

Approved: BL 3/4/99
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 9, 1999 in Room 313-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

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

Conferees appearing before the committee: Dr. William L. Sanders, University of Tennessee

Others attending: See Attached List

The joint meeting of the House and Senate Education committees was called to order by House Chairperson Tanner. Linda Holloway, Chairperson, Kansas State Board of Education, introduced Dr. William Sanders, University of Tennessee, to give a presentation on Value Added Assessment.

Dr. Sanders stated that in the early 90's, the State of Tennessee, after its findings had brought to light the need for greater accountability in education, passed the Educational accountability act, which paved the way for implementation of the Tennessee Value-added Assessment System. One of the functions of the system was and is to measure the effectiveness of school districts, schools and teachers. To date, millions of records have been amassed on school children.

Dr. Sanders likened a child's educational growth to the physical growth he or she experiences. At home, parents mark a child's progress with a ruler and pencil. At times this growth is sporadic. This same type of measurement and plotting can be used to follow a child through his curriculum growth over a period of time. The ultimate goal or outcome of all the various charts and graphs used is to give each student the opportunity to make a minimum of a year's growth each year; to try to pinpoint by the data who is or is not being reached.

What Dr. Sanders sees is happening in a lot of schools is that the teachers are focusing on raising the lower end children, those who are behind, while the upper end kids are not given the opportunity to make any academic gain. The variability among schools is huge.

Dr. Sanders stated that teacher effectiveness might be the single most important factor. Results show that location of building, classroom size, heterogeneity, and socio-economic factors have little influence on academic gain. If teacher effectiveness is repeatedly high one year, it will be high the next, regardless of location. On the other end, if a child has a weak teacher two years in a row, that child just about can't make it. When a teacher looks over the classroom spectrum, wherever that teacher places the focus, whether low, middle or high, that focus will determine where the gain will be. If that focus could be placed to include the entire class, low, middle and high, the teacher could get excellent gain across the entire classroom. At an earlier age good teaching skills come into play; the further up the grade levels, more teaching knowledge comes into play. His hypothesis that the further one climbs, a teacher's own knowledge of his or her subject contributes, as well as the desire to motivate and all the other variables that contribute.

Sever questions were directed to Dr. Sanders about testing, teacher competency and teacher preparation. He was asked if he has identified in his state the best institution that aspiring students should attend to become the best teachers. His response was that he has been asked this question many times, and, as he told one Senator, "Senator, I am brazen, but I am not foolish." There are schools that produce better teachers. His group is in the process of doing a study by the National Science Foundation to look at the levels of math courses a particular teacher has taken when that teacher was a student and how this impacts on how well the students of that particular teacher do in the classroom. Teacher effectiveness is not as easily identifiable at the elementary level, but shows up more at the middle school level. A better pool of teachers is available in high growth areas. In remote areas, there is a shortage of math and science teachers. In talking to school superintendents, they will invariably tell him that they are in good shape except for high school math and science teachers.

CONTINUATION SHEET

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MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE, Room 123-S Statehouse, at 9:00 a.m. on February 9, 1999.

Dr. Sanders commented that two important parts of his study are the free flow of all the diagnostic information coming in from the school districts and the accountability base. Teacher evaluation must not be the sole basis of an evaluation. The school districts have to decide how much information should be weighed and how to process that information. They hold the key to accountability for the failures of the children and the teachers.

On a personal note, Dr. Sanders said that he has a problem with holding a child responsible for something he or she had no control over. Some kids are goof-offs and should be held accountable, but the kids who are giving their very best effort and then are not getting it are going to have to have an accountability system based upon growth rates. This will put pressure on schools and teachers across the entire spectrum. He reiterated that this is his personal opinion.

After answering several questions, Dr. Sanders came to a close by saying that he appreciated the honor of appearing before the joint committees and, if he could ever be assistance, just give him a holler.

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE GUEST LIST

DATE: February 9, 1999

NAME	REPRESENTING
Jacque Dokes	SQE
Tom Burgard	Professional Standards Board
Martha Sage	KSDE
Stacey Farmer	KASB
Jenny Plamann	KSBE
Barbara Palmer	St. Bd.
Andy Dimpfling	KSDE
Tracy Schell	KSDE
Kimberly Young	KSDE
Steve Adams	KSDE
Nurshe Pasor	City
Earle Kroulton	School of Educ., Univ. of Kansas
John J. Nuspl	USD 348, Baldwin City
Roger Toelkes	Senate Husky Office
Marabeth Conner	Chamber of Comm. Clay Center
Mary Petes	Sprint
Phu Bui	KSDE