

These minutes contain materials which paraphrase and/or summarize statements made during this session. Only text enclosed in quotation marks

report a speaker's exact words. For complete contents of the proceedings, please refer to the tapes.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

June 5, 1991  
p.m. Tapes 103-105

Hearing Room F 1:30

MEMBERS PRESENT: Rep. Carolyn Oakley, Chair Rep. Vera Katz,  
Vice-Chair Rep. Bruce Hugo Rep. Delna Jones Rep. Mike Nelson Rep. Bob  
Pickard Rep. Walt Schroeder

STAFF PRESENT: Lee Penny, Committee Administrator Carolynn  
Gillson, Committee Assistant

MEASURES CONSIDERED: SB 917A - Requires consolidation of  
union high school and elementary school districts by specified dates,  
WRK SB 445A - Requires participation in National School Breakfast  
Program, WRK

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TAPE 103, SIDE A

005 REP. CAROLYN OAKLEY, chair: Calls the meeting to order at 1:40 p.m.

MOTION: Rep. Oakley moves to take SB 917A from the table. VOTE: In a roll call vote, the motion failed, with Reps. Pickard and Schroeder voting NAY. Excused: Reps. Jones and Nelson

SB 445A - Requires participation in National School Breakfast Program  
Possible Reconsideration and Work Session

029 MOTION: Rep. Hugo moves the committee rules be suspended to allow the committee to reconsider SB 445A. VOTE: In a roll call vote, the motion carried with all members present voting AYE. Excused: Reps. Jones and Nelson

MOTION: Rep. Hugo moves the committee reconsider the vote by which it passed out SB 445 A.

042 LEE PENNY, Committee Administrator: When SB 445A came over from the Senate, it was to go into effect during the 1992-93 school year. This committee added the emergency clause with an effective date of July 1, 1991.

VOTE: In a roll call vote, the motion carried with all members present voting AYE. Excused: Rep. Jones

064 MOTION: Rep. Hugo moves to restore the language in Section 2 in SB 445A and replace the word "Department" on lines 9 and 10 with "State Board of Education." There was no objection.

MOTION: Rep. Hugo moves SB 445A as amended to the floor with a do pass recommendation. VOTE: In a roll call vote, the motion carried with all members present voting AYE. Excused: Rep. Jones Carrier: Rep. Pickard

093 MOTION: Rep. Oakley moves to remove SB 917A from the table. VOTE: In a roll call vote, the motion carried, with Reps. Pickard and Schroeder voting NAY.

SB 917A - Requires consolidation of union high school and elementary school districts by specified dates. Work Session Witnesses: Rep. Jerry Barnes Rep. John Schoon Sen. Paul Phillips Joan Yatvin, Cottrell School District Rep. Liz VanLeeuwen John Danielson, Oregon Education Association (OEA) T. K. Olson

130 LEE PENNY: Gives the committee an overview of the issues addressed by the bill. > Reviews the provisions in the bill. > Lists the concerns raised during the hearing on the bill.

172 REP. JERRY BARNES, District 52: Concerned about government dictating what local people will do. Government starts at the local community and goes up. > State government needs to show rural communities the advantages and disadvantages of this legislation and let them decide for themselves. > The schools are the center of development in most of these communities.

232 REP. JOHN SCHOON, District 34: Opposes unification in a generic form. > Decentralized management has proven to be better than centralized management. > Small schools do as good a job or better and do it at less cost. > Why force unification? Would greater curriculum choices really occur? > Talks about activities that smaller school districts can participate in. > The facts don't support forced unification and consolidation. There are other ways to meet curriculum needs.

316 REP. HUGO: Why can't every school district offer the things you say smaller school districts can?

SCHOON: They could. I think the smaller schools do the extra things because the parents are more involved.

REP. HUGO: Would unification stop schools from having those activities?

SCHOON: It could. Larger districts don't have the parental and community interest.

