

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Dave Kerr at 1:30 p.m. on March 13, 1995 in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

All members were present.

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

Conferees appearing before the committee: Representative John Toplikar
Susan Chase, KNEA
Gerry Henderson, USA
Mark Tallman, KASB
KCCI, Jim Edwards

Others attending: See attached list

HB 2288 - Kansas mastery of basic skills program

Representative Toplikar, introduced this bill, and so gave a brief explanation. This bill is an attempt to put more meaning into a high school diploma. The diploma is now seen as a piece of paper that represents having reached a certain number of hours of "chair time" in school. There has been much discussion about high school students who attempt to enter the work force but are unable to read or follow instructions and cannot use basic math on the job. One of the goals in Kansas' strategy for economic development is to ensure that Kansas has a highly skilled work force that is internationally competitive. Basic academic skills such as reading and writing are a major concern in improving general work skills. The concept of **HB 2288** passed both houses of the legislature in 1993 because of the serious need for improvement in academics in the work place, and to better prepare students for college, reducing the need to repeat remedial courses. The bill was then vetoed by Governor Finney, who said it was a duplication of the QPA process. (See Attachment 1)

He then testified in support of the bill. He originally introduced the bill this session with the provision that a basic skills certificate must be attained before a student could receive a diploma. The House Committee on Education removed the provision because of a concern that not automatically granting a diploma could cause a constitutional problem. It seems to him that removing the provision "takes the teeth out of the bill." What good does it do to add another program without adding more learning responsibility on each student? He requested the Committee re-insert the provision. He doesn't believe that a basic skills program is a duplication of programs we now have. It is a program that would ensure a student at least attain a mastery of the basic skills needed to function as a productive worker.

Senator Lawrence asked who was preparing the mastery tests, if they were the same ones used in QPA assessments, and when the tests would be administered. Representative Toplikar replied that to him, it did not matter what tests were used. There has been some discussion that Mr. Poggio would develop the test, and it could be a part of the QPA assessment test. Senator Lawrence then asked if home schools and private schools have these tests. The answer was, not at this time. She suggested that this might be a disadvantage to those educated at home or in private schools when at the point of entering college or the work force. Representative Toplikar did not agree that there would be a difficulty for these students.

Senator Downey suggested that students would only be taught to pass the test, and would not learn the higher intellectual skills. She asked him if he had no confidence in the QPA process. He replied that he had confidence in the QPA process, this test was intended to be a supplemental help to that process.

Senator Walker asked if he supported QPA as it is being implemented. He replied that it was not his intention to interfere with the current QPA process, and he did not want to be in the middle of the debate. QPA is in an evolutionary state, and is being defined as time progresses; so, he is not sure what QPA is in its present form. He doesn't want to buck the system or throw out QPA, he just wants to add a test to QPA in an attempt to narrow and clarify the definition of QPA.

Representative Toplikar was asked when the mastery test should be given. He suggested 9th grade. If a student can quiz out, he can then spend more time mastering higher learning skills. If the student doesn't pass, he then has the time to do some remedial work in addition to developing higher learning skills.

Senator Emert asked what the difference is between the 1993 bill that was vetoed by Governor Finney, and this bill being introduced now. There is no difference. It is essentially the same bill. Senator Harrington stated that she is afraid more control will be given to the State Board of Education, and it will be taken away from local control. Senator Lawrence stated she sees this bill as redundant to QPA, if QPA tests are used as

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION Room 123-S-Statehouse, at 1:30 p.m. on March 13, 1995.

mastery tests.

Representative Toplikar suggested that before the bill is passed out of committee, some thought should be given to defining the word "mastery." "Mastery" means different things to different people. And, a certain amount of confusion and heated disagreement is generated when this word is used.

Jim Edwards, Kansas Chamber of Commerce and Industry, presented written testimony in favor of the bill. KCCI supports the concept of having students master a variety of preselected skills before graduating from high school. This concept is embodied in **HB 2288**, a measure which would provide for a mastery of a basic skills program in Kansas public schools. Some business persons often comment that "they would hire someone with a GED before someone with a high school diploma because a GED denotes a mastery of certain skills." A high school diploma should be a valuable piece of hiring criteria, but for a variety of reasons, it has not kept pace with the times. While we feel that the current system of QPA will help in addressing this problem, most admit that it will be a number of years before we actually start seeing any results. Again, the KCCI supports the QPA process. If this body passes **HB 2288**, KCCI would ask the Committee to take it one step further and have it apply to all persons receiving a diploma. By doing this, all graduates will possess the needed skills for the work place, and need only the high school diploma upon graduation. (See Attachment 2)

