

VisionNet Quality Education Videoconference
January 13, 2005
Regarding Senate Bill 152

Introduction

- Senator Tester welcomed all the participating schools and acknowledged that this was a first in legislative history. Senator Tester explained that each site would have five minutes to offer comments, with additional time allotted after each site had a chance to comment.
- Senator Ryan welcomed all of the participating sites. Senator Ryan introduced Senator Story (Senator Black had not yet arrived). Senator Ryan said the purpose of this videoconference was to allow participants not able to travel to Helena, an opportunity to participate in the process of defining quality education.

IN ATTENDANCE at Helena site:

- Senator Tester
- Senator Ryan
- Senator Black
- Senator Story
- Senate Majority and Minority staff members
- VisionNet Staff
- Media Staff

Participating Locations:

2. Browning

- Gloria Wilkinson, assistant principal of Browning Public School, commented that the Legislature needs to focus on the unique qualities of communities in Montana. She emphasized that the definition must allow for the integration of American Indian cultures and Indian languages as part of quality education.
- Stan Juneau, educator, wants to see more professional development of teaching staff. He also wants to see the definition regarding the implementation of the "Indian Education for All" Act.
- Lori Falcon, parent, commented that she would like to see more materials that teach cultural "responsiveness" to all teachers, both Indian and non-Indian. She feels that a quality education is not necessarily reflected in a test. Ms. Falcon wants more teachers to believe that Indian students can succeed, and a) revitalization of Tribal languages b) respect for local schools c) high expectations, and c) competitive compensation to draw the best and brightest teachers.
- Bob Gervais, school board member, commented that it is hard to recruit and retain teachers with the ability to teach "Indian Education for All." Additionally, social problems such as dropout rates and overcrowding need to be addressed.

3. Chinook

- Jay Eslick, superintendent of the Chinook School System, wants more communication regarding amendments on SB152. Mr. Eslick showed support for a framework that allows for flexibility with the unique situations and problems that school systems face.
- Delores Plumage, educator and commissioner for Blaine County, expressed concern for schools such as Harlem and Hayes-Lodge Pole regarding the definition of quality education. She requested consideration for American Indian values and culture into the school system. She also wants to see a stronger link between the Tribal Governments and the school systems.
- Julia Doney, Fort Belknap Tribal Council, commented that teachers, parents and the community need to make a personal investment in students' education.

4. Froid

- Rodger Britton, superintendent/principal of Froid K-12, was concerned about the cost of "quality education" to the districts and the state. He wants mandates to be funded. He also wants the Legislature to understand the cost of providing just basic classes. He is upset that the Legislature is going through the process of defining quality, as he feels it is redundant. Mr. Britton wants schools to have greater ability in funding special education programs. He also wants the budget caps lifted, so that citizens in the district can fund programs for their students. He is upset over the No Child Left Behind Act. He likes state standards and feels they are needed, but wants to be able to meet them, which means more funding.

5. Glasgow

- Glen Hageman, superintendent of schools, feels that SB152 is a "nice basic framework." He wants to see the effects the definition will have on the general fund. He awaits a funding formula to discuss later, and wants more local control of schools.

6. Hardin

- Participants expressed excitement for using ITV more.
- The Principal of Hardin, Keith Campbell, would like to see a more comprehensive bill instead of a "piecemeal" approach.
- Clarice Denny, of the Hardin school board, wants to make sure SB152 includes diversity that is reflective of our state, and wants "Indian Education for All" implemented. She would like to see the integration of American Indian social and cultural values into the school system.

7. Opheim:

- Leroy Nelson, secondary school teacher, wants funding in order to stay fully staffed. He also wants caps lifted on budgets to allow for community decisions regarding education, with the ability to run mill levies more frequently. Lastly, he requested relief for the first year of the biennium, with needed changes implemented in the second year.

8. Phillipsburg:

- Mike Cutler, superintendent and principal, commented that he wants to allow for more elective classes, and that teachers should be paid what they are worth. He pointed out

that there was more money spent on corrections, versus education last year and that “if we don’t pay for education now, we will pay for it later in corrections.” Mr. Cutler wants to see the budget caps left on, to alleviate additional pressure on local districts. He feels that it is the obligation of the state and federal entities to fund education. He also wants the resources to meet the needs of his students, and wants an increase in pay for teachers—as they have not had an increase in five years. Mr. Cutler also feels that it is important to keep state standards, but those standards have to be supported with adequate funding.

9. Power:

- Jon Konen, principal, expressed desire for a pay increase for teachers, rather than just the proposed \$1000. Mr. Konen also feels that more emphasis on the Distance Learning Programs could provide for more electives. He also wants more budget authority to allow for teacher raises and professional development, and lastly Mr. Konen requested a plan for schools with old infrastructures.

10. Rapelje:

- Jerry Thompson, principal, is for distance education, but said that it should not replace a teacher. He wanted to see a long-term plan with a permanent fix.

11. St. Regis:

- Superior Superintendent Bill Woodford commented that more electives are needed. He wants to see the dismissal of ANB funding, and immediate relief. In St. Regis they are experiencing a brain drain of teachers, and feels better pay and better benefits, including insurance, to retain teachers. Mr. Woodford wants mandates funded, and expressed that there are good models in place, so we should not reinvent the wheel. Additionally, he would like to see if per-pupil funding should be measured differently for elementary and secondary levels due to the cost differentiation at each level.

NOTES:

Arlee

- Due to inclement weather conditions, Arlee Schools were cancelled on 1/13/04. The school’s Technology Coordinator Michelle Wheeler was present to tape the event, but had no comment.

Sunburst

- Due to inclement weather conditions, Sunburst Schools were cancelled on 1/13/05.

Eureka

- Site did not have participants due to technical scheduling problems.

WEB SUPPORT:

- A link to the archived webcast of the quality education videoconference can be found at:
www.opi.state.mt.us/qualityEd/
- Public questions and/or comments can be directed to qualityeducation@mt.gov