

Approved: 4-5-2000  
Date

## MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Senator Barbara Lawrence at 8:00 a.m. on March 28, 2000 in Room 423S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Senators Hensley and Jones - Absent

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

Conferees appearing before the committee: Senator Umbarger

Others attending:

Senator Lawrence called the meeting to order and stated her thanks to the Subcommittee on School Reform for putting together something that is affordable and also that has some reform measures.

Senator Umbarger began by stating the subcommittee had reviewed the components of several of the proposed school reform issues which included the "First in Class" plan by Senator Bond, "Years of Promise" by Representatives Glasscock and Tanner and the proposals contained in Representative O'Connor's plan. Most of the subcommittee's focus was on early childhood intervention and student proficiency in basic skills, school and district level accountability, and teacher preparation and performance. The subcommittee feels the constraints of the budget limitations for FY 2001 and FY 2002 and the time it would take to resolve the tangle of issues of school improvement. (Attachment 1)

Turning to page 2 of the subcommittee report, Senator Umbarger directed attention to two pieces of legislation that the subcommittee supported. The first piece of legislation was reading skills at the early grades. It was thought to use **HB 2794** as the bill directs the State Board of Education to prepare a strategy for identifying, developing, and implementing a mastery of basic skills program in kindergarten and each of grades one through three of school districts based upon the goal of basic skills mastery by pupils upon completion of third grade, but this bill was not blessed. The reading skills language will go into **HB 2799** which is in the Senate Education Committee and blessed. He stated that **HB 2899** would also work as a vehicle.

The second piece of recommended legislation was the mentoring of first year teachers. The subcommittee recommended passage of an amended version of **HB 2799** or adoption of the substance of an amended version of that measure which recently was added to **SB 432** by the House Education Committee. He explained that the bill authorizes the State Board of Education to award grants to school districts to pay stipends for experienced teachers who serve as mentors to first-year teachers. Stipends of \$1,000 would be paid for each mentor teacher. To participate in the program, a school district board would be required to have a State board of Education approved mentor teacher program.

Senator Umbarger went through the rest of the subcommittee report with a recommendation that the LCC create a special interim committee on Preschool and K-12 matters that would be charged with the topics of student assessments, four-year-old at risk pupil component of the school finance law, parents as teachers program, full day kindergarten and student retention. The postsecondary issues of alternative routes to teacher certification were highlighted, as well as direction for the LEPC to direct interim study to teacher preparation and accountability of teacher training institutions.

Discussion followed the presentation of the subcommittee report with comments on which bills to place the pieces of legislation of reading skills and mentoring. The suggestion was made to place mentoring in **HB 2799** and reading skills in **HB 2899**. Other members thought it would be better to place both recommendations into one bill to ease the Revisor's work. The Revisor stated that she would write it either way, whatever the wishes of the committee.

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE, Room 423S Statehouse, at 8:00 a.m. on March 28, 2000.

**Senator Kerr moved to place the reading skills and mentoring recommendations into HB 2799.**  
**Senator Emert gave a second to the motion.**

Cost considerations were discussed. Dale Dennis, Deputy Education Commissioner, stated that it would probably could be done without serious consequences since it is a plan to plan a skills program without getting into the content as to what people are reading.

It was commented that second grade testing is already in place and that would be a help.

Teacher mentoring and lack of funds was also discussed. It was noted that teacher preparation and training will be a subject that will be revisited for several years. Another member stated that there would have to be some sort of performance criteria. The bill should have language that the State Board of Education would set the criteria with the local district doing the evaluation. Another member stated that some of the language sounded bureaucratic. In regard to training, one of the Senator stated a program had been started in her town without dollars that was more like a dialogue skills program since the teaching skills were intact.

Mr. Dennis stated that training skills would be done by service centers in the area.

Senator Kerr stated that all the incorporated mechanisms for training and the language for training should be incorporated into the bill; whatever additional language would be compatible with what is trying to be done. The criteria for selection and training with local boards selecting the teachers for training.

The Revisor read all the language that was agreed upon by the committee and the Chairperson stated she would meet with the Revisor to make sure that all the suggested areas by the members of the committee would be incorporated.

The Chairperson asked if there was any further discussion.

Senator Bleeker offered a substitute motion that would incorporate essential academic mastering skills and listed several pages and lines of the bill where changes would be made. The motion died for lack of a second.

The Chairperson called for a vote on Senator Kerr's motion. **The motion carried.**

**Senator Emert moved the language that included the local boards selecting the teacher and training the teacher and the State Board of Education determining the criteria to be included in the bill.**  
**Senator Langworthy gave a second to the motion.**

It was stated that a bill that carries this important message should be funded now.

The Chairperson stated there was a problem with base state aid now. She noted there are three members of the Senate Education Committee on the Senate Ways and Means Committee, two of which are on the subcommittee. She would hope they could persuade the Ways and Means Committee to consider this as a priority.

A member stated that another possibility would be to allow a year before it would become effective. To look at the budget for next year for the Board to come forward and send a message that this is something that is going to be done.

Senator Kerr stated this was very agreeable.

