for some classes were too big. This prompted about 40 parents to get involved in asking the school board to add a teacher at our school. They did...., and also at two other schools.
- 7) Finally we found out that our parents like many things about our schools. In particular they thought that the teachers and staff were very good and in general were very supportive of what was happening at our school. They also like the school newsletter, the library, the facility, the DASH program, what subjects are taught, the classroom rules, the report cards and the parent-teacher conferences.

The quality of education at our school is improving. It was very good already, with a fine staff, an excellent principle and highly motivated teachers. The site councils gives us a way to improve this good quality education. It allows our parents to get involved in that improvement and helps the staff to stay motivated knowing they have the support of parents and the community in the incredibly important task of educating our children.