

Approved: 2/24/99  
Date

MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Senator Barbara Lawrence at 9:00 a.m. on February 3, 1999 in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Senator Hensley

Committee staff present: Avis Swartzman - Revisor  
Ben Barrett - Legislative Research  
Jackie Breymeyer - Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Dr. John Poggio, Center for Education Testing and Evaluation, University of Kansas

Others attending: (See Attached List)

Chairperson Lawrence called the meeting to order and called on Senator Emert, who asked for a bill to be introduced concerning the education savings plan.

Senator Emert moved the bill introduction. Senator Oleen gave a second to the motion. The motion carried.

Chairperson Lawrence stated that the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education had a short discussion on state assessments and found that they have been changed. The decision was made to bring Dr. Poggio back for an overview of what has been done and what can be expected from the tests.

Dr. Poggio had an attachment entitled, "Something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue: A summary of the changes to the Kansas Assessment Programs" (Attachment 1). Dr. Poggio is located at the Center for Educational Testing and Evaluation, University of Kansas, where he works at statistical analysis and evaluates school children and programs.

Dr. Poggio stated that there has been a move from competency testing to a the role of testing in the classroom; from achieving world class standards to a more practical set of mandates. While the legislature was interested in accountability, it was equally interested in using the assessments to focus curriculum in Kansas to ensure that world class content was being taught. Now, there is a clear shift to more accountability; building tests and assessments that will be rock solid so that comparisons over time will place more emphasis on school-based accountability.

Referring to the title of the attachment, Dr. Poggio stated there has been a marriage in terms of membership on the State Board of Education wanting assessment programs that meet all of the needs of constituents. The shift of which he is speaking is a shift to the curriculum focus of exams that starts to apply equal emphasis to assuring that basic essential skills also become a part of the assessment. The old curriculum standards supported the kinds of questions on the exams that were intellectually challenging, that involved reasoning, communication, problem solving, and demonstrating critical analysis skills. The state assessments would place a premium on evaluating these higher skills; world class standards. The local school districts were left to decide for themselves if they wanted to evaluate basic and essential skills. They could adopt some off-the-shelf products and could do the evaluations at their own level. What has happened through discussions and resolutions at the State Board of Education as it has called for curriculum standards is that the Board has demanded a balance between higher order thinking skills, as well as some knowledge production skills. It is not a matter of good or bad, but it is simply acknowledging test content is changing to include more 'stuff'. With the demands to place emphasis in testing not only on thinking skills, but also knowledge-based skills, they will have to give up some of the things they are testing. If there is a one hour or two hour testing time and more things are

added to the mix than there was before, some things will have to be pulled. The curriculum standards have also undergone review. As well as calling for change in the structure and design of the exams, the Board has directed the agency to get involved in a reconsideration of curriculum standards. If a look is taken at the old ones, they tend to be more general in the way they are authored. For example, in mathematics, the student should be able to do problem solving and quantitative reasoning with respect to Algebra at the high school level. What has happened as these standards have come under review is that there is a greater exactness and specificity in those standards. Thus far there has been approval of the communications arts standards, which covers the areas of reading and writing. If one views these, one sees more exactness and specificity. They become stronger guides informing educators in the exact expectations; it has become an information service. The old programs and the curriculum standards formulated in 1990-1993 that so many were involved with in, calling for world class standards, looked toward national standards and national association standards and stated that those were the things that should be discussed; the international expectations of mathematics and other curriculum tests were coming from those national documents. What has happened in the last couple of years is that the new Board has looked at those standards and tended to look at other states that have gotten good marks in the press and asked why Kansas standards can't reflect some of those structures. Where there tends to be greater specificity, there tends to be more attention for essential skills being part of the state curriculum standards because that is the way the other states have moved.

