

2011 HOUSE EDUCATION

HB 1273

2011 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

House Education Committee
Pioneer Room, State Capitol

HB 1273
01/19/11
13082

Conference Committee

Committee Clerk Signature



MINUTES:

Chairman RaeAnn Kelsch: We will open the hearing on HB 1273.

Rep. Kim Koppelman: Sponsor. I bring HB 1273 for your consideration. I was asked to introduce this on behalf of our school district. The reason I agreed to introduce the bill is because it is limited to kindergarten and deals with readiness testing. I think it plays a fundamental role of what kindergarten is about.

Louise Dardis – Assistant Superintendent, West Fargo Schools: Support. Testimony. Attachment.

Vice Chair Lisa Meier: The area of the bill that I have a question on is number 2. Can you describe to me when the tests are given to the students, are the students then dismissed for the day?

Louise Dardis – Assistant Superintendent, West Fargo Schools: We schedule tests with every student that is registered with us. At same time parents fill out a questionnaire giving us insight on the child. We then bring the child, parent, and teacher together to discuss and get to know more information on each other. It takes us two days to get thru the 500 students.

Chairman RaeAnn Kelsch: You are currently doing that before school starts?

Louise Dardis – Assistant Superintendent, West Fargo Schools: Yes. We are paying out of our local dollars to have teachers come in.

Rep. David Rust: It seems to me on our report; don't we list the tests we are going to use for our readiness test? I assume every school must do some kind of readiness testing?

Louise Dardis – Assistant Superintendent, West Fargo Schools: Yes. Readiness testing is usually done as group testing. That is very hard to do with a 5year old. It makes it more personalized through our readiness.

Rep. David Rust: We are a smaller school district than you and we do same thing and if I remember correctly we do it every spring or every fall.

Rep. Karen Karls: I do recall someone appearing before us last session and some of the kindergarten teachers expressed concern with difficulty with children that weren't ready for kindergarten. Do you ever turn down children?

Louise Dardis – Assistant Superintendent, West Fargo Schools: We are public and cannot reject them. We do use screening devices so we know what we are walking into with a child. The assessments aren't for rejecting. It is for individualized assessment and education.

Chairman RaeAnn Kelsch: Thank you Louise.

Shari Gehrke: Support. I have had the privilege of doing assessments prior to starting the year. I get to meet the student and parents one on one. It is a calm and quiet environment. After assessment it allows me to seat the child and develop curriculum for that individual child. It also allows me to start the education on day one instead of finding out down the road that the child requires special attention to his/her learning. When assessment days aren't offered, we cannot educate the child from day one. Assessments done before the start of school allows the parent to introduce the child into the school atmosphere. Assessments done by teachers themselves, gives them a better base as opposed to someone else giving those assessments and giving us the results.

Rep. Phillip Mueller: In your kindergarten class do you have aids that help you?

Shari Gehrke: The only reason I do this year is because I have special needs students but otherwise we do not have aids.

Rep. Karen Rohr: Is that tool you use for your assessments a culturally sensitive tool that can be used to Hispanic populations, American Indians, etc?

Shari Gehrke: Yes.

Chairman RaeAnn Kelsch: Questions? Support?

Jon Martinson – NDSBA: We support this bill.

Chairman RaeAnn Kelsch: Questions?

Warren Larson - NDCEL: We support HB 1273. These days the assessments are critical in a student's learning. It is crucial that students get off to the right start in kindergarten. This is a map to help these kids get off the right start. This foundation has to be strong. We need to find out their needs and get it right. I encourage you to support HB 1273.

Rep. Phillip Mueller: Can you describe how the readiness things work? Are we talking about eyesight and hearing and other physical kinds of things or does it deal other things that deal with readiness for academics?

Warren Larson - NDCEL: I can only speak to the past. In the past we have done those screenings as well. As was mentioned earlier it isn't just an assessment of the child. It is for the parents and teachers as well and concerns can be shared between them.

Chairman RaeAnn Kelsch: In Amy's letter she lays out some of the things that can be assessed.

Rep. Karen Rohr: Will this increase the cost of educating our kindergarten students?

Warren Larson - NDCEL: I'm not sure on how to answer that. It may somewhat, however, I can tell you in the past what we did in the Williston public schools is we did it before school started and paid our teachers to come in.

