

School Code Subcommittee  
of the  
Standing Committees on Schools

FINAL REPORT

To: Legislative Council, December 16, 1969

From: Representative Walter V. Langland, Chairman

Subject: Progress report of the School Code Study Subcommittee

Membership: Senators Conklin, McGill, Ollenburg, Orr and Parker  
Representatives Brinck, Kehe, Kreamer, Roorda and  
Langland

Directive: "Recodification, clarification and repeal of obsolete  
code sections relating to Schools."

However, the Standing Committee chairman suggested that we not deal with Ch. 285 on transportation and Ch. 280 on Standards, since special subcommittees were assigned to these areas.

Since our meeting time was limited, the committee decided to initially, at least, concentrate on repeal of obsolete code sections relating to schools, and then possibly clarification of sections needing such.

Meetings: The subcommittee held three meetings, as authorized, the first being in October and the last two in November.

Consultant: Leonard Abels, legal consultant was assigned to work with our subcommittee. He was with us at all three meetings and for his assistance we were most grateful.

Most of our bill draft is the direct result of his work. He prepared a list of supposedly obsolete areas in the school code which we quite carefully reviewed as a group and, with some minor changes and additions have presented in this bill draft.

Content: Most of the material in this draft should be non-controversial, at least our subcommittee felt that it should be. A couple changes however, are of a substantive nature. We propose to repeal the 6-year school board terms in cities of over 125,000 population (which is now only Des Moines, but might soon also include Cedar Rapids) and propose making all school board elections for 3-year terms, including that of County Boards. Our subcommittee felt that since school elections are now held annually in the merged areas of the state, there was no logical reason (such as economy) for having biennial elections in Des Moines or for County Board membership, which are currently also 6-year terms.

In a separate bill, provision is made for run-off elections where a number of candidates file for one or two offices and no one receives the required majority (such as might be the case when all candidates run at large.) Mr. Abels informed us that this provision for a run-off (after the regular election) generally conforms with an alternate method for municipal elections.

Another point of clarification to avoid voter confusion is our recommendation that in all school corporation elections the polls close at 8 p.m. (See page 8 of draft) Currently some polls close at 7 p.m. and some at 8 p.m. However, the Board, by resolution, can change the voting hours.

Basically, the purpose of this somewhat lengthy bill draft is to revise and update the statutes relating to schools by eliminating obsolete provisions and duplications. It is calculated that this bill will shorten the school laws by approximately four thousand words, without sacrifice of useful content, outside of the substantive changes which I have mentioned.

Our subcommittee wrote to several other education oriented groups in an effort to gather additional material for our deliberations. Among them were:

The Iowa Ass'n of School Administrators  
The Education Department at the U. of Iowa and  
The Iowa Ass'n of Non-Public Schools.

The only specific recommendation obtained from these groups was that a complete recodification of the school laws should be done. Our subcommittee will probably give this recommendation further thought, since we hope to meet at least once more during the early part of the legislative session. However, there are some strong arguments against such a wholesale overhaul of our school laws, which will not go into at this time.

Our committee seeks to be in contact with the Governor's Educational Advisory Committee which is currently functioning.

Leroy Peterson attended part of our last meeting and briefed us on the current status of activities within the purview of this Governor's committee. He stated that a progress report is expected the early part of next year, hopefully while we are still in session. At that time, our committee might wish to consider whatever recommendations they might make.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Walter V. Langland