

NORTH DAKOTA LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Minutes of the

EDUCATION FINANCE COMMITTEE

Tuesday, December 14, 1999
Peace Garden Room, State Capitol
Bismarck, North Dakota

Senator Layton Freborg, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Members present: Senators Layton Freborg, Dwight C. Cook, Jerome Kelsh, Rolland W. Redlin; Representatives James Boehm, Lois Delmore, Rachael Disrud, David Drovdal, C. B. Haas, Lyle Hanson, Kathy Hawken, Dennis E. Johnson, RaeAnn G. Kelsch, Ralph Metcalf, Bob Stefanowicz, Laurel Thoreson

Members absent: Representatives Thomas T. Brusegaard, Jack Dalrymple, Howard Grumbo, Deb Lundgren, Robert E. Nowatzki

Others present: See Appendix A

It was moved by Representative Kelsch, seconded by Representative Boehm, and carried on a voice vote that the minutes of the previous meeting be approved as distributed.

Chairman Freborg called on Dr. Wayne Sanstead, Superintendent of Public Instruction, who presented testimony regarding the development and implementation of state standards and assessments. His testimony is attached as Appendix B.

Dr. Sanstead said today the committee is getting a major look at the future. He said it is important to identify that which is essential to learn and that which we expect of our students. He said it is important to identify the teaching and administrative skills that need to be improved. He said it is important to determine how we can improve parent participation in the education process and how we can report results to our communities.

Dr. Sanstead said all students should be taught to challenging standards, all students' performance should be measured against these standards, all schools should be accountable for their students' performance levels, and all schools should be afforded optimum flexibility to achieve these goals. He said students requiring special education have and will continue to have their curriculum tailored to their individual needs. He said we continue to expect that special education students participate in the educational opportunities available to all students.

In response to a question from Representative Thoreson, Dr. Sanstead said one of the critical characteristics is the alignment of a school district's goals with the goals of the state.

In response to a question from Representative Drovdal, Dr. Sanstead said he anticipates technical assistance coming from the Department of Public Instruction. He said the purpose of such assistance is to help districts meet those goals they believe are possible, provided the districts continue to make progress.

In response to another question from Representative Drovdal, Dr. Sanstead said the present open enrollment law allows parents to move students from a school district they believe is not meeting their children's educational needs.

In response to a further question from Representative Drovdal, Dr. Sanstead said the Department of Public Instruction has initiated an internal school reporting system. He said a parent can go to a district and find out how the district's students did on tests.

In response to a question from Senator Cook, Dr. Sanstead said one concern is whether or not our students are being challenged to be the very best that they can be. He said, realistically, we do not expect every student to reach the top performance levels.

In response to another question from Senator Cook, Dr. Sanstead said there are age-appropriate and grade-appropriate considerations that go into the composition of standards.

In response to a further question from Senator Cook, Dr. Sanstead said he suspects there are some schools that are not providing the maximum opportunities for their students. He said some schools try only to get students through at the very minimum levels. He said the citizens in those communities need to ask some very serious questions about what their schools are doing.

Chairman Freborg called on Mr. Greg Gallagher, Director, Educational Improvement, Department of Public Instruction, who presented testimony regarding content standards and assessments. Mr. Gallagher's testimony is attached as Appendix C. He said content standards deal with what we expect of our students and what we want to teach to our students. He said the Legislative Assembly is in fact the master school board of the state.

Mr. Gallagher said in the 1940s there was a state-driven curriculum. He said with the advancements in publishing, content standards became textbook driven and those textbooks were generally written for the

large states such as California and Texas. He said our statutes tell us we need to teach subjects such as English and mathematics. He said the statutes are silent with respect to what should be taught within those content areas.

Mr. Gallagher said in North Dakota we need to make allowances for variances among local communities. He said we need to reach a level of comparability regarding what should be taught. He said comparability tries to address content at a higher level. He said students need to "know" and then to "understand." He said statements of knowledge and statements of understanding are the main components of standards.