Chairman RaeAnn Kelsch: It wouldn't be additional state costs because the school districts pay out of their local budget.

Warren Larson - NDCEL: Correct.

Chairman RaeAnn Kelsch: Questions? Support? Opposition? What are the wishes of the committee?

Rep. Phillip Mueller: Motion to do pass.

Rep. Mark Sanford: Second.

Chairman RaeAnn Kelsch: Motion Carries. We will close on HB 1273.

**15 YEAS 0 NAYS 0 ABSENT
CARRIER: Rep. Bob Hunskor**

DO PASS

Date: 1-19-11
 Roll Call Vote #: _____

2011 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES
 BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 1273

House EDUCATION Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken: Do Pass Do Not Pass Amended Adopt
 Amendment

Rerefer to Appropriations Reconsider

Motion Made By Rep. Mueller Seconded By Rep. Sanford

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Chairman Kelsch	X		Rep. Hanson	X	
Vice Chairman Meier	X		Rep. Hunskor	X	
Rep. Heilman	X		Rep. Mock	X	
Rep. Heller	X		Rep. Mueller	X	
Rep. Johnson	X				
Rep. Karls	X				
Rep. Rohr	X				
Rep. Rust	X				
Rep. Sanford	X				
Rep. Schatz	X				
Rep. Wall	X				

Total (Yes) 15 No 0

Absent 0

Floor Assignment REP. HUNSKOR

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

HB 1273: Education Committee (Rep. R. Kelsch, Chairman) recommends DO PASS
(15 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1273 was placed on the
Eleventh order on the calendar.

2011 SENATE EDUCATION

HB 1273

2011 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Senate Education Committee
Missouri River Room, State Capitol

HB 1273
March 2, 2011
14853

Conference Committee

Committee Clerk Signature



Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

Relating to readiness testing and formative assessments of kindergarten students.

Minutes:

See "attached testimony."

Chairman Freborg opened the hearing on HB 1273; no fiscal note attached.

Representative Koppelman, District 13, introduced the bill at the request of local school districts. Simple bill; calls for readiness testing for kindergarten students and allows the district to set up to two days of the school calendar for this purpose. He is normally against adding non-instructional days to the school calendar; because he thinks teaching kids is what we do. However, also recognize that you can't teach children if you don't know where they are academically and figure out what their readiness is to learn and how best to teach them. This already goes on in most school districts; what typically happens according to his school sources is that the teachers do this with no pay on their own time or after hours and he feels it should be part of the school calendar.

Senator Gary Lee: Why wouldn't this be done prior to school starting? **Representative Koppelman:** Not sure how it is done in all districts; in his district the idea is that the readiness testing is probably done at the beginning of the school year. Not sure when it is scheduled; more of an issue of planning the school calendar and allowing it to be done within calendar days so staff is paid. **Senator Gary Lee:** Seems like poor planning in terms of how it is being done, if that is the case. Maybe misunderstanding what IS being done. How do they know how many kids will be in kindergarten? How do the parents know what to do with the kids that don't "make" it? Basic questions of what if. **Representative Koppelman:** Doesn't think this is a question of testing them for kindergarten readiness. Think it is more an issue of the kids that ARE coming into kindergarten, and determining where they are academically, what they know & what they need to be taught.

Senator Flakoll: Is there any requirement within the language that it happens within the first week of classes? **Representative Koppelman:** Don't see that in the bill; think the local district and school board would determine—assume that is where it would happen. Unless they would use this at the end of the year to talk about readiness to move on. Think the intent is readiness for incoming students. Think what might be happening in some districts, where they are doing it before the year begins, think the teachers come in just because they are committed teachers even without being paid. **Senator Flakoll:** Can they

bounce a kid out of a kindergarten program—word is readiness testing—if not ready and of age can the test bounce them out? **Representative Koppelman:** Not sure of that so won't try to answer. **Senator Flakoll:** Do you know if this is going to align with Gearing up for Kindergarten? Any talk of how the two initiatives/bills align? **Representative Koppelman:** Not sure, not on the House Education Committee. Could ask and clarify.

