

MINUTES

MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES 59th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION FUNDING

Call to Order: By **CHAIRMAN MONICA LINDEEN**, on January 14, 2005
at 3:00 P.M., in Room 137 Capitol.

ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Rep. Monica Lindeen, Chairman (D)
Rep. Bill E. Glaser, Vice Chairman (R)
Rep. Norma Bixby (D)
Rep. Tim Dowell (D)
Rep. Dave Gallik (D)
Rep. Bob Lake (R)
Rep. Holly Raser (D)
Rep. Jon Sonju (R)
Rep. Pat Wagman (R)

Members Excused: None.

Members Absent: Rep. Verdell Jackson (R)

Staff Present: Connie Erickson, Legislative Branch
Kim Leighton, Committee Secretary
Eddy McClure, Legislative Branch
Jim Standaert, Legislative Branch

Please Note. These are summary minutes. Testimony and discussion are paraphrased and condensed.

Committee Business Summary:

Hearing & Date Posted:
Executive Action:

DISCUSSION: CHAIRMAN MONICA LINDEEN opened the meeting with general housekeeping. She briefly introduced Dr. Kirk Miller, Chairman, Board of Public Education.

Dr. Miller spoke to the committee about accreditation standards. He began by speaking of contemporary challenges facing the legislature. He also introduced some gentlemen that came with him. They are also on the Board of Public Education. These gentlemen were John Fuller from Kalispell, Cal Gilbert from Great Falls, and Steve Meloy from Helena. The committee also received a copy of the accreditation standards for Montana.

EXHIBIT (esh10a01)

Dr. Miller presented the committee with the case of Helena Elementary v. State. This concluded that Montana has the minimum standards needed for quality education. He also spoke of the Public School Renewal Commission, and its importance in this process. He also went on to discuss the Montana Accreditation Standards, which is the basis of what quality education standards should be. **Dr. Miller** touched on the issue of input versus output standards. He also stated that the standards were currently reviewed and revised in the 1999-2000 school year.

Dr. Miller spoke about Chapter 55 in the accreditation manual. This adheres to the basic standards, or the input standards. These include performance-based standards, class size issues, and educational opportunities. He then touched on Chapter 54 in the accreditation manual, which deals with content and performance standards. This can also be referred to as output standards. This chapter concerns developing a curriculum for each grade level. There is testing at the end of grade four, grade eight, and upon graduation. The intent of these standards is to improve student learning for all. It has been said that Montana's standards are not specific enough. However, **Dr. Miller** stated that he believes they are specific enough to stay on course.

Dr. Miller talked briefly about Chapter 56. This involves the student assessment rules, including state level assessments that are required in schools. He stated that these rules will most likely be affected by NCLB. Chapter 57 deals with generating a uniform system of teacher certification. Lastly, he spoke about Chapter 58, which addresses a definition for professional educator preparation program standards. These standards were initiated in 1979, then reviewed and revised in 1984, 1989, 1994, and are set to be revised again in 2005.

Dr. Miller touched on the administrative role making process, which is on a five-year cycle. The guiding principles in this decision making process are: quality, equity, diversity, and

currency with nationally recognized standards. He also proclaimed that there were a couple of legal decisions that were made. There are a few underlying factors that the Board of Public Education always tries to incorporate. These are equity, adequacy, and quality.

Dr. Miller cited the contemporary efforts taking place recently. One of these is implementing federal regulations such as NCLB. Another is the teacher programs and certification standards. Also, the Board of Public Education is looking at accreditation needs of special purpose schools. Furthermore, the Board of Public Education is looking at how to recruit high quality educators, and how to keep them here. The Child Nutrition Act is also a concern. They need to implement a wellness policy by the 2006-2007 school year. In conclusion, it is important to devise this definition in order to take care of Montana's most precious resource, its children.

{Tape: 1; Side: B; Approx. Time Counter: 0 - 4.4}

REP. JON SONJU requested some clarification on Chapter 57 in regards to getting more educators in Montana, and the problem of many educators leaving Montana for better opportunities out of state.

Dr. Miller responded by speaking of Teacher Education Programs that are being implemented, and also the recommendation of student teaching programs.

REP. PAT WAGMAN asked if there is a place the committee is able to get minutes from the Board of Public Education.

Dr. Miller provided **REP. WAGMAN** with the website for the Board of Public Education which is www.bpe.state.mt.us.

