

MINUTES

EDUCATION COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 23, 1977
3:00 p.m.

Members Present: Chairman Vergiels
Mr. Goodman
Mr. Horn
Mr. Kissam
Mr. Schofield

Members Absent: Mrs. Gomes
Mr. Rhoads

Guests Present: See attached list

Chairman Vergiels called the meeting to order at 3:05 and introduced Assemblyman Sue Wagner, sponsor of AB 151. The mother of a first and a second grader, Mrs. Wagner felt there is a definite need for counselors at the elementary level which, in turn, might eliminate problems in middle and high schools. However, Mrs. Wagner pointed out it is not her intent to disturb the distributive school fund.

Madalynne Rutherford, NPGA, counselor for the sixth grade at O'Brien Middle School in Reno and past president of the Nevada Personnel and Guidance Association, indicated there are many children who are abused or handicapped physically and also academically or psychologically, and AB 151 would help identify these children earlier. It would also provide a longitudinal model for those who do not have one or who are overlooked by sheer force of numbers.

Dr. Keith Pierce, College of Education, UNR, representing NPGA, an association of 270 professional counselors, summarized provisions of the bill, the need, status of elementary counseling, the duties of counselors as conceived by NPGA, and summarized some of the research supporting elementary school counseling. His outline is attached as Exhibit A. He also read a letter from Stan Barnhill, president of the Western Nevada Peace Officers Association, attached as Exhibit B. He stated further that the bill calls for one counselor per 500 pupils, at a cost of \$15,000 each, for this year, 30 units the first year or \$450,000 total, and 30 units the second for a total of \$900,000. Funding for this program would not interfere and should not interfere with the basic school formula.

Mr. Horn repeatedly asked whether one counselor can adequately serve the needs of 500 students, whether the testimony did not concern severe rather than normal problems and questioned whether the ratio in high school should be decreased to provide counselors at the elementary level.

Dr. Pierce admitted the bill is not a panacea but could deal in a developmental sense with many of these problems before they get to the point of being critical, explained that in high school counselors work more on a one-to-one level while in elementary schools there is more group work and affective education. He stated the bill follows the recommendation of the National Institute of Mental Health Commission and that, within broad guidelines, 1/500 could be considered adequate.

Dr. Bill Wollitz, Director of Northern Area Substance Abuse Council in Reno, shared his experiences, working four and one-half years as a counselor in Oklahoma City where the combination of teachers, counselors and parents working together produced positive results and six and one-half years in juvenile probation locally where he feels there is a definite need for counseling at the elementary level to combat drug and alcohol abuse problems.

Shirley Barnes, Reno, the parent of an eight-year-old boy in second grade, is presently studying with a group of parents and a counselor, discussing developing problems of growing up. She said she found this most useful and practical and supports the concept of elementary school counseling.

Shirley Oberg, resource teacher-counselor with the Rita Cannan Elementary School in Reno, in her fourth year of counseling approximately 430 children, said that by always being there, she helps with crisis situations and growth producing mental health. She stated she is in contact with every student, through the classroom situation, once a week, helps the staff as an intermediary and co-ordinates movement of children into middle school.

Mr. Goodman asked her what she considered a good ratio. She replied, "Ideally 1/250, realistically 1/500."

Mr. Kissam asked if she considered teaching a requirement for counseling to which she replied yes.

Mr. Vergiels requested copies of Nevada Teacher Certification Requirements for members of the committee and recessed the meeting for five minutes.

Upon reconvening, Chairman gave the gavel to Vice Chairman Horn.

Jan Hunt, a Reno parent in favor of elementary school counseling, defined a resource teacher as a remedial teacher, helping under-achievers and stated that counseling and reading go together at the elementary level and that she feels the only way to get these resource people is by categorical funding.

Bonnie Woods, Sparks, the mother of a first grader, observed that her participation in group therapy with an elementary school

counselor has provided insight and helped her husband and her deal with situations with their child.