Mr. Gallagher distributed a document entitled *North Dakota English Language Arts Curriculum Framework*. The document is attached as Appendix D. He said this document is the first one issued by the Department of Public Instruction. He said it has become the model for the development of curricula frameworks in other content areas. He said the framework model offers an opportunity for districts to insert their own content as they see fit. He said each framework begins with a listing of the fundamental standards for that particular area. He said the curriculum used by schools must cover these fundamental standards.

Mr. Gallagher said standards are developed at three benchmarks--the fourth, eighth, and twelfth grades. He said a benchmark is an attempt to take a general standard and make it applicable to that grade level.

In response to a question from Representative Stefonowicz, Mr. Gallagher said districts can develop for themselves what students should know and be able to do in the first, second, and third grades so their students will be able to meet the benchmarks set forth for the fourth grade. He said this is also applicable to the other grade levels between the fourth and eighth and between the ninth and twelfth benchmarks.

In response to a question from Representative Delmore, Mr. Gallagher said the Department of Public Instruction uses drafting teams and review teams to develop its content standards. He said the documents are then disseminated for public comment, and afterward the content standards are revised again. He said the content standards are amendable by future groups. He said these standards are designed to represent the best thinking at a given time. He said we do not require a curriculum to follow a particular standard. He said individual teachers determine what standards they should use.

Mr. Gallagher said currently we have no standards. He said if we are going to have comparability among school districts, we need to set forth at least a base from which everyone can work.

In response to a question from Representative Thoreson, Mr. Gallagher said guidelines used in the past focused more on instructional activities and

strategies. He said what the field asked for was greater guidance regarding what should be taught.

In response to a question from Representative Delmore, Mr. Gallagher said the process of validation happens at several levels. He said one of the first things a design team has to address is what is already out there, i.e, what have other states already done and what North Dakota products already exist.

In response to a question from Representative Delmore, Mr. Gallagher said standards have been developed across the country. However, he said, they have developed at different speeds. He said our standards developed rather slowly in part because we did not have any money available other than federal funds. He said how each state develops and prioritizes its content standards is different. He said each time a state completes its standards, there is another document available for review and consideration.

Mr. Gallagher said the North Dakota content standards include activity examples for teachers to use in following the benchmarks.

In response to a question from Representative Stefonowicz, Mr. Gallagher said the standards identify that to which every student should be exposed. He said how districts follow through on the standards is their own decision.

Mr. Gallagher said members of the Legislative Assembly should determine from a policy perspective whether they want to uphold the unit system or focus on content standards. He said if we set our sites on standards, then we need to give districts the latitude to determine how those standards will be implemented.

In response to a question from Representative Thoreson, Mr. Gallagher said the role of textbooks is not to set curriculum but to aid instruction. He said many times a textbook is adopted as the curriculum. He said by doing that we have handed over our responsibility to a publishing company to determine what we are going to teach our children. He said teachers should use textbooks and other supplementary material to educate students. He said that is the art of teaching. He said a teacher should not be wedded to a textbook.

In response to a question from Senator Cook, Mr. Gallagher said if one adopts a textbook as the sole interpreter of the knowledge to be communicated, then the textbook has indeed become the curriculum. He said a standards-based curriculum recognizes the priorities of the district. He said a district needs to determine what it is trying to explore, and then it can determine whether a textbook is an appropriate choice.

In response to a question from Senator Kelsh, Mr. Gallagher said the question to be asked is how much flexibility is enough. He said one could prescribe which topics need to be taught on which days. He said the North Dakota approach has been to look for a balance that assures comparability

among districts. He said if there is clarity regarding what the standards are and if districts are asked to prepare their curriculum based on those standards, comparability will be achieved.

In response to a question from Senator Cook, Mr. Gallagher said if we were to move toward a good balance between a standards-driven system and flexibility, then a lot could change for districts. He said if a district decides to teach to standards, how they package their delivery of education would change. He said now we just talk about units, not knowledge. He said once a student has so many units, the student is ready to graduate. He said what the student has been taught is not a point for discussion.

In response to a question from Senator Cook, Mr. Gallagher said if we take an accreditation approach, the approach would not be applicable to districts that do not choose to be accredited. He said if a private school chooses not to use standards and if standards were a component of accreditation, then the private school would not be accredited.