The Chairperson asked Senator Emert if that would be part of his motion.

Senator Emert stated he had no problem codifying something that would be a year before any money is spent. It is not going to cost the State Board of Education anything to develop the plan. All it really does is state the State Board of Education will develop a plan for a mentoring program.

## CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE, Room 423S Statehouse, at 8:00 a.m. on March 28, 2000.

A member stated that it would be good to have language to the effect that this is a delayed program; don't look for it now; the committee did know what it was doing. He also thinks that realistically FY 2001 and FY 2002 looks bad at this point. There are also the pressures of special education, K-12, people on ACDS waivers in wheel chairs for which it is not determined if there are sufficient funds to satisfy the case loads. It will be tough to get to this program.

One of the committee suggested that language could be inserted to the effect that the State Board of Education shall develop the criteria by January 1, 2001. This would give some indication that it is not going to be started immediately. This would get us to the same end point.

Another member stated she liked the date that the Board would have the language in place and the locals trying to approve that and then having the dollars available in FY 2001 - FY 2002 school year.

Mr. Dennis stated he like the idea, but questioned if the resources would be there. If the program is set up and there is no funding, how will that be explained. It is a lot of pressure.

The Chairperson responded when the budget is worked next year, if this program is really thought important, it will be handled much better if it is in the State Board of Education's budget. This would be a priority in that budget whereas in this year's budget, it is too late.

The issue of having funds for this bill or funding prior programs that did not get funded this year was discussed. The Chairperson commented that this is what has to be asked. Is this where the committee wants to put the money next year or are there things that are unfunded this year that would be more important. That is the decision to be made.

It was commented that the mentoring concept is very important given the ability to recruit teachers and keep teachers in the classroom. This bill has the potential to make some difference in the quality of teaching and the retention of teachers.

The comment was also made that when one looks at the size of the appropriation for base state aid per pupil, one million dollars more or less gets lost. It might mean something in a program like this. To some extent it should be more important than adding another million dollars to base state aid per pupil because no school district will know the difference whether or not there is one million dollars more or less base state aid per pupil, but a lot of them may know a difference if they have a mentoring program.

One committee member suggested that a definition of basic reading skills should be incorporated. This should be done throughout the bill or at a definition of what basic skills are with a focus on reading.

The Chairperson asked for a vote on the bill as it stands with the local board selecting the teachers and doing the training, but the State Board of Education outlining the criteria.

**Senator Oleen made a substitute motion to include the implementation date of FY2001-FY2002 school year and to make the focus the reading portion of the bill and to report the bill favorably as amended. Senator Langworthy gave a second to the motion. The substitute motion carried.**

**Senator Langworthy moved to adopt the committee report with the recommendaitons for interim study. Senator Kerr gave a second to the motion. The motion carried.**

**Senator Langworthy moved the passage of the minutes of March 17, 20, 21 and 22. Senator Kerr gave a second to the motion. The motion carried.**

The meeting was adjourned.



**REPORT OF THE SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON SCHOOL REFORM**  
to the  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**Background**

The Subcommittee commenced its study by reviewing the components of several of the proposed school reform issues introduced during the 2000 Session, including the measures contained in the "First in Class" plan presented by Senator Bond, the "Years of Promise" initiative urged by Representatives Glasscock and Tanner, and the series of proposals recommended by Representative O'Connor.

**Focus of Attention.** Most Subcommittee attention focused on:

- Early childhood interventions and student proficiency in basic skills;
- School and district level accountability; and
- Teacher preparation and performance.

**Other Material Reviewed**

In addition to consideration of the several reform bills, the Subcommittee reviewed the four-year-old at-risk student component of the school finance law; the Parents as Teachers program; the fiscal consequences of full-day kindergarten programs; research on the educational and social consequences of student retention; features of the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment program; alternative teacher certification initiatives among the states and, in particular, the program in place at Wichita State University; teacher preparation in the pending State Board of Education teacher certification regulations; and new federal higher education teacher preparation institution accountability reporting requirements.

**Constraints**

The Subcommittee felt constrained with respect to various initiatives it might have endorsed and advanced for consideration by the Senate Committee on Education by the severe budget limitations facing the Legislature in FY 2001 and in FY 2002. Another constraint that weighted heavily on the Subcommittee was that of time. Many of the school improvement target areas involve a tangle of issues that are not easily resolved. The Subcommittee discussed several issues that simply defy easy solution. Progress was made in achieving a better understanding of the implications and consequences of various proposals. In this connection, the Subcommittee has identified a series of topics it believes ought to be the subject of interim legislative study. (These are mentioned below.)

*Senate Education  
3-28-2000  
Attachment 1*

## Recommendations

### Proposed Legislation

**Reading Skills in the Early Grades.** The Subcommittee recommends amending Sub. for HB 2794 to limit its scope to concentration on mastery of basic reading skills.