Gerry Henderson, United School Administrators of Kansas, testified in opposition to the bill. They believe the accreditation system now operating in Kansas schools calls for learning basic academic skills at a high level of mastery, and furthermore, is being responsible to Kansas business in reaching beyond the basics. We appreciate what **HB 2288** is trying to do, but we believe existing systems can be made to place whatever emphasis on the mastery of basic skills a local community wishes to place on them. (See Attachment 3)

Mark Tallman, Kansas Association of School Boards, testified in opposition to the bill. KASB's first concern is that the certificate of mastery program proposed in this bill has not been developed to fit into Quality Performance Accreditation, or as part of a new system of school-to-work transition, or as part of either a college preparation system or a tech-prep system. Their second concern is that the bill uses the current state assessment program as a basis for determining "mastery" of basic skills. They have been repeatedly told by the developers of the current program that these tests are not designed to accurately evaluate the performance of individual students. No one has yet explained how much the current program would have to be modified to make it serve this additional task. This bill would seem to require that these tests be offered much more often, because students should have "numerous opportunities to demonstrate mastery of basic skills." They are unclear on exactly how this program would be administered. Finally, they are not sure there is a consensus in this state about the wisdom of a single test of student mastery. Certainly this program would have an impact on local school curricula, and would pressure schools to teach the standards reflected in this test. However, that is one of the major criticisms of the current testing program. (See Attachment 4)

Senator Lawrence suggested all high school students take the GED test before graduating high school. Mr. Tallman replied that one cannot take the GED test if one is currently enrolled in high school. She then suggested the skill mastery test be tied to national tests already being offered, such as the Iowa Basic Skills Test or ACT tests. He replied that these tests measure how students are doing compared to students all over the United States; and just because our schools are doing better than other national schools, does not assess whether the basic skills needed to work in Kansas have been learned by each individual student. Senator Lawrence also asked if the QPA tests would indeed measure individual students knowledge, or would only show how well schools are doing as a whole. No clear answer was given.

Susan Chase, Kansas National Education Association, testified against the bill. Kansas NEA does support the idea that all students must master the basics. Schools, in the current accreditation process, must demonstrate the mastery of basic skills by their students using their own means of assessment. Student Outcome I of QPA states "all students will demonstrate in academic and applied situations a high level of mastery of essential skills." They believe this is the appropriate way to handle mastery of basic skills. By having a statewide test of basic skills, a conflicting message is being sent to students. We are telling them they are expected to achieve high standards, but emphasis is also put on their mastering the basic skills. She reiterated that high skills must be required. Students must have already mastered basic skills in order to develop higher order skills. (See Attachment 5)

A motion was made by Senator Langworthy to approve the minutes of the March 9, 1995 meeting. The motion was seconded by Senator Lawrence, and the motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 14, 1995.

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE COMMITTEE GUEST LIST

DATE: 3-13-95

NAME	REPRESENTING
Liane Gjerstad	USD 259
Harold Pitts	OB ^{SEK}
Phil Johnston	KAESP
Rue Jaquez	BOEING
Sue Chase	KNEA
Mark Tallman	KASB
Cindy Baldwin	USD 419
Wesley Warrick	USD 419
Sustin Likins	USD 419
Marsha Strahm	CWA
Clara Renyer	Right to Life of Mo
Ashon Gunden	KSBE
Mildred McMillan	St. Bd. of Ed.
Gerald Henderson	USA of KS

STATE OF KANSAS

JOHN M. TOPLIKAR

REPRESENTATIVE, 15TH DISTRICT

507 E. SPRUCE
OLATHE, KS 66061



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OFFICE: 155 EAST
TOPEKA, KS 66612
(913) 296-7683

March 13, 1995
Testimony on HB -2288
"Mastery of Basic Skills"

Mr. Chairman & members of the Senate Education Committee

This bill is an attempt to put meaning into a high school diploma. The diploma now is seen as a piece of paper that represents having reached a certain number of hours of "chair time" in school.

As a member of the Economic Development Committee & Joint Committee over the last two years, I have heard much discussion about high school students who attempt to enter the workforce but are unable to read or follow instructions and cannot use basic math on the job. This is frustrating to employers.