Senator Heckaman, District 23, testified in favor of HB 1273. Smaller school districts that are tested for readiness or assess their skills, it gives an idea of what they know and don't know. Helps the teacher prepare materials for them. When only have one class section, probably not optimal to use the assessment in grouping children. In a larger school could see them using this as a grouping mechanism for those that are more advanced, etc. Think what is important about this is when we get to mandatory attendance for kindergarten, those children need to be in school every day that school is in session. This would allow the schools to take two of those days and schedule children on an appointment basis for the testing. Frees up teacher and takes stress off; if there are 16 students in a class and the teacher is trying to assess someone on the side, they are not going to be very successful. Kindergarten the first six weeks is learning procedures in school. This would be an option when the mandatory attendance issue is effective; set two of those days aside for readiness testing. Assessments are very important; hard to assess little people because they don't always perform with someone new; shyness and bashfulness all play into the academic setting.

Senator Flakoll: The last sentence of the bill; they have two days of testing and that is all that can occur during that period of time? **Senator Heckaman:** Her understanding of this is if it takes the teacher an hour to assess the student, the student is only there that one hour the first two days. If it takes longer, that is the time each student would attend those first two days.

Senator Gary Lee: In the description you gave of the testing, there would probably need to be a sub teacher for the rest of the class as others are being tested? **Senator Heckaman:** In her experience in school that is what they do. The first 4-6 weeks in any school year are very important, especially in kindergarten. Bring them in to meet their teacher the first day, and the second day have someone new would make it sort of difficult for them to acclimate to their setting. Think it is good to have this appointment time if the school wishes to use it that way. Think there is also an option here if they wish to pay their teacher for those two days and have it done before school begins.

Betty Hanson, Principal, Clayton A. Lodoen Kindergarten Center, West Fargo Schools testified in support of HB 1273 (#1 Testimony)

Senator Gary Lee: Are children tested during a scheduled school time, but tested independently with the sub teacher in the classroom and someone else working with these children? What would the process be? **Betty Hanson:** In the past they have had the parents come in with the children; not a regular school day. It is an opportunity for the parents and teacher and child to meet and bond, to share any information or past experiences of the child, then to assess at that time also. Their school district paid the teachers for two days; one a professional development day and the other a vacation day. The other children are not in school; one on one time with the teacher, parent, and child.

Senator Gary Lee: Would this preclude anyone from attending kindergarten then? **Betty Hanson:** No, that is not an option. Take the children wherever they come to them. Those that know no letters or sounds to those that are reading already. Just gives the school the information on where to begin the support for that child.

Senator Heckaman: This would be important if you are grouping children in centers, correct? And if this is allowed in the first two days of the school then they would be on an appointment basis? **Betty Hanson:** Yes, just an appointment basis set up with registration of all kindergarteners. Parents select a time they can come to the session. Almost 100% of parents come to the assessments. Two years they did not do this and it was a tremendous impact on the year. Didn't have that relationship built at the beginning of the year; parents didn't know the teacher and those types of things. No information on the children prior to coming to school.

Shari Gehrke, Kindergarten Teacher, West Fargo Public Schools testified in support of HB 1273. Has taught kindergarten with and without testing. Prior testing really makes a huge difference in how the school year goes. A quiet testing environment is used and testing takes 20 min. to 1 hr. Gives the teacher how students are functioning academically and socially. After the assessment, optimal seating charts can be made for learning. Can start lesson planning the first day for each of the students, helping with differentiated instruction and interventions of special services to help students right away instead of a month into the school year. Assessments can take up to one month without testing prior to the year beginning. It has to be done with other students in the room where it is not quiet, teachers have to manage other students in the room, and students are juggled around to figure where the best placement is for them. She also shared quotes from other teachers from the state.

Doug Johnson, North Dakota Council of Educational Leaders supports HB 1273 with a Do Pass.

Bev Nielson, North Dakota School Boards Association: They passed a resolution in support of this bill.

No further testimony in favor; no opposition. Hearing closed.

Senator Heckaman: Motion Do Pass; second by **Senator Gary Lee.** Motion carried 7-0-0. **Senator Heckaman will carry the bill.**

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

HB 1273: Education Committee (Sen. Freborg, Chairman) recommends DO PASS
(7 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1273 was placed on the
Fourteenth order on the calendar.

