

MICROFILM DIVIDER

OMB/RECORDS MANAGEMENT DIVISION

SFN 2053 (2/85) 5M



ROLL NUMBER

DESCRIPTION

1157

2001 HOUSE EDUCATION

HB 1157

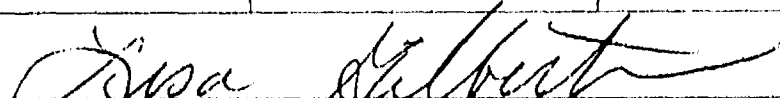
2001 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. HB1157

House Education Committee

Conference Committee

Hearing Date 01/17/01

Tape Number	Side A	Side B	Meter #
#1	X		2327 to 6218
		X	1 to 1731
Committee Clerk Signature 			

Minutes:

Chairman R. Kelsch, Vice-Chair T. Brusegaard, Rep. Bellew, Rep. Grumbo, Rep. Haas, Rep. Hanson, Rep. Hawken, Rep. Hunskor, Rep. Johnson, Rep. Meier, Rep. Mueller, Rep. Nelson, Rep. Nottestad, Rep. Solberg, Rep. Thoreson

Chairman Kelsch: We will open the hearing of HB1157.

Bill Goetz: (Chief of Staff for the Governor's office) I'm here on behalf of HB1157. In terms of what our objectives are in terms of this bill, because there are several changes that the governor wishes to express, that committee would entertain and work with us on the terms of somewhat of a new direction. You will note that the bill has an appropriation, and the presentation has been made from when the governor's office budget was presented that this appropriation be brought forth into the governor's office budget. That is because the governor is taking the position that this initiative should be brought into the governor's office, rather than create a separate commission. The feeling is that the commission in itself is not needed; that is can be handled

within the governor's office, and the dollars, then would be used to outsource the necessary work that would take place in advancing the proposal as it is presented in the bill. That does not change or diminish the importance the objective that has been put forth in this bill. The objective is the same, the importance of obtaining that goal is the same, it's just that we're looking at convening that objective within the governor's office. A little bit of background in terms of what has led up to this. There's been a tremendous amount of work that has gone into this effort. It was realized through quite a number of discussions within the governor's office that due to the complexity of the issue that surround the face of education today in ND, that if we're going to do the job that we should be doing in the area of policy development, we just simply need much more information than we have currently to make good policy decisions. Be it the governor, be it the legislative branch, and be it generating the necessary public support in order to make those policy decisions. You all know that the underlying fundamental issue that is driving so much of what we're faced with in education today in ND is demographics. That changing environment, the objective, then, was to begin to assess the quality of our schools, and as a result, a committee was convened, it was called the North Dakota Quality Schools Committee, and it was composed of the various interests that had a vital direct interest in education. It was a time that was most appropriate in terms of bringing together the interests and being able to sit down and have some very good dialogue. I think that step was a definite advancement in addressing the issues that confront us today as it relates to education. Not only was it bringing together these interests and having some very positive dialogue and some very positive outcome at this point in time, but it also was generating some financial resources. So, it's not been a situation where we've had people just sitting around and talking, necessarily, and lightly discussing, but it has been a very

serious dialogue that is backed up with some financial resources. The objective, then, to develop a process that would better offer information and to guide us in making those policy decisions, framework has been developed to identify indicators of quality. What are those indicators? These indicators, then, would be used by the schools in assessing themselves. Let me speak of the various areas we need to speak of when we're talking about quality and assessment. For most people, when we talk about assessment, we immediately think about student achievement, and the reaction is that we're already testing and we're already doing some things in terms of student achievement. That's true, but measuring quality of our system in ND means more than just measuring student achievement, it means looking at the curriculum, in terms of delivering; it means looking at our teachers, our faculty, in terms of issues like their preparation of professional development and salaries and the concerns about having an adequate teacher supply in years to come. It talks about environment, the environment of our education system: classroom size, teacher turnover, parental involvement, that's part of quality as well, that needs to be assessed. It talks about that important ingredient which is so much a part of our infrastructure today, and that is technology. Where are we at in terms of technology, as it pertains to every single school in ND. As important, if we're going to do the job that needs to be done in addressing policy change for education, we also need to be as concerned about school administration, and our school board situation, those people then that advance the policy at the local level. This work must continue if we're going to be doing the job that needs to be done in addressing policy changes for our future.

Rep. Solberg: Who determines the framework for this quality schools?

Goetz: To save time, I would suggest you wait for that discussion in a few minutes.

Rep. Solberg: What seems to be the problem with this standardized testing that's now in place?

Is there something wrong with that that is in place now?

Goetz: We do have testing that is taking place. Obviously that testing, those assessment tools will be brought to bear in terms of focusing in on that component, and one of those components is student achievement, but by far, when we talk of quality schools in ND to get ahead a handle on what we needs to address as it relates to quality schools is much more than student achievement. Those tests will be utilized as one component of many that need to be looked at.