Mr. Gallagher said North Dakota test scores have put this state at number one or two in the nation. Unfortunately, he said, only 31 percent or 32 percent of North Dakota students reach a proficient level. He said when people are told those figures, their first comment is that we should do better. He said we need a standard so that we know what we should be learning, and then we need to measure our progress.

In response to a question from Senator Freborg, Mr. Gallagher said many other states have already initiated content standards and each has had its own approach. He said most of the standards generated by other states have come into being during the past five years. He said North Carolina and Texas have taken a much more proactive approach to standards-based education. He said their proficiency ratings--their rate of improvement--has increased tremendously during the last several years. He said North Dakota's proficiency rate is flat.

In response to a question from Representative Thoreson, Mr. Gallagher said there is no intention to attach mandatory testing for high school graduation to the content standards or to state assessments. He said the intent is to use assessments to show how much we are improving. He said assessments should give us insights about how well our students are performing. He said assessments should help teachers determine how we can improve. He said we have a need for good valid data that can help people determine how to improve.

In response to a question from Representative Delmore, Mr. Gallagher said accreditation is an attempt to evaluate the capacity of an institution to do its mission. He said standards will give us the basis for measuring in a fashion that is clear and intellectually honest.

In response to a question from Representative Delmore, Mr. Gallagher said North Central

Accreditation (NCA) carries a good housekeeping seal of approval. He said content standards do not restrict the NCA process in any way. He said NCA examiners prefer to start with good valid data and are very critical when that data is not available. He said this is not an exercise whereby the state looks at results that are not good. He said this is a means for the state to compel improvement, not to lay sanctions on school districts.

Mr. Gallagher also distributed copies of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction *Mathematics Content Standards*, the *Science Standards*, the *Social Studies Standards*, the *Health Standards*, the *Visual Arts Content Standards*, the *Music Content Standards*, the *Dance Arts Content Standards*, the *Theatre Content Standards*, the *English Language Arts Performance Standards*, and the *English Language Arts Calibration Packs*. The documents are on file in the Legislative Council office.

Chairman Freborg called on Mr. John Salwei, Assistant Superintendent, Bismarck Public Schools, who presented testimony regarding content standards. Mr. Salwei said the greatest challenge faced by the Bismarck Public School District is providing students with knowledge, skills, and values so they can become productive members of society. He said making meaningful change happen in a traditional and conservative institution such as teaching is difficult. He said the Bismarck Public School District has embraced the standards movement.

Mr. Salwei said traditionally a high school diploma has been a measurement of seat time, not one of knowledge gained. He said in France every teacher is on the same page today. He said that is too prescriptive. However, he said, in the United States there is no consistency. He said the standards movement will set the direction so that a high school diploma will mean something. He said students will be involved in the learning process.

Mr. Salwei said the Bismarck Public School District uses federal funding from a variety of sources in order to bring standards to the students. He said the district is in the infancy stage with respect to standards, yet it is ahead of many school districts and states.

Mr. Salwei said the Bismarck Public School District looks at textbooks like a tool. He said textbooks are a resource to be taken off the shelf and used. He said the implementation of content standards has resulted in changes in the teaching process and participation by the students in the learning process.

Mr. Salwei distributed copies of the Bismarck Public Schools *Elementary English Language Arts Curriculum K-6* and the *Elementary Math Curriculum K-6*. The documents are on file in the Legislative Council office. He said how well our children learn has to do with how well our teachers teach.

In response to a question from Representative Drovdal, Mr. Salwei said the Bismarck Public School

District is writing expanded standards for children with disabilities.

In response to a question from Representative Thoreson, Mr. Salwei said letter grades are still used but the district is moving toward using references such as advanced, proficient, nearly proficient, and deficient. He said standards are our best hope in education.

Chairman Freborg called on Ms. Janet Edlund, Principal, Dakota Prairie School District, who presented testimony regarding curriculum development. She said curriculum development was the reason that five districts came together into the Dakota Prairie School District. She said what was taught in grade three in one district was not taught in the other districts. She said each district had its own math textbook and the information was not the same from one to the other. She said curriculum changes were done every 10 years with the selection of new textbooks.