In a March 15, 1993 report to this committee in support of the Mastery of Basic Skills program, Charles E. Krider, Professor of Business and Director of Business Research at the Institute for Public Policy and Business Research at KU reminded us that Goal #2 of the Kansas strategy for economic development is to ensure that Kansas has a high skilled work force that is internationally competitive. He said that the mastery of basic skills program is "consistent with this objective in that it would establish a program to assess Kansas high school students on basic skills and competencies." He also cited a survey by the Institute (Attachment 1 & 2) in which Kansas firms indicate the types of employee skills needing improvement. As you can see, basic academic skills such as reading and writing are a major concern in improving general work skills. Dr. Krider defined the results as a "moderate to severe skill gap" and projected the problems to become more severe in the future.

*Senate Education
3-13-95
Attachment 1*

The concept of HB-2288 passed both houses of the legislature in 1993 because of the serious need for improvement in academics in the work place and to better prepare students for college, reducing the need to repeat remedial courses. The bill was then vetoed by Governor Finney, who said it was a duplication of QPA processes.

I originally introduced the bill this session with the provision that a basic skills certificate must be attained before a student could receive a diploma. The House Committee on Education removed the provision because of a concern that not automatically granting a diploma could cause a constitutional problem.

It seems to me that removing the provision takes the teeth out of the bill. What good does it do to add another program without adding more learning responsibility on each student? I ask the Committee to re-insert the provision. My purpose for proposing the bill is to add that extra responsibility on the shoulders of the students to ensure they have a minimum competency in basic skills.

I ask the committee to again consider the need to graduate students from high school with a higher level of academics. I don't believe that a basic skills program is a duplication of programs we now have. It is a program that would ensure that a student at least attain a mastery of the basic skills needed to function as a productive worker.

I ask for your support of HB-2288. Thank you.

Rep. John Toplikar

Attachment 1

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TABLE 18
SKILL IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED BY NEWLY HIRED EMPLOYEES

Area Needing Improvement:	Total Group Percentage:	Percentage of Subgroups:	
		Manuf.	Non- Technol. Manuf. Driven*
Goal setting and personal motivation	79%	77%	84%
Proper attitudes toward work & work habits	77	75	81
Organizational effectiveness & leadership	75	73	79
Listening & oral communication	72	70	78
Problem solving	70	73	75
Teamwork	70	71	75
Adaptability/flexibility	68	63	71
Interpersonal relations	60	57	63
Comprehension/understanding	60	60	68
Writing	60	55	63
Business/management	57	53	61
Computation	52	54	58
Microcomputer	47	47	54
Reading	43	45	45
Technical	42	50	51
Skilled trades/crafts	40	50	45
Mechanical	38	46	43
Machine operation	37	50	40
General labor	31	34	35
Clerical	29	25	32
Electrical	25	32	31
Mainframe computer	22	21	27
Other	8	9	9

Source: Institute for Public Policy and Business Research, Business Survey, 1989.

*Technology driven firms are those firms that responded that technology changes will increase the level of technical or vocational skills needed by their employees over the next five years.

100
100
100

Attachment 2

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TABLE 19

SKILL IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED BY CURRENT EMPLOYEES
TO COPE WITH TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

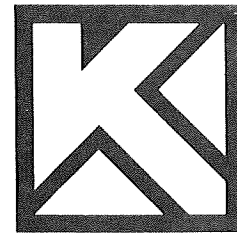
Area Needing Improvement:	Total Group Percentage:	Percentage of Subgroups:		
		Manuf.	Non- manuf.	Technol. Driven
Problem solving	72%	72%	71%	80%
Adaptability/flexibility	72	70	75	79
Teamwork	71	72	70	77
Goal setting and personal motivation	71	69	72	77
Proper attitudes toward work & work habits	70	71	69	75
Organizational effectiveness & leadership	68	67	70	75
Comprehension/understanding	68	67	68	75
Microcomputer	67	66	63	75
Listening & oral communication	65	64	66	70
Business/management	58	53	65	65
Interpersonal relations	56	53	60	62
Technical	56	63	48	66
Computation	56	59	54	64
Reading	51	52	49	57
Writing	49	45	54	53
Machine operation	44	56	30	49
Skilled trades/crafts	41	46	34	48
Mechanical	40	47	33	46
Clerical	35	31	40	39
Mainframe computer	35	34	36	38
Electrical	33	39	25	38
General labor	30	33	27	33
Other	8	9	7	9

Source: Institute for Public Policy and Business Research, Business Survey, 1989.

