

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Senator Dwayne Umbarger at 1:30 p.m. on January 16, 2001 in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Committee staff present: Avis Swartzman, Revisor of Statutes
 Ben Barrett, Legislative Research Department
 Carolyn Rampey, Legislative Research Department
 Judy Steinlicht, Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Others attending: See Attached List

Chairman Umbarger welcomed The Kansas Teacher of the Year Team. Dale Dennis, Deputy Commissioner of Education, gave some background on how the team is selected and introduced the leader of the team, Janet S. Lewandowski, and invited each team member to speak sharing a little about themselves and their passion for teaching.

Janet Lewandoski teaches fifth-sixth grade in Maize East Elementary School. She is strongly committed to teaching and feels teachers must not only have a passion for knowledge and teaching, but also must have compassion for every student. Kids must first know that you care, then you can set high standards for them and they will believe in themselves and they will learn.

Jan Dicker, has taught 17 years at Grant Elementary School in Lawrence. Grant is the smallest elementary school in Lawrence with 58 students and 3 certified teachers. They have had strong parental involvement and strong support from the Lawrence community, the Lawrence School District and from the City of Lawrence. She believes the work cannot be done by educators alone. She believes that a cycle of strong communities helps provide quality schools, quality schools attract effective teachers, effective teachers help student achievement and student achievement helps gain support from the community and this encourages community members to increase their involvement in their schools.

Vickie Fellers teaches speech, debate and forensics at Wichita East High School, one of the larger schools in Kansas. She is an advocate of these subjects and all extra curricular and co-curricular activities. She believes that art, drama, music and athletics are a vital part of what is taught in schools. It is a fact that students involved in these classes and activities have higher GPA's, higher graduation rates, lower drop-out rates, and fewer discipline problems than students not involved in these activities. They are learning sportsmanship and citizenship, teamwork, and how to compete well against others.

Mary Etta Copeland teaches at DeSoto High School and is in her 34th year of teaching in Kansas. She teaches music, psychology and service learning. She is a firm believer in educating for life and not just to exist. She is most enthusiastic about psychology and mental health. Statistics show that there has been a doubling of depression. For a person to succeed, they need to know how to be healthy. She believes our society has come to the point where the problems cannot be handled single handedly.

Hildie Brooks has taught health education for 25 years, the last five at Dwight D. Eisenhower Middle School in Manhattan. She deals with peer pressure recognition, anger and stress management skills. Her biggest area of concern are the students that are at risk. She is interested in teaching them skills to be able to handle whatever comes before them in their lives. Her goal is to have the students graduate, be happy and healthy in the future and to be safe throughout their whole lives.

Carol Panzer teaches 5th grade at Lakin Middle School. She went through the process of National Board

Unless specifically noted, the individual remarks recorded herein have not been transcribed verbatim. Individual remarks as reported herein have not been submitted to the individuals appearing before the committee for editing or corrections.

Page 2

CONTINUATION SHEET

January 16, 2001

Certification in 1999, specifically to challenge herself professionally and to model for her students what she wants them to do in their lives. She stated that she has learned much and that the National Board Certification has had a huge impact on her professionalism.

Sue Boldra is also a certified teacher and teaches government at Hays High School and also teaches teacher preparation at Hayes State University. She will be recruiting the best and the brightest and then will have to find a way to adequately prepare them and retain them. Presently we lose about 30 percent each year. She believes quality educators and quality public education is the answer to all our Kansas education woes.

Renita Ubel has taught for 25 years, now at Eugene Field Elementary School in Ottawa. She is interested in early literacy. Her second interest would be in assessment to enhance student learning.

The floor was opened for questions. It was asked if the components of the National Board Certification were different than teacher preparation programs. It was stated that some components of the National Board Certification program were being implemented in preparation programs, but that the whole process can only be applied to an experienced teacher. Much of the process is reflection, assessment and validation of what you have been doing the classroom. It would be tremendously overwhelming for a new teacher.

The question was asked what they would change about their formal training. One idea was that the universities would bring their students into the classroom to co-teach with a real teacher and practice techniques on real kids. One teacher stated that she went to a one-year master's program in Oregon where she taught 5 classes with a mentoring teacher, a mentoring administrator and met with the university professor once a week. She felt this program was tremendous. Teachers need management skills. It was added that KU has a 5 year program for teachers, the 5th year being a professional year. Emporia State University also has help available for their graduates. If they run into problems, they can call and the university will send someone to help them through some of their difficulties.

Questions were asked about recruitment and retention of teachers. It was stated that Kansas was graduating enough teachers, but large corporations and private sectors were coming in and recruiting them because they have all of the skills they want. We need to be able to offer them incentives, such as health care, moving costs, and assistance in finding housing. They should not be put into the hardest classrooms and they need to be made to feel welcome. They need a mentoring teacher. Parents need to come in and welcome her and offer assistance. The job of teaching needs to be elevated and not be referred to as "just a teacher". They need to be in positions where their full talent can be utilized.

Closing remarks were made by Dale Dennis. Chairman Umbarger thanked the team and adjourned the meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled at 1:30 p.m. on January 17, 2001.

Unless specifically noted, the individual remarks recorded herein have not been transcribed verbatim. Individual remarks as reported herein have not been submitted to the individuals appearing before the committee for editing or corrections.