Don Vangness: (Quality Schools Committee) *attached handout* If you turn to page 3, regardless of the format, whether we get commissioned or directly from the governor's office, the work has not changed, so if you look at the middle of the page when it talks about what the outcomes of committee would be, those outcomes still would remain. It provides a comprehensive assessment of the current condition of the K12 schools; the assessment process would be adapted and would also utilize current activities and the information that would be obtained during this process would be used for recommendations for future policy decisions. The assessment process. there are currently a set of 21 scales that have already been developed in regard with technical review, with outside reviewers and so forth. About the assessment process itself, it's based on a combination of current research, current best practices that are taking place in schools, and also some basic common sense applying those types of issues to ND. It does not rely simply on a high stakes test. We already have standardized testing in the state, what we are doing with this assessment is taking what we already have. It's a comprehensive assessment. In ND, it's CTBS. While we always do well on it in ND, and it has value, looking the status of k12

education, it needs to go way beyond that, and we've put together a framework of 6 categories of which student achievement is one that starts to look at some of those ideas. The assessment we're talking about does not add a lot of new requirements for schools as far as data collection. The intent is to use what's already being collected, DPI and various other agency already have considerable that's collected, so the notion with this framework is to take that existing data and fit it into that framework and use what's already there. This includes things that have been done through NCEA and the state's school improvements process as well. Obviously there would be a few things that might be additional, but they will not be extensive. The idea is to work with agencies to create a database. If you look on page 4, there are a series of scales on there, and these are some that have already been developed; as I said we have 21 scales that have already been developed, mainly in the student achievement area, and we started with student achievement, because that's where the focus was initially. The first scale is with CTBS, and what we are doing is using ND standards, because ND always scores above the national average. If you look at that scale, and this scale would be the format for every single scale developed, meets quality expectations in the middle, and that's where the largest amount of schools, statistically would fall in ND. The intent is not to create a rank order necessarily, but obviously schools would see where they were placed. This type of scale would be done by the researchers, so schools would not have to process data and find out where they stand. At the bottom of the page, you see a little more of a qualitative type scale that's more of a narrative, and that would be based more on subjective data. This would be the type of scale that the schools would respond to, they would place themselves in one of those categories, and obviously with further development, some of those general terms would be replaced with some actual benchmark.

Beyond these student achievement scales, there would be a series of capacity scales, and that's what Mr. Goetz was referring to us far as teacher compensation, availability of teachers, etc. would be looked at.

Rep. Thoreson: Based on the information that your trying to interpret, does that mean that all of the students in the 4th grade have to be on the same page, all of the people in the 3rd grade have to be on the same page, in other words, do we have a state wide curriculum so that you can make these assessments if you're going to be comparing schools in rank order across the state?

Vangness: No, right now, not all of the schools have the same curriculum, there's a wide fluctuation, and that's why with this process, you would not look at one single scale, the idea is to look across the board. In an issue like that, what it would do is identify if there's a school that's up there that's in that bottom category, for instance, the idea then would be, 'let's take a look at why you're at the botton', and that's where some of those capacities come in.

Rep. Thoreson: You're trying to establish state wide standards, though, aren't you?

Vangness: In this process, that's not one of the goals, it would come into play in one of the scales, but that is not the specific intent of this.

Max Laird:(President of the NDEA) A few years ago, the result of an amendment that was attached to SB2162 by a member of your committee, a great deal of conversation ensued was how we would pursue the development of a clear understanding what a quality public school education is in ND. During the interim, immediately thereafter, this project as amended on 2162 was not authorized in the interim, but through a number of discussions with various of the interest groups and stakeholders in public school education, we continued to review and have conversations about this issue, 'how do we maintain and sustain quality for the future?' At that

time we came together as a group, and simply began talking about, 'what does it mean to be a quality public school?' We've known very clearly about the past of other states approaching high stakes testing, standards and assessment; we really wanted to accumulate the research around what it is that a quality school needs to be. ND has always been a place where we've had high quality schools. The reason declining enrollment, and a number of national trends, have left a number of us wondering if we truly do have quality that we can sustain into the future. To declare that we have quality schools without data is a difficult assumption to make. We have taken two years, feeling very good about collecting research, and determined that a quality in our environment involves a larger of data points that we need to track as a state. We must manage our declines and maintain our integrity as high qualities school system in ND. Under the leadership of the Lt. Governor Mirdal, we began to meet on an ad hoc basis, shortly after the last session. We eventually determined that there was a need for some consultancy help; we went about securing the funds for the project, as was described by Mr. Goetz. We were able to access funds from a number of private foundations, and in addition we contributed to ur own organizations. It allowed us the time to develop a conversation around an assessment framework model, and we're now ready to move to completion and application. This proposal allows the state to develop a clear set of frameworks and assessment tools that will allow school districts to clearly know what they must do into the future to sustain and maintain quality. We're focusing our attention on two categories: student achievement and school capacity. We have identified those as crucial categories to quality schools, we have a plan, we've come some distance, it's now time, we hope, for the state to assist us in moving this project to the next generation.

Rep. Thoreson: What is school capacity refer to.

Laird: Capacity are things like the ability of a school district to offer a technology professional development, advanced course work, building maintenance, remodeling funds. Those are the kinds of capacity issues that we think lend to a quality school system on a local basis, and they do apply directly to student achievement..

Rep. Nelson: How does this process differ from what's going on through the department today, with the school improvement process, or some of the assessments that are made through the department? How would this mirror some of those, and how is it different in other areas?

Laird: We do have on board right now, school improvement processes, NCEA, we have a variety of issues that are of concern. We don't want to add on another layer of assessment. What we're trying to figure out here is a system that integrates everything that we presently do into a single quality assessment tool framework that we can then report back to everyone that, in fact, we really believe that what we're doing, here's where we have a need, here's where we define quality, and here's where we're going to go in the next generation. Today we have a number of systems in place that we're not always sure get reported back.

Rep. Brusegaard: They say a total of 21 scales have already been completed? How many scales are we going to be looking at when the process is complete?

Laird: We don't know, that's what the next step will entail. We're not sure what the school capacity will entail. There are approximately 21 scales, but we're not even at a point where we've determined... This is just a technical review, we haven't determined whether those are going to be used or not used.

Rep. Thoreson: What kind of a timeline does this project have?

