

MEMBERS PRESENT

Chairman Vergiels
Vice Chairman Craddock
Mr. Banner
Mrs. Hayes
Mrs. Wagner
Mrs. Westall
Mr. Stewart
Mr. Malone
Mr. Webb

GUESTS PRESENT

See Guest List attached

Chairman Vergiels called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

The Chairman called on Assemblyman Nick Horn to explain the bills which would be heard by the committee. Mr. Horn stated that all of the bills to be considered on this date came out of the Pupil Achievement Subcommittee which was chaired by Senator Richard Bryan. The Subcommittee was composed of senators and assemblymen, school teachers, administrators and other ex-officio members, including members of the State School Board. They had exhaustive hearings in many locations of the state, and it basically came down to one fundamental concept, that of following the tide of going back to the basics. The committee and subcommittee believed that the approach is to move back to basic reading, writing and arithmetic. He felt that the bills should have little difficulty in the committee if the committee felt that this approach should be followed, but might have some difficulty if the members of the committee felt that the legislature should not get involved in dictating the policy or getting involved in curriculum.

ASSEMBLY CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 1

Assemblyman Horn explained that A.C.R. 1 requests that school districts gather and analyze information on high school seniors and the way they use their time during the school day. One of the things they discovered is that the number of credits it takes to graduate is so structured that if you take the set number during the freshman through junior years, then the senior year you could take virtually one or two classes and have the rest of the day free. This Resolution is not mandating by law, it is simply requesting that the school districts gather and analyze this information for a time study as to how students utilize their time and whether or not they are getting a full years education their senior year. Other things that come into play are whether or not they are working, taking extra-curricular activities, etc. This study would help the legislature and the State Department of Education

to understand and evaluate the activities in order to achieve a high rate of achievement.

Marvin Moss, Administrative Assistant for Curriculum in the Washoe County School District, spoke in favor of A.C.R. 1. He feels that it is a very positive step and should be taken by the State Department of Education and the school districts in the state. The legislative subcommittee working on this matter received a great deal of information from his district and they also learned a great deal from the committee.

Augie Orci, Director of Secondary Curriculum for the Clark County School District, stated that they are not opposed to or in favor of A.C.R. 1. In Clark County they are not opposed to seniors taking six classes. On January 18, the Secondary Education Division went to their Board asking to increase their graduation requirements and to adopt certain curriculum changes, one of which is asking their Board to support them in requiring all juniors to take six classes and requiring all seniors to take four, which would create a situation where students would be taking 22 credits as opposed to the current 19 required by the state for graduation. This is a first step because the effect of doing this could be something they are not prepared to handle immediately. Such as when minimum competency comes into play, the numbers of students that may have to have additional classes for mathematics and reading at this point are not predictable, so they would like to study the possible effect before starting this program. In Clark County, approximately 3700 of 5000 seniors are already enrolled in 4, 5 or 6 classes and approximately 1400 are enrolled in 1, 2 or 3 classes. The immediate effect of their proposal to the Board to be acted on February 22, will be to move 1400 students into at least a four period day. One effect might be that if a student has to stay after lunch, he may stay more than he would have if he hadn't had to come back after lunch. Regarding the part of the bill having to do with the time that students are out of school, in the last year or two, the Clark County School District has moved to have as many extra-curricular activities as possible outside the normal school day. These have been well attended. He feels that Clark County is already acting on much of what is contained in A.C.R. 1.

Mr. Malone asked what would be accomplished by requiring seniors to take the expanded program. Mr. Orci said that that is what they are going to try and find out with the program.

Mr. Malone asked by they instituted this college type program in the first place, of letting the seniors have less requirements in their senior year. Mr. Orci did not have that information. Mr. Malone felt that it might be for college and job preparation. Mr. Orci said that some students are in work-study programs.

Marvin Moss stated that they started to do away with study halls which caused students to take a full six period day, and by the

time they completed their junior year they were at a point where they didn't have to have a full day and many chose to work.

ASSEMBLY BILL 128

Assemblyman Bill Brady stated that he introduced this bill partly by request and partly from experience. Basically, this bill is directing the Superintendent of Public Instruction to develop and devise standards in the areas of reading, writing, mathematics, social studies and sciences.

To do this, they would be calling on administrators, teachers and people in various areas to help in developing these standards. They would be reviewed every year to determine the extent to which they are being followed in each district. It is to try and lift the standards and quality of education.

Mr. Vergiels said that, according to Page 2 of the bill, it is not a mandatory thing, in his opinion. Mr. Brady said that that is the way it appears to him.