Ms. Edlund said we need to go even further than where the standards movement wants to take us. She said we need to address what every student needs to know in every grade. She said she is very glad the state is taking the initiative to set the basis for what students in grades 4, 8, and 12 need to know. She said any child from any school district in the state needs to be competitive with any child from any other school district in the state. She said each child needs to have the knowledge base to go to any university.

Ms. Edlund said now the only requirement is that a teacher teaches 200 minutes of math. She said that teacher can choose not to teach multiplication in fourth grade. She said that teacher can choose to teach only addition.

Ms. Edlund said the best example of a standard is the driver's test. She said we say what a student needs to know, and then we put that student behind a wheel and say show me. She said it is unfortunate that we do not apply the same thinking to science and mathematics.

Chairman Freborg called on Ms. Daphne Ghorbani, who presented testimony regarding content standards. She said we need to ask teachers why they are teaching what they are teaching. She said we need to ask them what exactly are they trying to accomplish. She said we need to ask them how they decide what they need to teach. She said the ultimate question for a teacher is what is the essence of what the teacher is teaching. She said each teacher must at least begin to understand that question.

Ms. Edlund said she spent 26 years in education and went to every faculty meeting. She said at the meetings they hardly ever discussed teaching. She said if every teacher was allowed to participate in the formation of content standards, the quality of education would be tremendously enhanced.

In response to a question from Representative Delmore, Ms. Ghorbani said we should consider

granting graduate credit to teachers who participate in the development of content standards.

With the permission of Chairman Freborg, Mr. Gallagher said the process of content development has helped bring renewed focus to many teachers.

In response to a question from Senator Redlin, Ms. Edlund said every teacher who has been involved in this process has brought a new excitement to the classroom. She said it is sad that more teachers cannot have this type of specific involvement in what they teach and how they teach it. She said this level of excitement is one of the factors that has helped Dakota Prairie School District keep its teaching staff.

In response to a question from Senator Redlin, Ms. Edlund said it is her hope that standards will enhance public education and give it the level of esteem it deserves.

Chairman Freborg called on Mr. Gallagher, who presented testimony regarding performance standards and assessments. Mr. Gallagher said we need to know how well students can integrate what they have learned into their lives. He said we need to define what is good quality performance. He said we need assessments in order to determine how well a student is doing. He said the assessment might focus on how the student is doing and how the teacher is doing.

Mr. Gallagher said in the past we have used assessments developed by each teacher. What is an "A" to one teacher might be a "C" to another. He said there is no consistency in the measurement of student knowledge.

Mr. Gallagher said North Dakota teachers were on the committee that created assessments in the areas of English language arts and mathematics. He said the tests require the actual performance of tasks, not just the coloring in of a bubble on a multiple choice page. He said it generally takes two to three years to develop a good quality test. He said if parents attend a parent-teacher conference, they receive a general report on how their child is doing. He said a detailed assessment would provide parents with a much better understanding of what and how their child is doing.

Mr. Gallagher said each test is graded twice by two different individuals. He said this eliminates any concerns about bias. He said in English language arts they are achieving 97 percent interrater reliability. He said the assessment data can also indicate whether we are asking too much of students or not enough.

Mr. Gallagher said a performance standard is the definition of expected proficiency. He said, unfortunately, teachers do not talk with other teachers about their grading expectations.

Mr. Gallagher said we are trying to find a balance between having standards and granting flexibility. He said that is a policy issue for this committee. He said what we need is a standard for content that ensures

comparability. He said we need a standard to govern what proficiency means while allowing districts ample latitude to make it work for them. He said districts need to have their philosophy regarding what they are trying to achieve on record. He said we need to give ample guidance to teachers.

Mr. Gallagher said the tough question is how do we communicate the results to parents. He said some districts use a strict comparison for people to compare and contrast one school with another. He said in some states if schools do not measure up, the states may remove teachers, administrators, or even school boards.

Mr. Gallagher said he believes the focus should be on the improvement of education, not on the exercise of sanctions. He said there is ample opportunity to work on an improvement approach.