Dr. Poggio went on to say that Kansas in the early '90s established curriculum standards that were clearly intended to represent world class initiatives, and brought in external reviewers to establish whether these were world class and if they would compete with academic standards in other countries. What has been done now is a recasting of the curriculum standards to answer the questions, are they specific enough; do they provide enough direction; do they cover basic skills; do they cover essential skills; do they also cover value-thinking skills and reflect the way other states have reported them as well. Kansas standards have become more in line with the specificity demands that will be seen in other states like Virginia, North Carolina and Ohio; they have become models for us. External reviews of those standards have become state-based grouped.

Dr. Poggio commented, not to be demeaning, that Kansas has become part of the pack. This is not necessarily bad, but the test designs and the standards created have been endorsed by the Board of Education. They have been brought to the governor and the legislature. This becomes the blueprint we now use to build our state tests. We then fit in the process of constructing exams to reflect other states. A large part of the discussion in the summer of 1996 and a period in 1997 was the abandonment of the performance assessment portion of the exam. In listening and reading about that discussion, the bottom line was that the subjective nature of the burden of performance assessment did not sit well with some members of the State Board of Education. Should or should not there be performance assessment. Whether structurally based, educationally based, or politically rooted based upon the sensibilities of constituents, tests are being built today that are more traditional. In the past there was more reliance on performance testing and objective testing. Every exam, with the exception of writing, which was always a performance based measure, was equally weighed between objective multiple choice kinds of test formats, but even these were unique and different. Objective items were created for which there was more than one correct answer. If the districts want to do performance assessments, they can do that of their own volition, but there is the expectation that they will do some performance assessments. The data is not gathered or aggregated; performance scores are not formulated for 5<sup>th</sup> grade students in mathematics with their objective scores. It exists separate and apart and becomes part of a review process that can be monitored through QPA.

Dr. Poggio stated that now the hallmark of the assessment programs that are coming forward, what is beginning to be designed is the criteria of standardization. Keep it fixed. Keep it constant. Keep it stable. The old format said let there be local control, while accountability is wanted, there will be tolerance of some individuality. There will be no hardball decisions. The new system brings standardization. This is not a question of which is best, it is a question of choice. Providing assessments used to take four class periods. All testing is being reduced to about two hours of test time per academic area. Mathematics was always a two-hour experience; one hour on objective testing - one hour on performance testing. It will be on the order of two hours, but only objective testing. An out-of-state external review committee, or testing specialists have been established to advise the Kansas State Board of Education and the Kansas State Department of Education. They will meet when the program gets into full swing and then three to four times annually. They are watching Kansas University's work and commenting on it. They are individuals who advise the Department and the Board on what testing protocols look like. Parental reports are being planned. These reports will be shared with parents who have a child who sat for an exam, fully disclosing to the parent what the child sat for, how the child performed and the child's performance related to state expectations and to the other children in Kansas. This is a very expensive process. Finally, the blue part of Dr. Poggio's heading refers to KU continuing to do the test development work.

Chairperson Lawrence had a question about the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade diagnostic. She asked if it would be more advantageous for every district to be using the same test. She feels that something needs to be done by the second grade level.

Dr. Poggio stated that he feels that the part of the mandate that is in place for the Board is an alright way to go forward, but it needs to be monitored carefully. Some of the schools want something. Let QPA monitor it closely and in a year or eighteen months a look can be taken at it to see what are the benefits or consequences of it. If it looks good, leave it alone. Let the local districts decide which way they want to teach, whether it be phonics or a sight-based method; using a basic skills approach and an understanding approach. In the main, though, we want Kansas students to be great readers. If things look okay with that piece of the puzzle in place, let it be that way. We do not like what is happening. The illiteracy rate remains high in some places. Let's start taking some purposive action in regard to standardization.

Dr. Poggio was asked if his program is doing the modifications of the state assessments for special education students.

