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2003 HOUSE EDUCATION

HB 1295

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2003 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. HB 1295
House Education Committee

Conference Committee

Hearing Date January 21, 2003

Tape Number	Side A	Side B	Meter #
1	x		2115- end
2		x	00-1700
Committee Clerk Signature <i>Linda Guchter</i>			

Minutes: **Chairman Kelsch** opened hearing on HB 1295

Dan Huffman, Assistant Superintendent of the Fargo School District, See Attached

Testimony

What we are asking to develop is a meaningful report that is manageable for us.

(2640) Mark Lemer, West Fargo School District Business Manager

we are here today to talk to you about the reporting process for teacher compensation. The green handout, is a little different spin to HB1295. What I am proposing you today is to keep much of what you have in place, but to make the reporting process much easier. The current reporting process has 134 independent pieces of information relating to the salaries and benefits of staff.

So we are required to break down the information, Initially when we looked at the legislation from last session we though it would be 8 or 9 pieces of information. What I am suggesting you today is that we try to meld the intent from last session with HB1295. In the amendments in front of you we are suggesting we should continue to collect some of this information, Example: collecting total compensation for summer school, total compensation for extended days. Those

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10/2/03
Date

Page 2
House Education Committee
Bill/Resolution Number HB1295
Hearing Date January 21, 2003

were in the last sessions bill. We are also suggesting that other compensation pay be collected, However, instead of breaking it down into 40 pieces of individual information, reported as a a total. We can recognize the need to reduce the reporting burden to make it easier for school districts to comply.

Handout - a sample of a report with the reduced size, compared it to a ream of paper for Department of Public Instruction report.

(3320) Rep. Haas On this handout that you gave us, the other benefit category includes what?

Lemer: unemployment tax, Workers compensation, disability insurance, life insurance, vision, dental, social security tax, other benefits.

Chairman Kelsch: I really appreciate the information that we received. When I saw the report, I found it to be a valuable tool. You complained about all the work that you had to do and still have time to do this report.

Lemer: If I had 15 min this summer working on this report, and then summarized to get that report you would have not heard from me.

Chairman Kelsch The question is once you have that report, and you have it all imputed, most of the things stay the same and if something changes during the year the majority is there.

Lemer the process is the same each year. This report is not what they have been hired to do, this is the actual total compensation. Next year I will have to do the same, extract the information out of the payroll system, all changes have to reflect in this report.

You can't get this report from the Department of Public Instruction system. I had to develop this report from a record writing tool so that I could get it in a way that made sense to me. So I won't have to red. this that is correct, but the Department of Public Instruction report will have to be.

Page 3
House Education Committee
Bill/Resolution Number HB1295
Hearing Date January 21, 2003

(3888) **Rep. Sitte** One piece of information missing on the green sheet is the FTE?

Lemer: you are correct and that could be put in.

OPPOSITION:

Dr. Kermit Lindstrom, Chairman of the ND Education Fact Finding Commission

See Attached Testimony

Rep. Hawken: What information do you need that is not on this schedule? (held up the one the Lemer handed out)

Lindstrom: I have not seen that report. (passed to him) It might work But I think you need to be very careful here. there is stuff going on out there in the fringe benefit world that is remarkable. We have double systems of retirement, very unique health systems, and if you pay for the wrong one you will never know about it. I think the Chairman Kelsch makes a good point, we have got the system in place, why not keep it for awhile. I think this business about worrying whether or not people who are paid to work have to work, is not very important.

Rep Hawken: So when you have done your fact finding, then you get on each school districts 144 cells. The problem is it can't be printed. So if you wanted to know my salary as a teacher, it can not be printed, because it doesn't fit on the reporting thing. Whereas if you had something like this would give you information you could use.

Lindstrom: Perhaps. But I still would do what I continue to do is visit the folks at Department of Public Instruction to collect information prior to going into the fact finding mission.

Rep Hawken: Hypothetically, would you do a fact finding in West Fargo. Do you not have the ability to look at exactly what they pay in benefits. Is that something that is available?