Assemblyman Horn said that, basically, the idea of A.B. 128 is taking the management by objectives approach. The objective of A.B. 128 is to develop and revise standards with the end result being levels of excellence in the three Rs, social studies and sciences. It has to be decided if it is attainable, feasible and realistic, and then establish a time frame. It is not mandatory. The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall make this standard available to all of the school districts to follow it or exceed it if they so desire. Hopefully, there would be some evaluation from year to year as to what extent they followed it. That would provide some insight in terms of how well they are meeting the objective, and the objective is excellence.

Mr. Craddock asked Mr. Horn if he envisions this as entailing some kind of standard reporting forms from the State Department of Education. Mr. Horn said that, hopefully, the Department could come up with something very simple. It is not designed to be complicated.

Mr. Stewart asked if the school districts have some kind of similar standards. Mr. Horn answered that they found that until A.B. 400 of the last session of the Legislature, there was no real measure of competency levels, and A.B. 400 instituted testing proficiency examinations and competency based testing in the third, sixth, ninth and twelfth grades.

Linda Terry, representing the Carson City School Board, spoke from a prepared statement, a copy of which is attached hereto and marked Exhibit A. She also left a copy of testimony from Mrs. Gould, who could not be here on this date, a copy of which is attached hereto and marked Exhibit B. Her testimony was based on her presumption that A.B. 128 was mandatory, which is not the case. The bill states

that the State shall make available to the school district copies of all standards, but it does not say that the district has to use them. Mr. Horn said that it was not the intent of the subcommittee to force the district to use them. If the school districts have a better standard, they should follow it.

Mr. Sanders, Superintendent of Public Instruction, reinforced the position that it would be optional as to the extent that the standards are followed. That seems to be the language, to imply that there is a choice as to whether or not the district would follow the standards

Mr. Horn said he would work with the bill drafter on an amendment to clarify this point to the extent that there would be no misunderstanding.

Mr. Orci said that the Clark County School district had the same impression that the standards would be mandatory.

George Earnhart, Vice President of the State Board of Education, said that they have not taken a position on the matter, but they don't have any trouble with the bill because the Board is under the understanding that it is not mandatory.

Mr. Stewart asked if the state does not already have certain standards. Mr. Earnhart said that they do, and read a prepared statement to that effect, a copy of which is attached hereto and marked Exhibit C.

Mr. Horn said that this also provides some direction that was void in the statutes.

ASSEMBLY BILL 37

Assemblyman Horn stated that A.B. 37 is a different story in that it takes a bold step. The subcommittee spent a good amount of time directed toward this one basic topic area dealing with the elementary schools and then moved into the middle schools or junior highs. It was the feeling of the subcommittee that these younger years were the years when the curriculum should be structured. That electives should be held to a minimum and that once the students get into the high schools, then they can broaden the scope and choose basic areas that they would want to pursue. A course of study should be designed for use in the elementary and middle school years with emphasis on the basics. This bill came as a direct result of the testimony heard by the subcommittee.

Mr. Craddock pointed out that the terminology of the bill would not necessarily fit all the schools as some districts have middle schools which only go through the eighth grade while others have junior high schools which go through the ninth grade and some combine junior high and high schools. Should this be terminated

at the eighth or ninth grades? Mr. Horn said there was some trouble on this count so it was purposely left broad to cover the situation and could be decided by the committee. There could be a conflict between A.B. 128 and A.B. 37 depending on the approach of the committee. Mr. Horn suggested designing a course of study which would only go through the eighth grade, which would solve the problem.

Mr. Malone asked if the students in the state were not already regulated as to how many basics and electives they could take. Mr. Horn replied that there were a variety of schools doing a variety of different things. Mr. Malone asked who would decide what the minimum would be. Mr. Horn answered that the State Board of Education would have the basic responsibility. This would become enabling legislation to that end.

Mrs. Westall asked if this would do away with such courses where the students study one subject for six weeks and then another one to find out what they like. Mr. Horn replied that this would be up to the State Board of Education. The subcommittee heard testimony regarding these types of courses and how they could fit in much more harmoniously in high schools prior to the time that the students are going to exit and look for a career rather than in the basic time. The subcommittee, after hearing testimony, felt that there was too much latitude and they would like to see a structured program. Mrs. Westall felt that the younger age was an ideal one to be exposed to different areas.

Mr. Malone was concerned about the minimum because it does not provide for the academically talented students. It would not leave enough time for them to expand and take the electives they need for their talents. That would be drastic for a student of this sort. Mr. Horn said that the Department should develop a program that would take care of this area. The problem is now that students are not achieving and are getting out of high school without being able to read beyond a grade school level. There was a decline and it is getting worse.

Mr. Malone felt that there should not be too rigid a restriction on electives by overburdening students with requirements, especially for the academically talented.