Joyce Woodhouse, NSEA, read a prepared statement endorsing the concept of elementary counselors, stressing prevention rather than prison, at a cost next year of \$7.50 per elementary pupil. However, she stated, the NSEA does not believe counselors should be counted as a teacher unit and does not want a program set up unless new money is appropriated. Her statement is attached as Exhibit C.

Mr. Vergiels asked Ms. Woodhouse to explain the relationship between the bill and distributive funding. She requested Bob Rose, president-elect of the NSEA, to answer the question. Mr. Rose replied that 3% is a benchmark, relating it back to basic support to give a number, that it was not meant to be included in the basic support formula. Mr. Costa agreed that, if passed the way it is now, it would be additional money on top of what the State Department of Education is now asking for. Mr. Vergiels asked Mr. Rose to secure from the NSEA a statement supporting AB 151 but not supporting categorical funding for each area and discipline. He also requested a written interpretation from the Legislative Counsel Bureau about the funding.

Ron Nagel, Lyon County School District, representing the Superintendent of Schools, said they now have two elementary counselors for their four elementary schools and, therefore, are committed to the philosophy of elementary schools counselors but do not support the concept of categorical aid. Rather he expressed the feeling the local school board should have the ability to determine its own priorities and requested the legislative to reinstate funds cut from the original education budget to fund this proposal.

Dick Wright, Washoe County School District, endorsed Mr. Nagel's philosophy. He further pointed out that when the legislature specifies a particular figure, it makes it difficult for the local district to administer the law; therefore, he suggested a range rather than a figure and asked that the distributive school formula not be disturbed.

Fenton Ray, middle school counselor at Dilworth in Sparks, spoke of his three years as a counselor in Fallon where an elementary school counselor made his work easier and his four years at Dilworth where the lack of one makes his work more difficult. He read an article from February "Smithsonian," relating to a study of the disintegration of the American family and resultant problems and suggested AB 151 would provide some answers.

Dr. Russ Andaloro, co-ordinator of the Juvenile Delinquent field program at UNLV, who did a nationwide study, surveying judges, directors of juvenile court facilities, probation officers and professors, stated his research showed that the top three causes of juvenile delinquency are (1) underachievement in school; (2) poor self concept; and (3) the breakup of the family, and supported AB 151 as an effort to prevent juvenile delinquency.

Dr. George Earnhart, a member of the State Board of Education, appeared as a former high school counselor and psychologist to support the program but insisted it must be funded over and above the distributive formula.

Jerry Miller, fifth grade teacher and night school teacher at Washoe High School, agreed with the principle of elementary school counseling, but felt that the qualifications must include teaching experience at the elementary level.

Myrna Macdonald, NPGA, stressed the importance of the elementary school counselor in helping the student develop positive feelings of self and setting a foundation for later career exploration. Her statement is attached as Exhibit D.

Bob Best, Executive Secretary of Nevada State School Board Association, favored the concept of elementary school counselors but not the categorical funding. A former superintendent, Mr. Best was involved in the formulation of the Nevada plan for funding schools which provides funds and leaves to the discretion of the local boards determination of their use. He interpreted that 30 units is \$3.20/pupil in basic support, taken away from the general support of school districts.

James P. Costa, Deputy Superintendent of the State Department of Education, read a statement reflecting the State Board's statutory policy to prescribe courses of study and provide financial support to local districts who are then responsible for determining priorities locally. He endorsed the concept of elementary school counselors without taking a stand on AB 151. His statement is attached as Exhibit E.

Mr. Vergiels asked about the possibility of re-allocating secondary school counselors to elementary schools. It was pointed out that this would create problems of accreditation, certification and qualification.

ASSEMBLY EDUCATION COMMITTEE
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AB 151 was scheduled for action only for the next meeting of the Education Committee.