REP. WAGMAN implored about setting policy in comparison with other states.

Dr. Miller stated that it is about a fifty-fifty split across the United States. Some states do it similar to us, and some do not.

REP. NORMA BIXBY requested **Dr. Miller's** opinion on the implementation of the Indian Education For All Act standards.

Dr. Miller attested that the Board of Public Education is focusing on implementing this by studying data that is coming in. They are also working on gathering tribal individuals to help with information. However, they are having some difficulty with

this. He avowed that this has been started, and with constant attention should be implemented in the next five years.

REP. BIXBY followed up by asking if Dr. Miller believes that the standards in place now are sufficient in providing for Indian students. She also stated that she made a copy of the Indian Education For All Act standards for everyone.

EXHIBIT(esh10a02)

{Tape: 1; Side: B; Approx. Time Counter: 4.4 - 15}

(REP. VERDELL JACKSON entered the hearing)

Dr. Miller stated that in his opinion, it would be best to ask those individuals involved in the education community, whether or not they need revisions, or if they are working.

REP. BIXBY inquired as to how the Board of Public Education monitors whether or not the standards are being implemented.

Dr. Miller explained that within Chapter 55, there are different codes that the school must follow for the accreditation. He then went on to discuss possible consequences of not meeting these standards.

REP. BILL GLASER commented on core curriculum, or minimum standard in regard to Indian studies. He also stated that it bothers him that extra curricular activities seem to be deemed as more important than the basic core requirements of education. He asked that Dr. Miller expand on the topic of paying for core curriculums before any money goes to extra curricular activities.

Dr. Miller remarked upon REP. GLASER's comment. He stated that the accreditation standards don't state extra curricular activities as a separate unit that need funding. He recommended communicating with the local representatives, and emphasize the importance of core requirements.

REP. GLASER stated he was curious how well the performance-based accreditation standards are being used, and what the effects of it are.

Dr. Miller responded by saying that it has been used in the state of Montana. However, there has not been a lot of focus on it.

REP. GLASER articulated that aside from the performance-based accreditation system, what we have is a cookbook system. A recipe is put out there, and the Board of Public Education is

then available to provide services. He recommended hiring individuals to go out and monitor the system.

Dr. Miller agreed that the Board of Public Education has been involved in the visioning of how to train individuals to do this. He believes the best way to do this is within the work of the Renewal Commission. It is a possible way to establish a process that is more cost efficient than the one we have now.

REP. GLASER proposed a process in which the legislature would define the basic system, then provide the resources and funding. The Board of Public Education could then apply the accreditation standards. He questioned as to how this would work.

Dr. Miller responded by saying that the Board of Public Education would work with the legislature to implement something like this.

REP. BOB LAKE commented on schools not reaching accreditation standards. He asked if it is a single part of the standards that they are not meeting, or if it is across the board.

Mr. Miller stated that a lot has changed over the last five years. However, a majority of the problem is the lack of a certified teacher in certain areas. Much of this includes trying to meet the standards for counselors and librarians.

REP. LAKE spoke of issues concerned with teacher certification, and meeting the accreditation standards.

Dr. Miller stated that there is clarification on that in Chapter 57. It is actually more flexible now than it has been in the past. There is also pertinent information in Chapter 55.

REP. LAKE remarked on the fact that many kids are on the road more than they are in the classroom.

Dr. Miller inferred that the Montana High School Association is under a lot of local control. He also stated that the school system provides quality education that accommodates the sports, and other extra curricular activities.

REP. LAKE asked Dr. Miller whether he was referring to a performance-based system, or rather a set pattern of the curriculum.

Dr. Miller stated that what he has been talking about contains both components.

REP. DAVE GALLIK hoped to visit a little bit about the court's decision, as well as the jurisdictional lines that are in place.

Dr. Miller believed that there have been very few bills that define what all schools should comply within terms of curriculum.

REP. GALLIK followed up by talking about HB 667 and Judge Sherlock's findings in regards to this bill.

Dr. Miller attested that when the Board of Public Education and the committee strike up a new system, there needs to be a plan set forth to keep up with inflation, whatever is built needs to be kept up.

REP. GALLIK commented that HB 667 in fact did not keep up with inflation. He challenged that they need to work on the dynamic principle in order for this to work.