Mrs. Terry, of the Carson City School Board, said that the Board feels that they are aware of the problems, but they feel that they are the elected people in their city to represent education and make decisions. Carson City has an excellent reputation in education and has good competency tests for their children and gives them a varied education in other fields such as physical education, music, art, etc. They feel that the board at the local level has a much better opportunity to meet the needs of the students. They are concerned about the autonomy of the school boards. They are strongly opposed to A.B. 37, which would mandate what they could teach. A.B. 128, in their opinion, would not be so bad.

She feels that the school boards should be able to decide what is minimum.

Mr. Horn asked if the people in office would feel more comfortable if Subsection 2 were deleted, which states that the State Board of Education shall cause to enforce the courses, and just leave in that the State Board shall develop the curriculum and change it to the seventh and eighth grades.

Mary Lou Moser, President of the Nevada Parent Teacher Association, presented a prepared statement, a copy of which is attached hereto and marked Exhibit D. The P.T.A. strongly opposes A.B. 37.

Mr. Craddock asked what Mrs. Moser perceives as the duties and responsibilities of the State Board and the Department of Education.

Mrs. Moser said those duties and responsibilities would be to serve as consultants and to prepare guidelines that the districts could follow, but not mandate specifically in the area of curriculum. She felt that they give a tremendous service to the state, particularly to the smaller rural districts.

John Hawkins, representing the School Boards Trustees Association, concurred with Mrs. Terry and Mrs. Moser's comments with regard to A.B. 37, and giving guidelines to the local school districts regarding curriculum rather than mandating. He would favor A.B. 128.

Marvin Moss said that he would like to see A.B. 400 given a chance to work and see if the standards will rise as a result of the competency testing.

Augue Orci spoke in opposition to courses of study that are enforced by the state. One opposition would be that if the course of study is so specific, they could not do the revision that is necessary for the local schools, and that would make it very difficult for them to operate. Also, the enforcement by the state would be a problem because over the last several years they have tried to develop a system of accountability for education beginning in the elementary grades and extending through senior high school, which goes along with management by objectives, as set forth by Mr. Horn. They are able to determine for themselves how well they are meeting their own standards. They are not opposed to a course of study because they already have that in the junior high schools in a general document. If the state comes out with a course of study that is too specific, they would have problems with that because they would not be able to adjust to it. They have gone beyond their course of study to what they call "program content statements", which takes general statements in the course of study to very specific statements in all the curriculum areas. An example of that this year is that all seventh graders were required to take reading, which caused a problem as it was part of the language arts coming from the course of study. They had to divorce the two and have a language arts stressing composition in writing and another document

for reading because they placed that much emphasis on it. They adjusted to that in two or three weeks, whereas if they had had to go to the State Department for a change they might not have been able to make that particular change. They have also developed programs designed to help students in the skills where they are lacking. They have developed minimum competency standards and would like to see how this will work. Mr. Orci left copies of their Course of Study and Program Content Statements bulletins for each member of the committee.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Assembly Concurrent Resolution 1

Mr. Webb moved to Indefinitely Postpone A.C.R. 1, seconded by Mr. Stewart. Mr. Webb did not feel that the state level should dictate or run the show. The subcommittee research showed the basic concerns of the Legislature, and that should be enough to show the local school districts what those concerns are and they could take it from there.

The Motion did not carry. Those voting against the motion were: Mrs. Hayes, Mr. Craddock, Mr. Banner, Mrs. Westall and Mr. Malone.

Mr. Craddock moved Do Pass on A.C.R. 1, seconded by Mrs. Hayes. The motion carried with Mr. Webb and Mr. Stewart voting No.

Assembly Bill 128 and Assembly Bill 37

Chairman Vergiels said that A.B. 128 would be held for an amendment to be drafted by Mr. Horn, and that A.B. 37 would be held for action at a later date if the committee so desired.

Chairman Vergiels referred to an incident in the Assembly whereby a committee report was turned around on the floor. The Senate has a standing rule which states that if you are going to do other than what you have done in the committee that you inform the committee chairman and other members just out of decorum so that they know that you have reversed your position so that they don't make fools of themselves on the floor. This committee has an agreement that the members will not do this to each other on the floor under any circumstances. Because of what happened in this instance, if that occurs again, as Chairman he would bring it out and the rest of the committee would also help the one who is reporting the bill out as it was to be done originally. To facilitate this, a book will be made up for each member of the committee containing the floor statements so anyone could step in and take over to make sure the bill is explained on the floor. There will always be an opportunity for a minority report. He asked that if anyone changes their mind and will vote differently on the floor than they did in committee, that they let the chairman know so credibility of the other members of the committee will not be questioned. If it looks like a bill is in trouble, have it re-referred back to committee.