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2/15/93

LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

Kansas Chamber of Commerce and Industry



835 SW Topeka Blvd. Topeka, Kansas 66612-1671 (913) 357-6321 FAX (913) 357-4732

HB 2288

March 13, 1995

KANSAS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

Testimony Before the
Senate Education Committee

by
Jim Edwards
Director, Chamber and Association Relations

Senator Kerr and members of the Committee:

I am to here lend KCCI's support to the concept of having students master a variety of pre-selected skills before graduating from high school. This concept is embodied in HB 2288, a measure which would provide for a mastery of basic skills program in Kansas public schools.

The Kansas Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) is a statewide organization dedicated to the promotion of economic growth and job creation within Kansas, and to the protection and support of the private competitive enterprise system.

KCCI is comprised of more than 3,000 businesses which includes 200 local and regional chambers of commerce and trade organizations which represent over 161,000 business men and women. The organization represents both large and small employers in Kansas, with 55% of KCCI's members having less than 25 employees, and 86% having less than 100 employees. KCCI receives no government funding.

The KCCI Board of Directors establishes policies through the work of hundreds of the organization's members who make up its various committees. These policies are the guiding principles of the organization and translate into views such as those expressed here.

Some businesspersons often comment that "they would hire someone with a GED before someone with a high school diploma because a GED denotes a mastery of certain skills." A high school diploma should be a valuable piece of hiring criteria but for a variety of reasons it has not kept pace with the times.

*Senate Education
3-13-95
Attachment 2*

While we feel that the current system of Quality Performance Accreditation will help in addressing this problem, most admit that it will be a number of years before we actually start seeing the results. I once again reiterate our support for the QPA process.

If this body passes HB 2288, KCCI would ask you to take it one step further and have it apply to all persons receiving a diploma. By doing this, you have all graduates possessing the needed skills for the workplace yet you end up with only one piece of paper upon graduation, and that would be the high school diploma.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony. I would be pleased to answer any questions you might have for me.



HB 2288

Testimony presented before the Senate Committee on Education
by Gerald W. Henderson, Executive Director
United School Administrators of Kansas
March 13, 1995

Mister Chairman and Members of the Committee:

United School Administrators of Kansas is in support of holding Kansas schools accountable for the teaching of basic skills and applauds the provisions of **HB 2288** which call for the recognition of students who master basic skills. However, we believe the accreditation system now operating in Kansas schools calls for learning basic academic skills at a high level of mastery, and furthermore is being responsive to Kansas business in reaching beyond the basics.

Quality Performance Accreditation allows individual schools and school districts to use the basic skills portion of the Kansas assessment program and other assessments to identify a level of mastery, and to use that information for whatever purpose the school or district deems appropriate. The change from accrediting schools based on in-puts to accrediting schools based continuous improvement in student performance will over time give more meaning to the diploma. Kansas high schools which have been involved with systematic school improvement for a time can already demonstrate this enhanced meaning of the diploma. USA would hope that in an effort to provide this accountability, the schools of Kansas are not asked to administer yet another assessment system to Kansas children. As has been said before, "One cannot fatten the lambs simply by weighing them more often."

We appreciate what **HB 2288** is trying to do, but we believe existing systems can be made to place whatever emphasis on the mastery of basic skills a local community wishes to place on them.

LEG/HB2288

*Senate Education
3-13-95
Attachment 3*



TO: Senate Committee on Education
FROM: Mark Tallman, Director of Governmental Relations
DATE: March 13, 1995

RE: Testimony on H.B. 2288

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments on H.B. 2288. This bill resurrects the concept of a certificate of initial or basic mastery, which has been advanced in a variety of forms for the past several sessions. As introduced in the House, the bill would have required students to achieve a certain minimum score, determined by the State Board of Education, on the state assessment program contained in the School District Finance and Quality Performance Act, in order to qualify for a high school diploma. KASB strongly opposed that provision. As amended, the bill resembles legislation passed in 1993 but vetoed by Governor Joan Finney. We continue have concerned about this bill, even as amended. Let me try to explain these concerns.