360 SEN. PAUL PHILLIPS: It is important to discuss this issue. Some think we are forcing something down local districts throats. We have not missed a session with this debate since 1977. We have missed the opportunity this bill provides us to facilitate some thorough discussion and proper planning on this issue. Next session we will have the opportunity to revisit the issue. > There has been no substantive evidence that this will harm local control. > It is important to consider the fiscal factors.

TAPE 104, SIDE A

025 CHAIR OAKLEY: Because of funding, down the road some of the school districts are going to have to consider some form of unification on their own. Wouldn't the community have a better feeling if they took it upon themselves and made that decision?

SEN. PHILLIPS: If an incentive is not provided on a statewide logical basis, it will not occur.

CHAIR OAKLEY: Explains how the issue can tear a community apart.

050 REP. BOB PICKARD: You discuss a political reality. We are more interested in an education reality.

SEN. PHILLIPS: We need to talk about the quality of education. We spend too much in this legislative process debating the financial facts of education. This issue deserves and warrants discussion and a debate. > Need to develop a system so kids are able to compete in the national and international market. > Need to broaden our horizons and discuss new ideas and concepts. > The political reality and education reality go together.

109 REP. PICKARD: The education reform that is taking place has to do with downsizing.

132 JOAN YATVIN, superintendent/principal of Cottrell School District in Clackamas County: > Talks about her school. > If you want to make improvements, it has to be in a small unit. > In large districts, the bureaucracy gets in the way of education. > In order to have forward moving education, we need to keep the units small and responsive.

REP. HUGO: Under this bill, what would change at Cottrell?

YATVIN: Sandy Union High School is in the safety net and does not have a cooperative community. Our community is very supportive. > It is inevitable our 6th, 7th and 8th graders will go to a large middle school.

REP. HUGO: Why do the people in your community support Cottrell but not Sandy Union High?

YATVIN: Because they have a more direct voice in our school.

208 REP. HUGO: There is a tremendous disparity between what some people are paying to support their school because of the wealth in the district and what others have to pay because of lack of wealth in their district. How would you argue against sharing the wealth for the good of K-12?

YATVIN: I believe you can make a formula that is going to do that without putting all of these school districts together.

Continued discussion concerning inequities in school districts.

294 REP. HUGO: What will change in your classrooms under a unified structure?

YATVIN: Explains how central control affects the classroom.

328 REP. DELNA JONES: We are talking about unification in terms of your students and where they go. You should be concerned about Sandy Union High School because that is where your students will go.

YATVIN: There is a lot of voluntary cooperation and collaboration already going on. I am not familiar with large districts in Oregon. My experience with larger school districts elsewhere is you have to fight to get anything out of the system.

REP. JONES: Your combined tax rate would be above statewide average. The proposed funding formula does not have a factor for administration. We are moving away from a property tax based system. We are in a changing mode in Oregon whether we like it or not. We have a state wide responsibility to our students.

424 CHAIR OAKLEY: Do you think your school community would be willing to consider unification as an option for itself?

YATVIN: A collaborative arrangement is possible. We would have to do it as equal partners with parents and people in the community.

TAPE 103, SIDE B

016 REP. VERA KATZ: I see tension between the funding issue and a management issue. We ought to be addressing the management issue and the systemic changes. > Need to give back empowerment to the local school sites.

YATVIN: Hope you won't set us back and make it harder for us. > Suggests looking at Kentucky where they are breaking down their larger units and going to the smaller units. Larger units should be serving the smaller units, not regulating them.

REP. KATZ: You would need to work out issues with school site committees. Hope we begin to focus on the management issues.

096 REP. LIZ VanLEEUWEN: From experience, I know that forcing small

schools to come under the administration of the larger schools does not necessarily provide a better education and save money. It depends totally on the management.