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Vergiels at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Ruth Olguin
Committee Secretary



My name is Linda Terry. I am a member of the Carson City Board of School Trustees and have been authorized to speak for the Board in regard to the bills which are under consideration today.

The members of the Board of School Trustees are the elected representative of each political subdivision. As such, they are....."given such reasonable and necessary power, not conflicting with the constitution and the laws of the State of Nevada.....to promote the welfare of school children, including the establishment and operation of schools and classes deemed reasonable and necessary." (NRS 386.350)

Under the direction of the board of School Trustees, the Carson City School District has established an excellent system of education in which substantial attention has been given to the basic skills at all grade levels without neglecting opportunities for student growth in the arts, physical education, career exploration, and other special interest areas. The effectiveness of these efforts are emphasized by student achievement test scores and the success of graduates in post-secondary activities.

It is important to note that Board members on the local level recognized local needs and make the necessary adjustments far in advance of any national or statewide effort.

We are very much concerned about the continuing deterioration of local autonomy in the field of education. Both the federal and state governments are continually making inroads in areas that previously had been local responsibility. We feel that the amendments proposed in AB.128 and AB.37 would result in increased loss of local autonomy, and that local school boards are much better qualified to respond to local needs in regard to courses of study and standards of curriculum.

The Carson City Board of School Trustees wishes to go on record in opposition to any legislation which would result in a loss of local autonomy, and in particular to AB.128 and AB.37.

Thank you

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Testimony of Mrs. Arthur Gould against AB 37

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee:

As a concerned citizen and parent I wish to testify against AB 37. I agree with the idea of constructing a new curriculum for middle schools and junior high schools. In fact it is most necessary and long over-due. However, I strongly disagree with the method proposed in this bill. I believe it would be costly to effect, and is vague in terms of inter-facing with both elementary and high school curriculum.

In fact AB 37 seems to be somewhat Orwellian in nature, and I would remind this Committee that 1984 is still five years into the future.

AB 37 refers to basic subject areas of reading, writing, math, social studies, and science, with a minimum of electives? There is no definition for electives or solids ... if American History is a solid, is World History to be an elective? For that matter what is considered to be an elective? Art, music, study of a foreign language? How does this bill inter-act with other parts of the Education Code?

In any planning for curriculum change there must be both local control and local input. Also, it is a sad commentary that the academically talented student is defined in the NRS as handicapped, without make it more difficult to plan advanced classes for these students.

I must commend both Assemblymen Horn and Vergiels for their concern, but in this form, I cannot support this bill.

STATEMENT OF
NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
TO THE
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

February 8, 1978
3:00 P.M., Room 214

A. B. 128 Requires development of state standards for public school curriculum in basic subject areas.

Mr. Chairman and Committee members:

The Department of Education would like to state for the record the following in reference to A. B. 128 which is now before this Committee.

1. The Department of Education has designated members of the staff with the responsibility for developing and revising the courses of study which include the standards in the basics.

These designated individuals are staff in the Division of Curriculum and Instruction. The Division does have in its work plan the revision and update of the courses of study for this next year.

2. The Department of Education has produced as required by Nevada Revised Statutes, courses of study which include standards for the basic subject areas.
3. The existing courses of study were developed with the use of advisory groups appointed by the State Board and the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
4. The Department does make available the courses of study which include the standards to all schools, and the Department does workshops for the courses of study for all teachers and administrators when requested by the districts.



Nevada Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

Testimony presented to the Assembly Education Committee, February 8, 1979, regarding AB-37, prescribing junior high school and middle school curriculums.

Chairman Vergiels and committee members. I am Mary Lou Moser, President of the Nevada Parent Teacher Association.

The Nevada Parent Teacher Association believes that the citizens of this state must have local control of their schools, must retain elected school boards and State Board of Education, and must be allowed the control and responsibility for what is to be prescribed in the courses of study for the children within their own district.

We do, therefore, strongly oppose AB-37 on the basis that it is another erosion of local control of the schools of this state.

It is agreed by many that changes need to be made in the curriculum of some of our junior high and/or middle schools, We need to ensure the basic subject areas are fully covered with possibly fewer electives available to students. We submit that these changes can best be addressed through a process of input from district personnel, teachers, administrators, students and parents representing a cross-section of the population within that district, in consultation with the State Department of Education as presently prescribed by statute.

You and I discuss frequently the erosion of control over our decisions by the federal government. AB-37 is in the same category, only with state control. We in the PTA ask that you deny passage of this bill at this time.

Those persons dealing with education decision-making have, in the past, responded to requests to needed changes. They will, I'm certain, consider the introduction of bill AB-37 as a mandate to begin the

change process which will reflect the wishes of the citizens they serve.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear here before you today.