

FINAL REPORT

OVERSIGHT OF K-12 LEGISLATION STUDY COMMITTEE

January 1991

AUTHORIZATION AND APPOINTMENT

The Oversight of K-12 Legislation Interim Study Committee was established by the Legislative Council to review recent K-12 legislation and to recommend any changes necessary to improve state efforts in this area of education. The Committee was originally authorized to carry out its duties in three meeting days, but the number was reduced to two meeting days during the course of the July Legislative Council meeting, when the number of meeting days for all interim study committees were reduced.

The members of the Study Committee were:

Senator Larry Murphy, Co-chairperson
Representative C. Arthur Ollie, Co-chairperson
Senator Joy Corning
Senator Wally Horn
Senator Elaine Szymoniak
Senator Ray Taylor
Representative Dennis Cohoon
Representative Horace Daggett
Representative J. Brent Siegrist
Representative Philip Wise

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Committee met twice, on July 24, 1990, and on August 14, 1990, to carry out its assigned duties. Prior to the meetings, Co-chairpersons Murphy and Ollie submitted requests for information to the Department of Education relating to duties imposed upon the Department in recent legislation affecting the kindergarten through grade 12 area. In addition to the materials submitted by the Department as a result of the requests, each Committee member received a background memorandum from the Legislative Service Bureau, which highlighted education legislation enacted in recent years.

COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS

July 24, 1990, Meeting

At its first meeting, the Oversight of K-12 Legislation Interim Study Committee heard testimony from members of the Business and Education Roundtable Task Force, the Chancellor of Eastern Iowa Community College and his assistant, members of the Department of Education staff, and the Executive Director of the Board of Educational Examiners. The names of persons presenting, and summaries of their testimony, are as follows:

Mr. Robert Houser and Mr. George "Pick" Wilson. Mr. Houser and Mr. Wilson discussed the purpose and progress of the Business and Education Roundtable Task Force, which was appointed by the Director of the Department of Education. The Task Force has hired a consultant, is working with the State Board of Education and the Iowa Futures Project toward attaining the goal of creating a world-class educational system in Iowa, and will be putting the Task Force's initiatives into a report. The focus of the Task Force's initiatives will be on outcomes of the educational system, rather than input into the system, which differentiates this study from previous studies of the Iowa education system. The Task Force will be updating the General Assembly on its progress.

Mr. John Blong, Chancellor, and Ms. Nancy Kothenbeutel, both of the Eastern Iowa Community College. Mr. Blong and Ms. Kothenbeutel discussed the community education programs, including adult basic education and business and industry sections, at the community colleges. They informed the Committee that approximately 500,000 adults in Iowa do not have a high school diploma, the current dropout rate is about 5,000 people per year, and approximately 6,000 people in Iowa annually receive a General Equivalency Diploma (GED) through adult basic education programs. The adult basic education programs include not only literacy training components for the GED exam, but also courses in English as a second language. Mr. Blong and Ms. Kothenbeutel discussed the increased emphasis needed in workforce training, retraining, and skills enhancement due to changes in workplace technology and employer requirements. Cooperative "2+2" arrangements for K-12 vocational education offerings were also discussed.

Dr. Mavis Kelley, Department of Education, discussed the progress that the Department of Education has made in achieving the goals of the State Board's five-year plan under section 256.7(4), which was adopted in 1986, and plans formulated for the development of and sources of information for the new five-year plan. She informed the Committee that the Business and Education Roundtable initiatives may play an important role in the formulation of the new plan. Dr. Kelley also discussed the division of responsibility regarding the mainstreaming of special education students into regular classrooms. The Committee was given a description of the manner in which the Department communicates with

practitioners, administrators, and training institutions and the nature of the relationship between the Department and the Governor's Office.

Dr. Sue Donielson and Mr. Ted Stilwill, Department of Education, discussed the Department of Education's role in and efforts regarding school restructuring. They suggested that the changes envisioned will be of a gradual nature and retain Iowa's tradition of local control. They predicted that aspects of the restructuring will include identification of student learner outcomes, development of multiple and alternative assessment measures, provision of a support system, development of collaborative efforts between schools and other agencies and business, an emphasis on lifelong learning, and the development of response mechanisms to demographic, societal, and economic trends. Dr. Donielson and Mr. Stilwill noted that Dr. Maryellen Knowles has been appointed to coordinate school transformation. Mr. Stilwill suggested that changes in Phase III of the Excellence in Education Program and accreditation may be included in any transformation plans. Current proposals, they said, include a shift to a results oriented system, some class size recommendations, and changes in decision-making structures.