Mr. Gallagher said the Legislative Assembly will be asked to determine the nature and extent of reporting results. He said it would be his recommendation to put first emphasis on an improvement model.

In response to a question from Senator Freborg, Mr. Gallagher said it is possible to begin working on standards without working simultaneously on assessments. He said the assessment component is a natural result of a standards-based system. He said once standards are in place, people will want to know how they are doing.

Mr. Gallagher said there is no one way by which assessments can be created and employed. He said we need to consider what is the true purpose of assessment.

In response to a question from Representative Disrud, Mr. Gallagher said nothing in the creation and use of standards in any way limits the studies of gifted students. He said the standards will in fact enhance the quality of teaching and thereby create even more options for teachers to pursue with gifted students.

In response to a question from Representative Delmore, Mr. Gallagher said we are just beginning to focus on how test scores should be reported to the parents of students.

Chairman Freborg called on Mr. Tom Decker, Director, Finance and Organization, Department of Public Instruction, who presented testimony regarding school construction issues. Mr. Decker distributed a document entitled *School Construction Approval Requests Approved*. The document is attached as Appendix E. He said this document shows numerous school construction projects. He said most of them are small projects.

Mr. Decker said current law provides that the Superintendent of Public Instruction may not approve a school construction project unless the district demonstrates the need for the project, the educational utility of the project, and the ability to sustain a stable or increasing student enrollment for a period of time at least equal to the anticipated usable life of the project, or demonstrates potential utilization of the project by a

future reorganized school district. He said this 1999 amendment makes the intent of the old law much more clear. He said the Superintendent of Public Instruction is currently reviewing the school construction approval process. He said many school districts look at the construction of a new building before they look at other long-term options for their districts.

In response to a question from Representative Thoreson, Mr. Decker said a request for construction approval comes from a school district after a vote of the school board.

Mr. Decker said the school construction approval process requires school districts to evaluate other alternatives to school construction. He said in recent years school districts have not been considering alternatives.

Mr. Decker said the school construction law was first enacted in 1969, following a period of significant population decline, especially in the rural areas. He said in 1989 the Superintendent of Public Instruction wanted to deny an application. He said the Attorney General indicated that, under the then existing law, the Superintendent did not have that authority. He said the Legislative Assembly enacted that authority during the 1991 legislative session.

Mr. Decker said school construction approval issues have consequences not just for the individual requesting district but for the surrounding districts and in fact for the state at large. He said the 1999 amendments provide a basis for review that takes into account the interest of neighboring districts in the event of a future reorganization and the interest of the state in terms of declining enrollments.

Mr. Decker distributed a document entitled *School District Profile Maple Valley Public School District #4*. The document is attached as Appendix F. He said the Superintendent of Public Instruction employed a consultant to review the proposed projects in both school districts.

Mr. Decker distributed a document entitled *County Enumeration of Children by District*. The document is attached as Appendix G. He said the Superintendent of Public Instruction denied the authority to construct a new high school. He said the Superintendent indicated that he was open to the construction of a new elementary school or to the renovation of the high school.

In response to a question from Senator Freborg, Mr. Decker said the Superintendent turned down a construction project in Granville during the last year. He said the Superintendent gets very few applications for major construction projects from low-enrollment districts.

Mr. Decker distributed a document entitled *ND Public School Enrollments for 1998-99 and 1999-2000*. The document is attached as Appendix H. He said only one page of this five-page document shows steady or increasing enrollment. He said based on births in 1998, there are 16 counties that had fewer than 25 births in 1998. He said one of those counties

has five school districts in it. He said there is no expectation that the declining birth trend will change in the near future. He said North Dakota has 18 counties with population densities of six people or more per square mile. He said those 18 counties have 80 percent and the other 35 counties have the remaining 20 percent of all school students.

In response to a question from Representative Kelsch, Mr. Decker said reservation counties have a large annual fluctuation of student counts.

Mr. Decker distributed a document entitled *ND Instructional Rooms and Enrollment per Instructional Room*. The document is attached as Appendix I. He said most facilities were built to house 18 to 25 students per class. He said our smallest high schools now have only 4.9 students per room. He said even our largest high schools average only 16 students per room.