Following a two minute recess the committee introduced BDR 34-626* which provides safeguards in discipline of public school education personnel. The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Harriet M. Knauff

Harriet M. Knauff
Assembly Attache

*A.B. 346

GUEST LIST

<u>NAME</u> (Please print)	<u>REPRESENTING</u>	<u>WISH TO SPEAK</u>	
		Yes	No
MADALYNE RUTHERFORD	NPGA	✓	
KEITH A. PIERCE	NSEA	✓	
Bill Wolitz D.P.A.	NASAC	✓	
Shirley Shirley Barnes	NPGA	✓	
Shirley Ann	NPGA	✓	
Bonnie Woods	NPGA	✓	
Joyce Woodhouse	Nev. St. Educ. Assoc.	✓	
Fenton Ray	NPGA	✓	
Bonnie Parnell	Carson City P.T.A.		✓
Dr. Russ Anderson	UNLV	✓	
Jane Hunt	Las Vegas, Nevada	✓	
Dick Wright	Washoe Co. School Dist	✓	
Ed Paul	NPGA NSEA		✓
James Shields	NSEA	✓	
SAM MAISANO	Clark Co. Schools		✓
Ron Jagel	Clark Co. Schools		✓
Cindy Mangum	UNR		✓
E. R. Selby	Washoe County Teacher Assoc		✓
Pat Werninger	NSEA Small Counties		✓
Robert Rose	NSEA		✓
Tom Marsand	Carson City, NV.		✓
Newton	NSEA		✓

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

GUEST REGISTER

DATE: _____

NAME, ADDRESS & PHONE NO.	REPRESENTING	TESTIFYING ON BILL NO.
<i>Anne Wagner</i>	<i>Assemblyman</i>	<i>151</i>
<i>Jerry Miller</i>	<i>Beck School - Reno</i>	<i>157</i>
<i>Myrna Macdonald</i>	<i>New. Res. & Acad. Assn</i>	<i>151</i>

SUPPORTING INFORMATION FOR A.B. 151 PRESENTED TO THE ASSEMBLY EDUCATION COMMITTEE AT 3 p.m., February 23, 1977.

A. A.B. 151

A.B. 151 would amend NRS 387.122-387.124 inclusive to provide the following:

1. Provision for funding elementary school counselors in units of \$15,000 each and at a ratio of one counselor per 500 students
2. Provision for 30 units during the first year of the biennium for a total of \$450,000 and
3. for 60 units during the second year for a total of \$900,000. Total for the biennium would be \$1.3 million.
4. Funding would not interfere with the basic school formula, but would be appropriated from the State general fund to the State distributive school fund
5. Distribution would be provided by the State Department of Education to school districts who apply for funds and whose program for implementation and certification meets State Department approval.

B. National and Nevada characteristics pertaining to the need for additional help for children and families such as can be provided by a qualified elementary school counselor:

1. Discipline, Vandalism, Crime

- Discipline has been the number one school problem indicated by adults in almost all recent Gallup Polls.
- School vandalism costs \$600 million annually in the U.S. That amounts to approximately \$13 for every public school student. (Sen. Birch Bayh's Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juveniles)
- Crime by young persons costs Americans \$12 billion annually (Sen. Bayh)
- One child in nine can be expected to appear in court before age 18 (Newsweek, September 22, 1975)
- In the Washoe County and Clark County School Districts for 1976-77, security and attendance forces are as follows:

Washoe County	16
Clark County	40
- In the Washoe County School District the 1974-75 glass breakage repairs totalled \$40,000.

2. Truancy -- often called the kindergarten of delinquency, was the object of a Reno police crackdown for a 31-day period in January 1974. During that same period Reno experienced a 30 percent drop in daylight crime.

3. Runaways -- one million children run away every year in the U.S. - most are from middle class homes (Newsweek, September 22, 1975).

Wittenberg Hall served 1186 runaways in 1974. 764 were from outside the Reno-Sparks areas

4. Costs in Nevada

- Keeping a girl for one year at the Youth Training Center, Caliente, costs \$14,000 and about \$13,000 for a boy at Elko.
- S.B. 175 authorizes \$400,000 to pay for overtime accumulated by guards and unanticipated medical costs during the prison riots last year.