Dr. Mary Ellen Knowles, Department of Education, discussed the implementation of the human growth and development programs in the state, including the HIV/AIDS curriculum. Dr. Knowles described the Department's approach to the implementation of the programs as incremental, due in part to the sensitive nature of the curriculum. The program implementation, she explained, is taking place in two stages: 1) the creation of the curriculum and staff development programs within the Department, and 2) evaluation of district compliance with the program and a survey of the impact of the curriculum. Dr. Knowles described human growth and development programs as having two aspects, the learning of knowledge and the application of the knowledge to students' lives, and that, while students test well on the cognitive level, no data exists relating to application of the knowledge to students' lives. Dr. Knowles also noted that the Department has recommended that superintendents provide for infusion of the human growth and development curriculum in a planned sequential manner in order to permit parents to be informed of when, where, and what is being taught to their children.

Dr. Ray Morley, Department of Education, discussed the adequacy of existing rules concerning at-risk students, funding alternatives for at-risk programs, and the lack of state funds to match federal initiatives in the area of programming for homeless youth. Dr. Morley recommended expanding the school-based youth services program beyond current funding initiatives. Dr. Morley also commented on the difference between the needs of rural at-risk and urban at-risk youth, and suggested that development of a profile of the rural at-risk youth could prove useful.

Ms. Susan Anderson and Dr. Carol Alexander-Phillips, Department of Education, discussed the Department's efforts in the area of early childhood education. The

Committee was informed that, although early childhood mandates were initially met with resistance, attitudes have changed considerably since then. Ms. Anderson and Dr. Phillips said that there have been approximately four times as many applications for grants as there has been money available and suggested that a standing funding formula for the provision of funds for early childhood education is a worthwhile consideration. It was also suggested that there is a need for a full-time early childhood consultant in each area education agency. Dr. Phillips noted that recommendations have been made to the State Board of Education to include grades prekindergarten through three in the prekindergarten certification.

Mr. Ted Stilwill, Department of Education, discussed a survey conducted by the Department regarding the issue of student fees, and noted that a more complete report will be available soon. The charging of fees varies substantially from district to district, he said, with some districts combining some of the fees and others charging separate fees for various items and services. On the average, he stated, Iowa students pay an annual textbook fee of \$20 and a workbook or supply fee of \$8. Most districts, he noted, do not have a formal policy for the waiving of fees and the total amount of student fees collected this last year is approximately \$7,500,000. Mr. Stilwill also noted that driver education fees are only charged for courses taken during the summer.

Mr. Stilwill and Mr. Dwight Carlson, Department of Education, discussed the use of Educational Excellence Program funds by school districts and the effectiveness of the Department of Education in disseminating information concerning the program. They stated that a formal assessment of the effectiveness of Phase III of the Program is currently being conducted by the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory. Several districts, it was said, are using supplemental pay plans to restructure their schools, with 29 districts and area education agencies having included a comprehensive school transformation component in their Phase III plans. Mr. Stilwill discussed the Department's position on the issue of increases in teachers' salaries.

Dr. Orrin Nearhof, Executive Director of the Board of Educational Examiners, discussed the issues of teacher licensing and preparation, the relationship of the new Board with the Department of Education, and Iowa's attempts to attract experienced out-of-state teachers. He described a four-state compact which Iowa has entered into to permit regional exchange of qualified teachers. He also asked to be permitted to address the Committee at its next meeting in order to more fully describe the Board of Educational Examiners' plans relating to translation of expectations placed on the K-12 system into goals for teacher training and how the National Board standards for licensure fit into Iowa's standards.

August 14, 1990, Meeting

At its second and final meeting, the Committee heard from Dr. Orrin Nearhof of the Board of Educational Examiners; from various staff members of the Department of Education on issues relating to school standards and the Department's relationship with various practitioner interest groups; from two panels of K-12 practitioners on the issue of implementation of the vocational education and human growth and development standards; from the Department of Education staff members responsible for Department rulemaking; and received presentations from the Governor's Office, Department of Management, Department of Education, and the Legislative Fiscal Bureau on teachers' salaries.