Mr. Decker distributed a document entitled *Change in Usage of Available Space: Schools on the 1995 Facilities Report that Continue to Operate in 2000*. The document is attached as Appendix J. He said 110 to 200 square feet per student is the Minnesota standard. He said we have adopted that standard here in North Dakota. He said most schools have significantly higher square footage per student than that required by the industry standard. He said we are trying to avoid having empty facilities after a relatively short period of time.

In response to a question from Senator Freborg, Ms. Leah Ann Schneider, Assistant Attorney General, said when a district is dissolved, the county committee hears and approves the dissolution. She said that is the level at which a decision is made regarding who will pay off any bonded debt. She said in most cases the bonded debt remains attached to the original land. She said if a dissolving district has a recent building that the new district can make use of, it makes sense to spread the bonded indebtedness. She said, however, that is a rare occurrence. She said the bottom line is that the county committee makes the decision in a dissolution.

Ms. Schneider said in a reorganization there is the formulation of a reorganization plan. She said before the plan is even drafted there is discussion about which buildings will be used and who should pay off which debts.

In response to a question from Senator Kelsh, Mr. Decker said he believes the new language regarding school construction was added during a conference committee. He said the conference committee did not have a public hearing.

In response to a question from Representative Hawken, Mr. Decker said the Legislative Assembly is in fact the state school board. He said this "board" is charged with determining whether we build schools because of need or because of "field of dreams" attitudes, i.e., build it and they will come. He said in 1947 we had 2,200 school districts. He said there were hundreds of communities that had high schools

back then but do not now. He said as things change we need to continually redefine what works and what is feasible. He said given what high school students now need to know, one has to wonder whether there is a minimum size of high school that is needed to deliver such education.

In response to a question from Representative Hawken, Mr. Decker said if a project is under \$150,000 and it involves no new square footage, approval by the Superintendent of Public Instruction is generally routine.

Mr. Decker said we need to develop a meaningful definition of a small but necessary school district.

Chairman Freborg said prior to the 1999 legislation there was concern in the Department of Public Instruction about the Superintendent's statutory ability to deny construction approval requests. He said Department of Public Instruction staff were asked to propose legislation. He said the proposed legislation was accepted by the conference committee. He said the conference committee's amendment gave the Superintendent of Public Instruction guidelines that he was to use in considering school construction approval requests.

In response to a question from Representative Drovdal, Mr. Decker said construction approval comes before a bond issue election in a school district.

Senator Redlin said when state money is involved it becomes our duty to create a situation where cooler heads prevail.

Representative Haas said the construction statute is sound legislation. He said there might be some minor adjustments needed to the mechanics but, basically, it is exactly what we need at this time.

In response to a question from Representative Hanson, Mr. Decker said the law at the time the Hazelton School District wanted to build its school made it impossible for the Superintendent of Public Instruction to reject the construction approval request. He said 60 percent of the cost in that case came as a gift. He said under the 1999 law the Superintendent would have been able to turn down the request. He said the Superintendent is trying to encourage school districts to look at multiple-use buildings.

Mr. Decker said the problems regarding school construction approval come when districts with a very limited future want to build a new school.

Representative Metcalf said the people of the Tower City and Buffalo area believe that losing the school will close the communities. He said numerous people live in Tower City and travel the 40 to 45 miles to work in Fargo. He said if a town has a good school, it can entice economic development. He said without a good quality school a town loses its ability to attract new business and industry. He said we should not be trying to close up North Dakota. He said we need to consider whether the statistics we see are in

fact accurate. He said such decisions are never black and white.