5. Families

- Single-parent families are increasing at three times the rate of two-parent families (The Futurist, August 1975)
- 3 out of 10 children live in single-parent families
- 1 of 3 marriages terminates in less than one year
- 1 of 2 marriages terminates by divorce or separation within two years
(J.W. Ramey, The Futurist, August 1975)
- 51% of American mothers with school age children are working outside the home - 2/3 of them in full-time jobs
- At least a million school children are "latch-key" children who come home after school to an empty house and spend most of their free time with peers
(Newsweek, September 1975)
- "Parents are being pushed out of the family by social and economic forces over which they have little control ... It's almost impossible these days to raise a child without substantial outside help." (Dr. Kenneth Keniston, Chairman, Carnegie Council on Children)
- More support needs to be given families whose mobility results in little or no contact with aunts, uncles, grandparents - an extended family which shares in the responsibility of raising the children (Newsweek, September 1975)
- In the Washoe County School District the average pupil turnover per school year was 44 percent in 1975-76 with some schools experiencing as high as 78, 87 and 90 percent turnover.

6. Mental Health

- Nationally, suicide has become the second leading cause of death among young Americans between the ages of 15 and 24 (Newsweek, September 22, 1975)
- Nevada has the highest suicide rate in the nation. In rural counties the suicide rate is close to three times the national average. (Nevada Association of Social Workers Conference, Judicial College, Reno, October 1975)
- Nevada ranks second among the states in incidence of child abuse

7. Status of Elementary School Counseling

1. In 1966 the National Institute of Mental Health Commission of 16 professional organizations recommended a counselor to pupil ratio in the elementary schools of 1 to 300-600.

2. Nationally -

500 in 1963
12000 in 1976

North Carolina 486 - quadrupled staff since 1972

Florida 782 - more than doubled since 1972

Tennessee 180 - more than doubled since 1972

Maine, New Hampshire, Texas, West Virginia, North Dakota and South Dakota - expanded 50%.

Wisconsin passed a law in 1973 requiring its 425 school districts to provide elementary counselors.

Hawaii in 1975 mandated 53 new elementary counselors to attain a counselor-pupil ratio of 1 to 500.

3. Nevada

Washoe County School District	3
Churchill County School District	3
Lyon County School District	2
Douglas County School District	1

4. Endorsements for elementary school counseling in Nevada

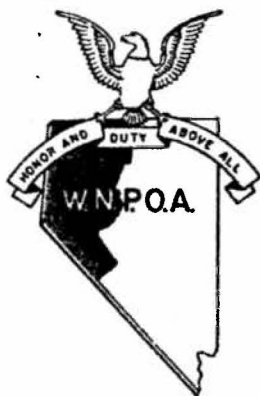
- Nevada State Board of Education
- Nevada State Parent-Teachers Association
- Nevada Personnel and Guidance Association
- Nevada State Education Association
- Washoe County Teachers Association
- Clark County Elementary Principals Association
- Washoe County Elementary Principals - 83%

D. Duties and competencies of elementary school counselors

1. Counseling - individual and group
2. Consultation -
 - (a) with parents, including leadership of parent-study groups
 - (b) with teachers
3. Coordination -
 - (a) with community agencies and
 - (b) other school specialists

E. Research supports the effectiveness of elementary school counseling in:

1. Identifying the need for alleviating the conditions in which students begin falling behind and dropping out by the end of grade 5.
2. Promoting school adjustment and achievement through strengthening family relationships.
3. Helping teachers to understand student behavior and to accept their role in the guidance service
4. Overcoming underachievement
5. Improving interpersonal relationships, peer acceptance, self-esteem, self-concept, personality variables, and general behavior
6. Improving academic achievement and basic academic skills, such as reading, language, and math
7. Reducing school absenteeism



*Western Nevada
Peace Officers Association*

February 23, 1977

Professor Keith Pierce
Counseling and Guidance Department
School of Education
University of Nevada/Reno
Reno, Nevada

Dear Sir:

I am writing to express my strong personal support for your efforts to increase the number of counselors in elementary schools. I just learned of your proposal, and our legislative committee and board of directors have not had an opportunity to consider it. However, I am sure that they will support it for the same reasons I do.