His response was that they are doing that as well. The state assessments that are being crafted will allow for accommodation. What he means is adjustments and modifications of the tests to meet the needs of special-needs students. There still remains two to three percent of the student population for whom the state assessments will not be appropriate at all. The instructional curriculum and the goals for that child won't be reflected in the state curriculum standards. They are working with federal agencies and the state to create what is being called an alternate assessment; something that speaks to that set of the population. The deadline for the first draft of those instruments is about a year's time if the pilot test work. Skills for assessment are also under development at this time; both test design and skills to be tested are getting serious and deliberate ongoing attention from the agency.

The Chairperson asked if those tests would be adapted to certain disability types or will they be adapted to each individual student.

He replied that this is a good question and the focal point of discussion now; how common can tests be for children with such disparate needs. The design being discussed now is more of a conceptualization; universal test questions with the most appropriate ones fitting the particular child. It is the most difficult thing they are facing right now. With regard to the expensiveness of this, the agency and people working on this are not ignoring the feasibility part of this. To create something that is so expensive as to make it impractical is something they are working to avoid. The results will be reflected in the overall scores using the equivalent scale of expectations on the exams.

One of the committee members stated that Dr. Poggio's report was extremely depressing. Since QPA and other assessments plans were adopted, the legislature has sent one consistent message and that is that it wants world class standards. What he is hearing now is the perception that the United States has one of the worst performing educational systems in the world. What he hears Dr. Poggio saying is that instead of striving to make a gain on Japan, Norway, Great Britain or France, the comparison is going to be with Virginia, North Carolina and Ohio. What it seems like the State Board is doing now is striving for mediocrity.

Dr. Poggio was asked if the special ed testing was because of a mandate. He responded in the affirmative.

The comment was made that these children are the most monitored, tested, evaluated and goal setting, with individuals. What is going to be achieved by spending lots of money?

Dr. Poggio answered that this all grows out of a federal concern that all of the money that goes into special education, there has always been a very limited standardized accountability. The legislation is a way for the federal government to respond to the issue in this way.

After a few additional comments about accountability, Dr. Poggio stated that when the Board directed that the fixed part of the state assessment that is called the performance assessment, the hands-on showed that the student could produce something rather than select something. That is the part that has been pulled out of the program. In that sense, the ability to measure certain outcomes have become restricted.

The Chairperson stated to Dr. Poggio that there were many questions left unasked. She asked if it would be possible for him to return in the near future.

He responded that he could do so.

Senator Oleen had a bill request concerning non-partisan elections to State Board of Education.

**Senator Oleen moved the introduction of the legislation. Senator Emert gave a second to the motion. The motion carried.**

The request was made of the Chairperson to make Dr. Poggio's appearance as soon as possible.

The meeting was adjourned.



*Something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue:  
A summary of changes to the Kansas Assessment Programs*

Old Program	New Program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• equal emphasis on changing instruction and the need for school accountability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• more emphasis on school based accountability</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• skills more tailored to world class outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• attention to both knowledge and process outcomes</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• outcomes perhaps more generally stated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• greater exactness and specificity of the outcome statements</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• curriculum outcomes/standards more aligned with national outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• more attention to outcomes used in other states whose outcomes stress specificity of skills to be learned</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• tests designs created to stress instructional approaches desired (best practices)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• test design more traditional (paper and pencil, multiple choice)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• equal reliance on performance assessment and objective questions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• only objective testing</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• more sampling opportunities for test formats</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• more standardization of the process of assessment across grade levels</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• objectivity important, but not paramount</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• standardization and objectivity in scoring dominates assessment considerations and decisions</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• test plans more novel and experimental</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• test designs follow off the shelf test products</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• more flexibility using technology (calculators, word processors, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• limitations placed on use of aids</li> </ul>

**New Features:**

- Outcomes being evaluated have been expanded
- What is to be assessed is more directly stated in the content area curriculum standards
- Test time has been reduced when not held constant
- An external assessment review committee has been established to advise KSBE and KSDE on test plans
- Parent reports are now planned
- Costs for development and production remain largely constant as does the contractor

*Senate Education  
Attachment 1  
2-3-99*