This bill directs the State Board of Education to prepare a strategy for identifying, developing, and implementing a mastery of basic skills program in kindergarten and each of grades one through three of school districts based upon the goal of basic skills mastery by pupils upon completion of third grade. Currently, the measure identifies reading, writing, and mathematics as the basic skills areas. The Subcommittee's recommendation is directed exclusively toward mastery of basic reading skills, as reading mastery is viewed as the single most important contribution to future educational success. Recognition of reading mastery by completion of the third grade is of critical importance.

**Mentoring of First Year Teachers.** The Subcommittee recommends passage of an amended version of HB 2799 or adoption of the substance of an amended version of that measure which recently was added to SB 432 by the House Education Committee.

The bill authorizes the State Board of Education to award grants to school districts to pay stipends for experienced teachers who serve as mentors to first-year teachers. As amended pursuant to the Subcommittee's recommendation, stipends of \$1,000 would be paid for each mentor teacher. (Fiscal Note—about \$1.0 million.) To participate in this program, a school district board would be required to have a State Board of Education approved mentor teacher program.

The mentor teacher concept is universally recognized as invaluable to the professional development and acclimatization of new teachers.

### Interim Study—Preschool and K-12 Matters

**Special Interim Education Committee.** The Subcommittee recommends that the Legislative Coordinating Council create a special interim committee on Preschool and K-12 Matters and charge it with studying the following topics:

- **Student Assessments.** Consideration should be given to a variety of issues pertaining to this activity, including preparation of annual reports and longitudinal data on individual and aggregate student academic achievement gains with such data correlated with individual teacher, school, and school system performance. Features of the Tennessee Value Added Assessment Program should be reviewed and considered by the study committee.

- **Four-Year-Old At-Risk Pupil Component of the School Finance Law.** A study should evaluate the effectiveness and cost efficiency of this program, consider the state's role in providing educational services to this cohort of children, and make recommendations pertaining thereto.
- **Parents as Teachers Program.** The Parents as Teachers Program also should be reviewed with respect to its effectiveness and cost efficiency. In addition, the philosophy underlying the program should be revisited and a determination should be made as to whether the program is serving the most appropriate constituency.
- **Full Day Kindergarten.** The issue of state support for full day kindergarten programs should be studied. The study should include review of the research pertaining to both the short-term and long-term effects of full day kindergarten on student achievement and the projected costs of implementing the program in Kansas school districts.
- **Student Retention.** The merits of student retention as one of the means of eliminating "social promotion" of students to the next grade level should be considered. The study should include a review of the research on the educational and social consequences of this practice.

### **Postsecondary Issues**

**Alternative Routes to Teacher Certification.** During the Subcommittee's deliberations on this matter, members received a presentation from Dr. Jon M. Engelhardt, Dean of the College of Education at Wichita State University concerning the alternative certification program that has been in operation since 1992. This program was begun in conjunction with the Peace Corps. In 1996, the program was expanded to include non-Peace Corps candidates. Forty-two persons currently are participating in the program. In part, this program has been supported by the Dewitt-Wallace Readers Digest Foundation, funding from which expires this summer. (A description of this program is attached to this report.)

One feature of admission to this program about which Dr. Engelhardt expressed concern is the requirement in the State Board of Education certification redesign of increasing from 2.5 to 2.75 in the grade point average required in an individual's academic major teaching field. This may work a hardship on program applicants who, during their college careers, majored in areas such as engineering or accounting, graduated with a bachelor of arts or bachelor of science degree, and have had successful, if not distinguished, careers but whose grade point average in the field of concentration was below 2.75. Dr. Engelhardt suggested that some type of case-by-case waiver provision in the State Board of Education certification regulations to address these situations would be very helpful. The Subcommittee recommends that the State Board of Education take this matter under consideration and devise some reasonable means of accommodating these applicants.

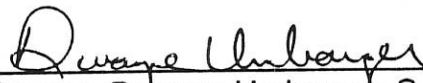
The Subcommittee was very favorably impressed with Wichita State's alternative teacher certification program and the success it is experiencing. More should be done to make this program known throughout the state. The Subcommittee urges the State Board of Education to provide promotional information to school districts about the program and for Wichita State to increase its marketing effort for this program. Postsecondary institutions engaged in teacher training in Kansas should explore linkages with Wichita State in the interest of coordinating the strengths of the program.

The Legislative Educational Planning Committee should direct further attention to this issue during the 2000 Interim.


**Interim Study—Teacher Preparation and Teacher Training Institution Accountability.** The Subcommittee recommends that the Legislative Educational Planning Committee, in addition to other matters it studies during the 2000 Interim, address the following topics:

- **Teacher Preparation.** The Legislative Educational Planning Committee should devote careful attention to the teacher preparation curriculum of Kansas teacher training institutions in the interest of ensuring that these programs are properly equipping students to meet the ever changing demands on educators in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.
- **Accountability of Teacher Training Institutions.** In connection with a discussion of means of holding teacher training institutions more accountable for the quality of their graduates, the Subcommittee reviewed the provisions of HB 2798 and discussed other accountability techniques. The Legislative Educational Planning Committee should continue the dialogue on this matter.

Respectfully submitted,



Senator Dwayne Umbarger, Subcommittee Chair



Senator Christine Downey



Senator Dave Kerr