Dr. Orrin Nearhof described the transitional activities of the new Board of Educational Examiners, which have been necessary in order for the Board to assume the teacher licensing duties held by the previous board, the State Board of Education, and the Iowa Professional Teaching Practices Commission. He again discussed the new regional exchange certificate, created as a result of a four-state agreement, and the need for establishment of a regional office for coordination of future cooperative efforts among those states. Dr. Nearhof addressed the Board's planning session activities and the development of a guiding statement which is based on the Board's enabling legislation.

Mr. Marvin Lewis, Department of Education, addressed the issues of special education services provided for the State Training School at Eldora and the Iowa Juvenile Home at Toledo through the staff from Area Education Agency VI. He noted that 50% of the students at the two facilities are identified as requiring special education. He also stated that the Department of Education assists AEA VI by providing staff development services. Mr. Lewis commented on the effect of length of stay at an institution on a child's ability to benefit from the educational program and the Department of Education's role in providing services to students who would fall under the parameters of the state Bill of Rights of persons with mental retardation, developmental disabilities, or chronic mental illness. He also discussed the relative effectiveness of current programming and the attempts which are made to track student progress. Mr. Frank Vance, also of the Department, discussed the educational programs at the Woodward and Glenwood State Hospital-Schools and the extent of departmental and AEA participation in that programming. He also described some of the in-kind exchanges which have taken place between the Department of Education and the Board of Regents' institutions, which include both personnel and equipment. Mr. Vance gave highlights of the discussions which have taken place between the Departments of Education and Human Services on the issue of whether AEA XI should assume the responsibility for the education of the students at the Woodward State Hospital-School. He also outlined the educational services available to students in private residential facilities, noting that some private providers conduct their own educational programming. The needs of children who are placed in foster and group homes, as well as shelter care and

juvenile detention facilities were discussed by Mr. Vance, as well as the services that the AEA's provide to those children. Mr. Vance also responded to Committee questions relating to issues surrounding the least restrictive environment requirement contained in the state and federal special education legislation.

Dr. Mavis Kelley, Department of Education, discussed the Department of Education's relationship with the Area Education Agencies, the Iowa School Board Association, and the Iowa State Education Association. She noted that the Department views its role as one of leadership, but that it maintains many formal and informal roles and performs a variety of functions. Mr. Ted Stilwill, also of the Department, discussed the Department's role in the formation of local data generation and collection initiatives in the area of school finance and departmental encouragement of long-range financial planning by districts. Mr. Stilwill also informed the Committee about departmental efforts to keep the districts and accreditation teams abreast of changes in the law.

Mr. Dwight Carlson, Department of Education, provided background information and time guidelines regarding the implementation of the new school standards, and distributed information regarding requirements for the formation of local committees to assist in the implementation of the standards. Mr. Carlson described instances in which local school districts are having difficulties meeting the new requirements and the potential impact of the new school aid formula on district compliance with the standards. He also provided the Committee with data on the number of waivers of requirement sought by districts as that data compares to the number of districts seeking an instructional support levy.

The Committee heard an education panel discussion. Dr. Phyllis Herriage, Department of Education, spoke regarding the Department's role in the formation and implementation of the new standards for vocational education. She also provided information regarding the activities of the regional planning boards in the development of regional program plans. Dr. Herriage described the programming changes involved in the shift of the vocational education curriculum to competency-based education and departmental efforts in the area of curriculum development under the new standards. She concluded her remarks by discussing the fiscal implications of implementation of the new standards. Ms. Diane Blackburn discussed the vocational education program at the Jefferson/Scranton schools, the development of the Greene County Regional Vocational Center with two other high schools in Greene County, and how their programming includes and is consistent with the new competency-based education standards. Mr. David Kleinfelter discussed the development of cooperative vocational education programming at Lamoni, including attendance of students at a vocational-technical school in Missouri and joint programming with neighboring school districts. Mr. Kleinfelter indicated his support for the new vocational education standards due to the initial research which went into the development of the new standards, the apparent effect of this type of programming on dropout rates, and on the follow-up