133 JOHN DANIELSON, OEA: We have long been supporters of school district unification. > Providing an education and developing an education system is a responsibility of the state. > There are good and bad large schools and small schools. > The game plan has changed. We are trying to create a equitable system driven by state resources. > It costs more money to educate a high school student than a elementary student. Because of specialty classes and activities the costs are driven up. > Talks about inequities between school districts and how much money school districts will lose since Measure 5 passed. > We can't afford the distortions created through these small elementary districts.

You can't limit property taxes and still have local options for schools. > As we adjust to the new system, somethings are mandated by the facts of the situation. > You can have better coordinated planning and efficiency through a unified system. > Unification does not necessarily mean one central office. > Many small districts are inefficiently operated. > Unification will not make a difference in parental involvement. > We are not creating large school districts. All we are doing is having kids that live in one area go through a single school system with grades K-12.

335 REP. SCHROEDER: You said it would take 100 years to get to where this bill would take us. Then you said we would not need the bill because of Measure 5.

DANIELSON: If we proceeded at the same rate since 1972, it would take 100 years from now to do the same kind of thing this bill will do in six years. That is how slow it is going. The bill is needed if you want orderly reorganization of school districts. > Unification is an adequate long-range plan.

REP. SCHROEDER: What happened with the bill that passed during the 1989 session that provided incentives for small districts to unify?

DANIELSON: Reviews purpose of the bill and the districts that qualified. > It appears the inequities created through nonunified districts are going to create major problems for those that have unified. > Ballot Measure 5 has changed our thinking on the unification issue.

445 REP. KATZ: What happened to those districts that did unify?

DANIELSON: In the 1950s', Oregon schools went through a massive reorganization. > A lot of time is spent coordinating and bringing students into a unified curriculum. Good planning can be done on a voluntary basis. > We are unaware of long-term difficulty resulting from school district reorganization.

TAPE 104, SIDE B

041 T. K. OLSON: Refers to information contained in a report resulting from a study on Oregon School Finance dated December, 1990 (EXHIBIT A). > Many people believe that eliminating the smaller school districts and requiring the consolidation of all districts into K-12 units would save substantial amounts of taxpayer money. > Pointed out in the report that even if every conceivable efficiency from such a change was realized, the funds saved would be less than one-half of one percent of the total spent statewide. > Only way most of the saving could occur would be if the smaller schools could be closed and consolidated into much larger and more efficient units.

074 REP. HUGO: In September, 1988, the Ridgely Commission came out with a report emanating from the Governor's Commission on School Funding Reform. One recommendation of that Commission was the unification of K-12. This is nothing in the reports recommendation regarding unification that deals with financial savings. What was the rationale of the Ridgely Commission on unification?

OLSON: Their stated reasons in the final report had to do with improvement of quality and coordination of the continuity of education from grade level to grade level.

REP. HUGO: Earlier testimony indicated that people in elementary district consider the elementary district to be their own district and the union high school district to be somebody else's district. Because of that, there was an inordinate number of school districts that were safety net districts that just happen to be union high districts. The Ridgely Commission was looking at the aspect of parents being parents of school kids K-12 not K-8. What is your response to that argument?

101 OLSON: It reflects a kind of psychological reality which is that parents are much more likely to feel protective of and want to know about the details of what goes on in elementary schools. They are, generally speaking, closer geographically than many of the high schools are. High school youth tend to be more independent and away from their home more. This is reflected in people's attitudes.

REP. HUGO: The rationale behind SB 917A may not be financial in the sense of saving money. It would be financial in the sense of equity and societal in the sense of districts being K-12 rather K-9 and 9-12.