1. The concept of a certificate of initial mastery or mastery of basic skills was proposed several years ago in the important *America's Choice: High School or Low Wages* report. That report called for a new system of secondary education, in which such a certificate, which students would be expected to achieve by what is now tenth grade, would be "gatekeeper" for further education in either a college prep or technical prep track. Several states have been moving toward the development of such a system. But whatever the merits of that system, H.B. 2288 is **not that system**. Our first concern is that the certificate of mastery program proposed in this bill has not been developed to fit into Quality Performance Accreditation, or as part of a new system of school-to-work transition, or as part of either a college preparation system or a tech-prep system. While it might become a piece of those systems, we are very concerned about adopting **this** piece without knowing what the **other** pieces are.

2. KASB supports the concept of a state student assessment program. However, this bill uses the current state assessment program as a basis for determining "mastery" of basic skills. Our concern about this approach is that we have been repeatedly told by the developers of the current program that these tests are not designed to accurately evaluate the performance of individual students. No one has yet explained how much the current program would have to be modified to make it serve this additional task.

3. We would also remind the committee that there is hardly a consensus that the current assessment program is really doing the job it already has. You are well aware of concerns over the time already required to administer these tests. This bill would seem to require that these tests be offered much more often, because students should have "numerous opportunities to demonstrate mastery of basic skills." We are unclear on exactly how this program would be administered.

4. Finally, we are not sure there is yet a consensus in this state about the wisdom of a single test of student mastery. Certainly this program would have an impact on local school curricula, and would pressure schools to teach the standards reflected in this test. However, that is one of the major criticisms of the current testing program. However much state control of curriculum will Kansans support - or tolerate?

In conclusion, we believe a number of questions about this concept remain unanswered. We believe these issues should be resolved before this bill is enacted. Thank you for your consideration.

Senate Education
3-13-95
Attachment 4



KANSAS NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION / 715 W. 10TH STREET / TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612-1686

Susan Chase Testimony Before
Senate Education Committee
Monday, March 13, 1995

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am Susan Chase and I represent Kansas NEA. I am here in opposition to HB 2288.

Kansas NEA does support the idea that all students must master the basics. Schools, in the current accreditation process, must demonstrate the mastery of basic skills by their students using their own means of assessment. Student Outcome I of QPA states "all students will demonstrate in academic and applied situations a high level of mastery of essential skills." We believe this is the appropriate way to handle mastery of basic skills.

By having a statewide test of basic skills, we are sending conflicting messages to students. We are telling them we expect them to achieve high standards, but we put emphasis on their mastering the basic skills. We hope this body will continue to expect students to achieve high standards and not just master basic skills. We urge you to not pass this bill out favorably. Thank you for listening to our concerns.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

STUDENT OUTCOME RELATED TO A WORLD CLASS STANDARD OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE THROUGH MASTERY OF ESSENTIAL SKILLS

STUDENT OUTCOME I

STANDARDS

INDICATORS

All students will demonstrate in academic and applied situations a high level of mastery of essential skills as evidenced by the following standards:

A. Read and comprehend a variety of resources.

Local Required Indicators:

1. Schools will develop and maintain a student improvement plan through appropriate intervention strategies for individual students who are deficient in the mastery of areas related to school academic focus.
2. Achievement will increase across all student groups as demonstrated through the use of multiple assessment techniques aligned with the local integrated curriculum and will be reported annually to the local board of education.

Local Required Indicators:

B. Communicate clearly, both orally and in writing, for a variety of purposes and audiences.

1. Schools will develop and maintain a student improvement plan through appropriate intervention strategies for individual students who are deficient in the mastery of areas related to school academic focus.

STUDENT OUTCOME I

STANDARDS

INDICATORS

2. Achievement will increase across all student groups as demonstrated through the use of multiple assessment techniques aligned with the local integrated curriculum and will be reported annually to the local board of education.

Local Required Indicators:

- C. Use mathematics and mathematical principles.

1. Schools will develop and maintain a student improvement plan through appropriate intervention strategies for individual students who are deficient in the mastery of areas related to school academic focus.
2. Achievement will increase across all student groups as demonstrated through the use of multiple assessment techniques aligned with the local integrated curriculum and will be reported annually to the local board of education.

Local Required Indicators:

- D. Access and use information.

1. Schools will develop and maintain a student improvement plan through appropriate intervention strategies for individual students who are deficient in the mastery of areas related to school academic focus.

STUDENT OUTCOME I

STANDARDS

INDICATORS

2. Achievement will increase across all student groups as demonstrated through the use of multiple assessment techniques aligned with the local integrated curriculum and will be reported annually to the local board of education.

Local Optional Indicator:

Schools and districts may develop local indicators for any of the standards.