work which has been done to assist districts with implementation of the standards. Ms. Trudy Yoder discussed the impact of the new standards on the Fort Dodge school district, their use of community college facilities for programming, the effect of the standards on curriculum development, and the cost implications of the new programming due to the nature of vocational-technical instruction. Mr. Clement Bodensteiner discussed the effect of enrollment declines on vocational education programming in the Grinnell district, the efforts of the seven school districts in the Grinnell area to develop cooperative programs, transportation problems encountered in the development of collective programming, the need for development of model curricula for seventh and eighth graders, and the need for greater involvement of the business community and community colleges in program development. Mr. Gordon Maney described his experiences as an instructor in an automotive program in Cedar Rapids, the need to implement the changes contained in the new vocational education standards on schedule, and the need to correct the curriculum imbalance which has been created by the current emphasis placed on academics. The Committee discussed the issues of teacher training and certification, district use of the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act for vocational education, and the implications of the standards on workforce preparedness. Dr. Herriage also gave a preliminary report on a survey relating to students with disabilities in postsecondary education.

The Committee heard a human growth and development panel discussion. Dr. Maryellen Knowles, from the Department of Education, spoke regarding the Department's role in providing training and technical assistance for the implementation of the human growth and development standard, which included the training of AEA consultants and contracting with other persons to provide assistance at the district level. Dr. Knowles addressed the issue of district perceptions of implementation of the standard and varying uses of the resource committees around the state. Mr. William Wright described his role as Curriculum Coordinator in Denison and his work and the implementation of the new standard in the Denison and Ar-We-Va school districts. He described the work of the advisory committees in both districts and the tactics used to develop an appropriate curriculum. Ms. Jean Nettleton discussed the history and expansion of Algona's health curriculum under the new standard, the effect of the standard on teacher certification class scheduling within the district, and curriculum development needs at the elementary level. Ms. Nettleton also indicated that experiences regarding the implementation of the standard in other districts in her area appear to be quite varied. Ms. Lori Dostal and Ms. Evelyn Bronson described the development of a health curriculum committee, program assessment, and the conducting of a community survey in Marion, which have been components of that district's implementation of the human growth and development standard. Ms. Dostal noted that the committee discovered that much of the standard can be met at the high school level utilizing current courses, but that some expansion of programming was needed at the middle and elementary school levels. Ms. Bronson noted that one result of the survey was increased awareness on the part of parents of what is being

taught to their children and emphasized the need for parental involvement in the development of certain program topics. Dr. Jim Stone described Indianola's experiences with implementation of the standard and their use of the advisory committee to assist in the curriculum transitions. He noted that the addition of health professionals to the advisory committee helped to alleviate some of the concerns expressed over aspects of the standard. The Committee discussed with the panel issues relating to ability of parents to opt their children out of programming.

Ms. Kathy Collins, Department of Education, addressed the question of how the Department of Education determines legislative intent, including issues relating to separation of powers and statutory construction under the Code. She then described the Department's position with respect to certain portions of the recent open enrollment legislation and the methods used to arrive at that position. Mr. Dave Bechtel, also from the Department, described his role in the interpretation of the state open enrollment legislation and difficulties encountered due to continual changes being made to the legislation. Mr. Bechtel reported that since the compilation of the Department's most recent annual report, 150 additional students have utilized the open enrollment procedures and that, when some of the larger schools end their moratoriums, the numbers may increase.

Mr. Phil Dunshee, Governor's Administrative Assistant, described the Governor's historical involvement with the issue of teachers' salaries and the assumptions used in the development of the Governor's plans to achieve the goal of increasing Iowa teachers' wages to the national average. Ms. Carter Hawley, Legislative Fiscal Bureau, described the estimates and assumptions she used to determine how Iowa could reach the national average for teachers' salaries by 1995 and compared them with those put forth by the Governor's Office. The Committee then discussed the differences in the assumptions and data used in preparing the differing estimates with both Mr. Dunshee and Ms. Hawley. Mr. Patrick Cavanaugh, Director of the Department of Management, informed the Committee that part of the differences between the Governor's Office estimates and the Legislative Fiscal Bureau estimates can be attributed to the different national growth assumptions used by the two offices. The Committee discussed the differences between the varying growth rates and the effect of recent events on those rates with Dr. Lee Tack, Department of Education, and Ms. Hawley.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee discussed areas in which several of the members intend to introduce legislation, but made no formal Committee recommendations or legislative proposals.

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