144 OLSON: One of the prices for the school consolidation issue is to eliminate the heart of social activity in many of these small communities. > Lists a series of questions that should be addressed about the objectives expected from school consolidation. > As long as unification is mandated, and not done by choice, you will end up with some school districts that will lose. > Talks about consolidation in two example school districts - Monroe in Benton county and Silverton in Marion county. > Explains how people in small school districts have trouble believing their schools will not be eliminated in consolidation. > The practice of consolidation is when the larger school with the larger population base decides the smaller school is too high cost of a unit to continue. This occurs when there are substantial discrepancies in size and unit costs. There are extraordinary disparities of either the tax effort or the amount that is spent per student within those school districts. The degree of spending and tax rate will color your approach to viewing this issue. > Measure 5 is inevitably going to cause school districts to consolidate. > Talks about situations in different school districts around the state. > The transition is tough and you need to be sensitive to that fact. > Suggests amending the formula so consolidated districts get more money than nonconsolidated districts. > Describes some short-term savings and long-term costs with consolidation.

TAPE 105, SIDE A

047 LEE PENNY: The -A5 amendment is from Rep. Sowa concerning the Jennings Lodge situation (see May 13, 1991 minutes) > The -A11 amendment is from Rep. Schroeder (EXHIBIT B). Points out a technical error - delete lines 26-28 on page 1.

051 REP. SCHROEDER: My -A8 amendment takes care of the error (EXHIBIT C).

LEE PENNY: Continues explaining what the -A11 amendment would do.

084 LEE PENNY: Reviews the provisions in the -A12 (EXHIBIT D) and A13 amendments (EXHIBIT E) from OSB A. > Reviews the provisions in the amendment proposed by the Redland School District 116 (EXHIBIT F).

137 MOTION: Rep. Schroeder moves to adopt the SB 917-A8 amendment.

REP. SCHROEDER: Reads the language in the -A8 amendment. > I am not opposed to unification or consolidation but it should not be mandated.

180 The committee took a break at 3:40 and returned at 3:55 p.m.

Reps. Hugo and Katz objected to the amendment.

VOTE: In a roll call vote, the motion failed, with Reps. Nelson, Pickard, Katz, Hugo and Oakley voting NO. Excused: Rep. Jones

190 MOTION: Rep. Hugo moves SB 917A to the floor without recommendation as to passage.

VOTE: In a roll call vote, the motion passes, with Reps. Pickard, Schroeder and Oakley voting NO.

206 Rep. Schroeder serves notice of a possible minority report. He is joined by Rep. Pickard.

REP. NELSON: "I want to be on record indicating I helped get this bill out of committee but in no way, shape or form do I allege how I will vote on the floor on this bill. I most likely will be voting no."

REP. JONES: It is unfortunate we have to go through this struggle. This is not a new issue. I believe we sometimes fail to realize that putting dates in the future gives people the opportunity to come back and look at this legislative process and see what problems exist. If we never look at futures, or targets, we will never get there. > Whether we like it or not we are going to have a state system in the future. If local communities are not allowed to be active participants in their local schools, then we all lose.

250 REP. PICKARD: "Because of the Speaker's actions related to SB 917A, I am withdrawing from the Republican caucus for the remainder of this session. His conduct towards members of this committee is inexcusable in any society that claims to be free."

Testimony in opposition to the bill was submitted by four people (EXHIBIT G). Testimony and a proposed amendment was submitted by the Jennings Lodge Organization for Quality Localized Education (EXHIBIT H).

265 CHAIR OAKLEY: Adjourns the meeting at 4:15 p.m.

Submitted by: Reviewed by:

Carolynn GillsonLee Penny Assistant Administrator

EXHIBIT LOG:

A - Report concerning SB 917A - T. K. Olson - 69 pages  
B - SB 917-All amendment - Rep. Schroeder - 2 pages C - SB  
917-A8 - Rep. Schroeder - 1 page D-SB 917-A12 - Oregon School Boards  
Assoc. - 2 pages E-SB 917-A13 - Oregon School Boards Assoc. - 2 pages  
F-Testimony and proposed amendment - SB 917A - Redland School District -  
2 pages G-Testimony opposing the bill - SB 917A - several people - 4  
pages H-Testimony and proposed amendment - SB 917A - several people - 2  
pages