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10/2/03
Date

Page 4
House Education Committee
Bill/Resolution Number HB1295
Hearing Date January 21, 2003

Lindstrom: Yes it is available, but they are sometimes very reluctant about giving it. The other thing that we never know, prior to this bill, was what happened after we left. This bill will now tell you year by year if our decisions made any sense.

Rep. Hawken: I think we are talking about apples and oranges.

Chairman Kelsch When you go on fact finding, didn't you go in a copy of just the school district information.

Lindstrom:(5042) Prior to any fact finding hearing, I have a visit with Department of Public Instruction, finance division, I request considerable more data then what is here. But this base data, may need a little fixing up, but let us not go back to the system where everybody was in the dark. That is just not good business. You have to have facts and reliable information in order to make decisions. Proceed with this cautiously. Look hard at what needs to be changed, I think you are gutting to much of it.

(5215) Dr. David Arson, Department of Public Instruction, See Attached Testimony.

I would like to address a couple of comments made to clarify at the end of this presentation.

Refereed to page 2, yes there is a lot of the data cells, But if it doesn't apply, don't fill it out.

I would like to address a question that Rep. Haas brought up regarding benefits. What I found was other benefit category had a lot of administrator annuities stuck in there. Every one of these cells were occupied with numbers when the filed report was put together. By the way January 2, a little less than two weeks ago, I have not yet had a chance to put it on the web for public access. It should be available within the next two weeks. The second page that I handed out, I used with the group that assisted me. I would like to point out that the law, c. and f. was any other and to itemize it. That is what I tried to give you. If you look at the report it was not put together

Page 5
House Education Committee
Bill/Resolution Number HB1295
Hearing Date January 21, 2003

arbitrarily. We followed very closely with the TFFR reporting by districts currently, and the top category is compensation, TFFR retirement, TFFR non reportable. Because retirement is not paid on. The items on the bottom came right out of the TFFR handbook. If I may, I would like to talk about a couple of items to clear them up. In part of the preparation I did speak with Software Unlimited RBA. If the school district has a contract they provide any changes to accommodate data requirements Department of Public Instruction provides at no charge. Black Mountain of MT, business software to school districts. When we proceeded, we offered a download process, so that when a school district or anybody, access the report they may download a spreadsheet to access the information. They can cut and manipulate the data. To have an exportable version that allows you to go through the data and look inside it to see what is there. Was my option. Why? Planning. Any one can export information, teachers, school boards, administrators have now called me to get information for negotiations.

(6000) Software comments. I put the report out there on July 1, If they pushed the right button, it would have rolled all that information out. And they would have just been able to enter it in. Next year as the software is updated, they just punch the button to a spreadsheet and they enter the information.

Rep. Sitte : Do they all have this software that makes it this easy?

Larson: I was told of 220 districts, approx. 150 districts have RDA Software. at no cost if they have a contract.

Chairman Kelsch What about the fiscal note?

Larson: That is the cost to undo what is in place. We currently have an online recording system, which allows districts to go online to enter reports.

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10/2/03
Date

Page 6
House Education Committee
Bill/Resolution Number HB1295
Hearing Date January 21, 2003

Flip tape

Rep. Hawken: Obviously there is a communication problem, because if it were that easy I don't believe we would have people here trying to change this. I don't think anyone doesn't want to report, I totally agree with you that we need information. But you keep mentioning cut and paste. Isn't that what you are saying is easy, would it not make sense to have all the business managers come in and show them how to punch that button so that they can get a report that you can use.

Larson: I agree and that is why last summer I spent a whole week traveling the state to do training. To address concerns of business managers and to provide the training. And To discuss these very issues to allow them to question me how this was done and I did it to show them on line, the exports and they cut and paste data. Done between August 10-16,2002.

Rep. Hawken: So now they can all print a report that gives them all of this information?

Larson: Yes but, it gives them one step further, rather than just a paper, they can select data, and put it in a report they want.

Rep. Hawken: Can they get a single page or a couple pages exactly what is on this form, by just pressing a button.

Larson: For an entire district. Yes.

Chairman Kelsch Because each of the cell add up, condensing them down?

Larson: Yes.

Rep. Jon Nelson 150 some school districts that are part of the contract

Larson: Between 150-170 that is my understanding.

Rep. Jon Nelson Why is there a lag between total compliance.

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