Dr. Miller reiterated that they need to stay on top of the system, and not let it go for ten or twelve years without addressing the problem. They must keep up with the mechanism.

REP. GALLIK asked Dr. Miller's advice on the court decision. He restated that the decision is to be made by October 1, 2005.

REP. GALLIK would like to know where the committee should be by the end of the legislative session.

Dr. Miller stated that in his opinion the committee needs to develop a process that will lead to the end product.

REP. BIXBY directed a question to Cal Gilbert pertaining to Indian education standards, and applying them to the curriculum.

{Tape: 2; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 0 - 25.5}

Cal Gilbert introduced himself as the Principal of Longfellow Elementary School in Great Falls. They are an urban school, with the second highest population of tribal students in the state. They met the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) goals two years running. He stated that the Indian studies are not an addition to the curriculum, but rather an integral part of the education.

REP. LINDEEN asked Mr. Gilbert if he is in charge of the curriculum development in regards to Indian education, or if there was someone on his staff that deals with that.

Mr. Gilbert stated that he plays a major part in that development.

REP. LINDEEN requested that Mr. Gilbert give Eddy McClure the name of somebody deeply involved that the committee could utilize.

REP. HOLLY RASER directed a question to Mr. Gilbert as to whether or not they have full-day kindergarten.

Mr. Gilbert informed REP. RASER that they do have full-day kindergarten.

REP. RASER asked about constraints that go along with integrating Indian education into the curriculum.

Mr. Gilbert stated that they are highly tied to the Title XII Program, and they also utilize volunteers.

REP. RASER asked if they are now a Title I school.

Mr. Gilbert responded that they are.

REP. RASER asked Mr. Gilbert to explain the difference between a school-wide Title I education system, and a targeted assistance system.

Mr. Gilbert stated that a school-wide Title I program is able to pull all their resources together. This gives them many resources that may be utilized.

REP. RASER inquired if being a school-wide program entitles the school to more funds.

Mr. Gilbert indicated that he did not believe so.

REP. LAKE asked if Longfellow Elementary School is considered a public school, or an alternative school.

Mr. Gilbert said that they are viewed as a public school. However they are probably the closest thing there is to an alternative school.

REP. LAKE asked if this allows them to use any different accreditation standards.

Mr. Gilbert stated that they are under the same standards as any other school.

{Tape: 2; Side: B; Approx. Time Counter: 0 - 3.2}

REP. PAT WAGMAN had a question for Dr. Miller. He asked him about the change in the teacher to student ratios in terms of modern times, versus thirty years ago.

Dr. Miller answered this by asking if the system is any less efficient today than it was thirty years ago. He personally does not think so.

REP. WAGMAN asked if the standards for a teacher class ratio has changed in the last ten years.

Mr. Miller stated that he doesn't necessarily have the historical background. He did say that in his ten years on the Board of Public Education, there hasn't been a large scale of change. He seems to think the process is working.

REP. LINDEEN asked if there were any other questions from the committee members. She commented on the biggest reason for not meeting standards being the lack of certified teachers. She asked Dr. Miller to please expand on this.

Dr. Miller stated that approximately 70% of students graduating from teacher programs or the Universities are looking for jobs outside of Montana. **Dr. Miller** believes that they need to recognize this and address it.

REP. LINDEEN approached Dr. Miller about his statement regarding the relationship between the Board of Public Education and the legislature.

Dr. Miller expressed his hope for this relationship. He stated that he would like to see the two bodies working together. The Board of Public Education is ready and willing to assist the legislature in any way they can.

REP. LINDEEN conveyed that she hopes everyone can continue to communicate with one another.

REP. RASER asked Dr. Miller if it is possible, as a legislative body, to come up with a definition that does not include the accreditation standards.

Dr. Miller stated that he does not think that is possible.

REP. GALLIK appealed to Dr. Miller in regard to the definition of a quality education system; "If there is a definition in place, can we have it?"

Dr. Miller stated that he would like to say yes. However, it is not that easy. It is a very complicated issue. He also handed out written testimony from his presentation.

EXHIBIT(esh10a03)

REP. LINDEEN thanked Dr. Miller for his presentation and time with the committee today.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 5:00 P.M.

REP. MONICA LINDEEN, Chairman

KIM LEIGHTON, Secretary

ML/KL

Additional Exhibits:

EXHIBIT ([esh10aad0.PDF](#))