2011 TESTIMONY

HB 1273

TESTIMONY ATTACHMENT

Testimony on HB 1273

Presented to the House Education Committee

By Louise Dardis, Assistant Superintendent, West Fargo Schools

(701) 356-2001 // dardis@west-fargo.k12.nd.us

Madam Chairman and members of the House Education Committee, my name is Louise Dardis, Assistant Superintendent for the West Fargo School District and I am here today to support the provisions of HB 1273.

While school districts are not required to conduct kindergarten, numerous districts in North Dakota do so. Many of those districts have found that conducting entry assessments of kindergarten children is prudent and necessary in order to learn each child's particular skills and readiness for the kindergarten curriculum. The information obtained from these assessments enables the teacher to plan effectively for the instruction of each child, as well as his or her entire class.

While extremely valuable, these assessments do require one-on-one teacher/student interaction. Currently, teachers must either give freely of their own time prior to the official start of school, and/or the district must pay teachers for the additional contract time necessary, and/or instructional time during class must be devoted to the individual assessments. We believe that the learning benefits for children and the teaching effectiveness for teachers is enhanced so much so that there should be time built into a kindergarten calendar for these assessments to take place.

We are asking for legislation to empower school districts to conduct up to two fewer student contact days for kindergarten than required by the state (175 days), provided that the

other one or two days are dedicated to the assessment of incoming kindergarten students. This legislation would require no additional expenditure of funds by the state or local authorities.

I would like to read a letter from Ms. Amy Neal, a kindergarten teacher from Minot Public Schools and the former North Dakota Kindergarten Association President. Please see attached.

With your permission, I would like at this time to turn the floor over to Shari Gehrke, a kindergarten teacher for West Fargo Public Schools, to provide information on how the kindergarten assessments impact her classroom, students, and instruction.

Lewis & Clark
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Amy Neal, K Teacher
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Lewis & Clark Elementary School
2215 NW 8th Street
Minot, ND 58703

January 19, 2011

To: Honorable Representative Rae Ann Kelsch
From: Amy Neal - Kindergarten Teacher
RE: Formative Assessment of Kindergarten Students

I am writing in support of HB1273 relating to readiness testing and formative assessments of incoming kindergarten students. The language of this bill allows districts to find their own "best fit" for kindergarten screening that would work with school calendars.

Screening incoming kindergarten students would be helpful to catch irregularities or unusual behaviors (indicating possible problems in development) of children who may need further testing; and screening would also guide instruction for the classroom teachers. (Sandra Crosser, 2005)

If assessment days are possible for in-coming kindergarten students, there are a variety of domains that educators may find useful. According to Costenbader, Rohrer, and Difonzo (2000), the following domains are appropriate to screen at kindergarten entrance, but not limited to:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| *physical health | *hearing and visual perception |
| *cognitive development | *knowledge of basic concepts |
| *speech and language development | *gross and small muscle development |
| *socialization | *self-help skills |

The skills above do not leave students out of kindergarten, they are just enabling educators to provide a "ready" environment for a child's educational experience.

Kindergarten teachers would appreciate your support on this issue,

Amy Neal
Minot K-Teacher
(former president NDKA)

Testimony on HB 1273

Presented to the Senate Education Committee

By Betty Hanson, Principal, Clayton A. Lodoen Kindergarten Center, West Fargo Schools

(701) 356-2020 // hanson@west-fargo.k12.nd.us

Chairman Freeborg and members of the Senate Education Committee, my name is Betty Hanson, Principal of the Clayton A. Lodoen Kindergarten Center which is part of the West Fargo School District and I am here today to support the provisions of HB 1273.

Many school districts have found that conducting entry assessments of kindergarten children is prudent and necessary in order to learn each child's particular skills and readiness for the kindergarten curriculum. The information obtained from these assessments enables the teacher to plan effectively for the instruction of each child, as well as his or her entire class. It also allows the school to provide necessary interventions expediently for the neediest students.

While extremely valuable, these assessments do require one-on-one teacher/student interaction. Currently, teachers must either give freely of their own time prior to the official start of school, and/or the district must pay teachers for the additional contract time necessary, and/or instructional time during class must be devoted to the individual assessments. We believe that the learning benefits for children and the teaching effectiveness for teachers is enhanced so much so that there should be time built into a kindergarten calendar for these assessments to take place.

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