Crime in America is becoming more and more a youthful phenomenon and enterprise. Over half of all serious offenses are committed by those 18 and under. The FBI Uniform Crime Reports continue to reflect numbers of youths arrested that are disproportionately high compared to their percentage of our total population. Youths are also becoming more involved in serious crimes, and are beginning their careers at an earlier age. Approximately 2500 murders were committed by those 18 and under in 1975, the last year for which full statistics are available.

In discussing juvenile delinquency and crime with public school personnel, I am convinced that elementary school counselors can play an active and significant role in juvenile crime prevention. They have a unique opportunity to identify potential youthful offenders and to work with them to prevent illegal activity. Potential criminal orientation can most successfully be repressed in the elementary grades, not in junior or senior high after such behavior has become confirmed. The breakdown in the American family has placed an increased burden on the public schools to provide guidance for our children. Adequate counselors, in addition to classroom teachers, are essential to fulfill this function.

Yours very truly,

Stan Barnhill
President

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

ASSEMBLY BILL 151

February 23, 1977

I am Joyce Woodhouse, representing Nevada's teachers through the Nevada State Education Association. With me is Dr. Jim Shields, Research Director for the NSEA. We appreciate the opportunity to appear before you this afternoon concerning Assembly Bill 151.

The NSEA supports A.B. 151. In May of 1976, the NSEA Delegate Assembly adopted the following resolution as part of our 1977 Legislative Program:

"Educational funding must provide for the employment of supportive personnel, including at least part time counselors for every elementary school. Such personnel must be counted separately from teacher units."

The Bill before this committee today is in every respect compatible with the position of our Association. We endorse it enthusiastically.

Life for today's children is easier in some ways, but much more difficult in many ways than for the children of even two decades ago. Children in elementary school do have problems ~~to~~ adjusting ^{ment} to school; to frequent moves; to divorce; to parental absence due to work or inattention; to parental ignorance of positive child rearing practices; and to choosing among the confusing, divergent, and shifting values in our society.

Ideally, a child's world would provide stability, love, concerned adults, values, and security. They need guidance in ways to cope.

However, in reality the child's world too often provides different and less desirable conditions. The divorce rate is climbing; the child will know several men as daddy or several women as mommy. Inevitably relationships with aunts, uncles, grandparents, and friends are broken. Violence on television every night is a factor. Our highly conflicted society with its working parents and isolation of affection often frustrate the child. The effects of unemployment, inflation, and dissatisfaction with work are felt by the child.

Then, the child's world is more confusing, more threatening, and less supportive than is conducive for healthy development. These social conditions impinge

indirectly on the child from birth through the parents and directly on the child as soon as he can understand TV programs.

Today's child has more things, but today's child needs more help - help which to a great degree could be provided by parents, but which is often missing.

Early intervention of a professional counselor is very likely to be more beneficial to the student than to the same student at a later age. The counselor, working with parents, could attempt to correct damaging patterns of child-parent, child-peer, and other family relationships.

Society needs to invest in the future by providing that help. We say, invest, because the dollar we spend today may save thousands of taxpayer dollars in the future. A counselor who teaches a child appropriate ways to express anger may save that child in adult life from injuring or killing another.

Early intervention by a professional counselor could save some children from futures in juvenile detention or in prison. The Governor has recommended that the Legislature appropriate \$62 million for prison construction and operation and for the parole system. That's \$62 million for a projected population of 1,266 prisoners. That averages over \$24,000 per year per prisoner, not including the costs of courts, of local police and local detention facilities. Nor does the \$24,000 reflect the cost to the criminal's victims or the loss to society of productive earnings. Elementary counseling could save some of these wasted dollars and wasted lives.

Obviously, most children who could benefit from elementary counseling are not going to wind up in the state penitentiary unless they receive counseling. Nor do we believe that counseling will help every pre-delinquent child. For the average child, counseling could provide a professionally trained listener, a person who could recognize the potentials of the child and could work with the teachers and parents to bring the resources to the child to stimulate maximum development.