In response to a question from Representative Stefonowicz, Chairman Freborg said the patrons of a school district should be fully informed of all the statistics before the local school board makes a decision regarding whether or not to request school construction approval from the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Chairman Freborg said the Legislative Council charged this committee with studying the provision of education to public school students. He said the committee was directed to examine the manner in which education to public school students will be delivered in the ensuing 5, 10, and 20 years. He said the committee is to address demographic changes as they affect equity of education opportunities with respect to courses, facilities, and extracurricular activities; equity with respect to teacher availability and qualifications; equity with respect to the organization and administration of school districts; and taxpayer equity in both rural and urban districts. He said to date the committee has taken testimony regarding:

1. The development and implementation of statewide academic standards.
2. The desirability and feasibility of student assessments.
3. Remedial courses offered at public institutions of higher education with a view to determining whether the kindergarten through grade 12 curriculum and the manner in which it is presented throughout the various school districts of this state provides our students with an adequate and appropriate preparation for entry into a four-year baccalaureate program.
4. Declining demographics.
5. The number of school districts needed in this state, the organization and administration of such school districts, access to schools, and computer-generated transportation routes.
6. The school consolidation process and the impact that consolidation has had on course offerings, extracurricular activities, teacher quality and availability, teacher salary levels, construction and maintenance of school facilities, student transportation, and taxpayer obligations.
7. Teacher preparation programs, the role of the Education Standards and Practices Board in licensing teachers, and teacher quality and availability.

Representative Hawken said English as a second language students are becoming an extreme hardship to the Fargo School District. She said the district is going to receive another 50 English as a second language students.

Senator Redlin said he would like to see some effort to involve standards in the accreditation process.

Chairman Freborg said Representative Kelsch had indicated the committee should forge ahead in the area of standards. He said she agreed that passing legislation regarding assessments will be tough. He said perhaps standards are doable.

Senator Redlin said maybe the committee should take the first small step and pursue standards.

Representative Hawken said current accreditation requires a certain number of minutes. She said if we pursue standards we should also amend accreditation standards.

Representative Thoreson said he is concerned the implementation of standards will take teachers out of the classroom as they pursue standards implementation. He said it is a good idea but he is not sure its time has come.

Representative Haas said it does have to be an articulated approach. He said the greatest benefit comes in the development of curriculum once the teachers see the standards. He said if we do it, we need to be committed to the idea that we attach an appropriation so the local school districts have the necessary money for curriculum development.

In response to a question from Representative Stefonowicz, Mr. Gallagher said many districts have obtained federal money to pursue professional development opportunities, and they have used the money to fund their standards and curricular efforts.

Senator Cook said the universities in some states are being allowed to charge back the cost of remedial education to the school districts. He said the committee should ask Dr. Mike Hillman to address this when he next appears before the committee.

Chairman Freborg called on Mr. Decker who said we need to distinguish between a small but necessary school versus a small but necessary school district.

Representative Thoreson said perhaps the state needs to provide financial incentives for students who go into teaching and take positions in small rural districts.

Senator Redlin said a number of the current teaching staff will retire. He said it will be hard getting young people into the profession on the current salary schedules.

Senator Cook said perhaps we could create an employer incentive to release employees for substitute teaching.

Chairman Freborg said perhaps the committee needs to look at reciprocal relationships with teachers licensed by other states.

Representative Haas said we should mandate that the beginning teacher salary be set at \$25,000 and that teachers receive subsequent raises based on merit.

Representative Thoreson said Minnesota has a lot higher salary schedule than we do, and they still have difficulty getting teachers.

It was moved by Representative Thoreson, seconded by Representative Disrud, and carried on a voice vote that the Legislative Council staff be requested to draft two bills for committee consideration, one of which addresses the implementation of content standards and the other of which addresses the implementation of both content standards and assessments, and the staff is asked to work with staff from the Department of Public Instruction to propose appropriate timelines, penalties for noncompliance, money for teacher training, and any other details the committee is not prepared to articulate at this time.

Senator Redlin said teacher salaries are an issue. He said we should not have to lower our standards to attract teachers to our state.

It was moved by Senator Redlin, seconded by Representative Stefonowicz, and carried on a voice vote that the Legislative Council staff be requested to draft a bill for committee consideration which adds \$200 to the per student payment for the purpose of paying higher teacher salaries. The money is to be raised by a dedicated income tax and is to be received by every district, regardless of the district's current mill levy. The mill deduct is not to be applied to this money.

Chairman Freborg adjourned the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

L. Anita Thomas
Committee Counsel

ATTACH:10