We're asking Nevada to invest about \$7.50 for every elementary student next year and more in the future. Ultimately, you would be spending about 3% of the basic school support funds for elementary counselors. This seems to us to be a very reasonable investment in a child's future and in the future of our society.

We are asking you to establish a new and much-needed program. As teachers, we know that present resources in Nevada schools are spread very thin. Nevada has more pupils per teacher than any other state in the Union save one. Despite the fact that Nevadans enjoy more per capita income than citizens of 42 other states, we spend less on public schools per pupil than do the citizens of 29 states. There are only 6 states which spend a lower percentage of personal income on public schools than does Nevada.

Given these figures, it is easy to see that we are concerned that the support for elementary counseling services not come at the expense of current programs. We support the funding concept incorporated in A.B. 151. We believe that elementary counselors should not be counted as a teacher unit and that funding should be based upon the number of counseling units operating.

Should the Legislature apportion counseling units by county, we would recommend that the Bill incorporate a procedure whereby any unused counseling units could be reallocated (see NRS 387 (2)(c) language on reallocation of special education units).

In summary, we support A.B. 151. However, we do not want a new program set up unless new monies are appropriated. Existing educational programs must not be jeopardized.

We thank you for your time and kind attention.

TO: Mr. Chairman and Committee Members

FROM: Ms. Myrna Macdonald, Carson City Junior High School Counselor, Business Woman, Active Soroptimist Member, Presenter-U.S. Commissioner's Conference on Career Education, Presenter-National School Boards Assn. Conference on Career Education. Honorary Consultant to the U.S. Office of Career Education. (other Professional Affiliations not mentioned) Registered Lobbyist Nevada Personnel and Guidance Assn.

THE ROLE OF THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COUNSELOR IN CAREER EDUCATION

The import of the Elementary School Counselor in developing comprehensive Career Education Programs within a school district can be invaluable.

In summary of recent research

"A counselor-consultant should be available to aid classroom teachers...We have found that many teachers were more comfortable dealing with students feelings when counselors are either in the school building or team teaching units..."¹

1. Schmidt, Jerry A. Elementary School Guidance Counselor
December 1976

How do feelings relate to career development? A Career Guidance Program designed to increase the pupils' self-concept is probably the single greatest step that can be taken. A positive feeling of self, awareness of our strengths, values clarification and goal setting pave the way for later career exploration. With this type of a foundation, we might flounder less thru trial and error career exploration experiences.

I have been teaching a career development unit in the 7th and 8th grades. The responses are over-whelmingly positive.

(examples cited)

STATEMENT OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Assembly Committee on Education
February 23, 1977, Room 214
3:00 P.M.

A. B. 151 -- Establishes elementary school counseling programs and makes appropriation to staff such programs.

The specific provisions of A. B. 151 were not available for the State Board of Education to review at its regular meeting held January 19, 1977. Consequently, the State Board postponed taking a position on the bill until the provisions became known and consideration could be given at its February 25, 1977 meeting.

In February, 1976 the State Board acted on a policy for responding to the many requests for special treatment of subject areas or the addition of special personnel. The policy reflects (1) the statutory responsibility given to the State Board to prescribe courses of study and to provide a system of financial support that will help insure equal educational opportunities for all pupils, and (2) the responsibility placed on the local school district trustees to organize, staff, operate and pay for schools in accordance with priorities determined locally. The policy of the State Board in part states, "When. . .there is need to reinforce, encourage or express concern relating to state or national issues of educational importance, the State Board will, from time to time, adopt position statements to emphasize the need to give greater attention in the curriculum to these issues as is appropriate."

At the same meeting, on the subject of elementary counseling, the State Board held "that the educational progress of elementary students in Nevada can be enhanced through increased emphasis upon counseling services at the elementary level. . ." The Board, continuing, ". . .encourages school officials to give attention to methods of increasing such service in elementary schools."

The State Board and the State Department can see the value in counseling services for the elementary schools, but do not have a position on A. B. 151 at this time.

JPC:maj
2-23-77