

MINUTES

**MONTANA SENATE
52nd LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

Call to Order: By SENATOR CHET BLAYLOCK, on January 28, 1991, at
1:00 P. M.,

ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Chet Blaylock, Chairman (D)
Harry Fritz, Vice Chairman (D)
Bill Farrell (R)
H.W. Hammond (R)
Dennis Nathe (R)
Dick Pinsoneault (D)
Mignon Waterman (D)
Bill Yellowtail (D)

Members Excused: Robert Brown (R)

Staff Present: Eddy McClure (Legislative Council).

Please Note: These are summary minutes. Testimony and
discussion are paraphrased and condensed.

HEARING ON SB 141

Presentation and Opening Statement by Sponsor:

SENATOR MIGNON WATERMAN, House District 22, presented SB 141 in which she discussed the concerns in the last few years that increasing requirements are being placed on small rural districts to provide services and programs that they may not have enough students or funds to provide. SB 141 would allow special education cooperatives that have worked successfully in the areas of special services to become all purpose coops to provide any services that those districts deem necessary; i.e., curriculum planning, gifted and talented, music, physical education--any programs that they would like to offer. They can agree to operate services in cooperation with one another. They work out the funding and arrangements, duration of time period. Some activities might just be one year; others might be on going.

SENATOR WATERMAN said the bill requires that that established special education cooperatives continue their existing structure. She said that they want to expand services but make certain that any existing ones continue. She said this would be a positive way to provide services to small districts.

Proponents' Testimony:

GAIL GRAY, Office of Public Instruction
MICHAEL IKARD, Central Mt Special Education Cooperatives
KELLY EVANS, Mt Educational Cooperatives and MCASE
WAYNE BUCHANAN, Board of Public Education
BOB ANDERSON, Mt School Board Association
CHIP ERDMAN, Mt Rural Education Association
ERIC FEAVER, Mt School Association
KAY MCKENNA, Mt Association of County Superintendents
KARL ROOSA, Powell County Schools
VERN BARKELL, Yellowstone West Cooperatives
JESS LONG, SAM

See attached exhibits in support of SB 141.

Closing by Sponsor:

SENATOR WATERMAN thanked the proponents for their testimony. She urged the committee to vote yes to SB 141.

HEARING ON SB 127

Presentation and Opening Statement by Sponsor:

SENATOR CECIL WEEDING, House District 14, presented SB 127 which calls for consolidation of the Office of County Superintendent of Schools with another elected county office.

He said that there are about 14 counties in the state of Montana that have currently consolidated offices.

Under existing law, in order to consolidate the office, it is necessary to contract for the statutory duties from a neighboring county superintendent of Schools as outlined in the bill under 20-3-207 and 20-3-210. This bill would enable the county commissioners to designate the office as part time with office hours on an 8-5 basis. With these office hours it would not be necessary to have an elected official there full time.

Proponents' Testimony:

BETTY LUND, Clerk and Recorder, Ravalli County. Also serves as County Superintendent of Schools. Office has been consolidated since 1981 because of small number of schools within the county and because the county could not afford a full time person. She urged support of SB 127 which would allow county commissioners to have this as an elected part time office and the person doing the duties of superintendent would be accountable to the people. As County Clerk and Recorder, she stated that she hires someone to do the work of superintendent. She said that right now the hired person has taken a leave from work so she is

doing the work of superintendent. She said that she is not a teacher and does not feel qualified to fill this position.

Opponents' Testimony:

The following opponents testified against SB 127: In summary, they said that they felt that the Office of County Superintendent of Schools was vital and necessary to the school system and should remain a full time position. It was expressed that counties might take the opportunity under this law to cut eh position to half time because of budget problems when a full time person might be needed by the school district. It was also expressed that data would be incomplete, inaccurate or not provided in a timely manner and that there would be no link between teachers and elected officials.

KAY MCKENNA, MCSS
CHIP ERDMAN, MREA
JESS LONG, SAM
BOB ANDERSON, MSBA
KARL ROOSA, PCSS
GAIL GRAY, OPI

Closing by Sponsor:

SENATOR WEEDING said that he felt that county commissioners had no intent of diminishing the efforts toward schools; in fact, he thought that they were intending to develop a better schools system. He said that three of his counties have now combined the superintendent's office although none of the persons in those positions may be qualified as far as education is concerned. He said that he thought it would be better to have someone with proper qualifications although on a part time basis. He felt this is a local government issue based on the scope of duties to be performed under those two sections of law. If it is determined by local officials that duties of these two offices or any other offices can be performed under the law, then that option ought to be available to the local elected officials.

HEARING ON SB 143

Presentation and Opening Statement by Sponsor:

SENATOR CECIL WEEDING, District 14, presented SB 143 which would allow school boards to adopt less than a five day school week. Bill was requested by small schools. It involves some families who drive long distances with primary school children and they say it would be much to their desire to eliminate one day of school each week in order to save time and money.

This program has been accomplished successfully and studied in other states; namely, Colorado, Wyoming and New Mexico. (They

have had this program for about ten years and more with all sizes of school population involved and have concluded that the change has had no academic effect on students) This bill simply gives the school board the option to make the change if so desired. The school board would need to have a public hearing before the change could be made.

Proponents' Testimony:

In summary proponents felt that a less than five day week program for schools may be necessary in order to save time, money and transportation costs. The following persons testified:

WAYNE BUCHANAN
CHIP ERDMAN
BOB ANDERSON
JESS LONG
KAY MCKENNA
ERIC FEAVER

Opponents' Testimony:

KARL ROOSA testified that a four day week placed too much stress on children. He felt if SB 143 passes, it should be amended in order for children not to be coming to school and going home in dark hours of the day.

Closing by Sponsor:

SENATOR WEEDING thanked the proponents. He thinks not all school districts would be interested in the proposed four day week but it could be a valuable asset to some communities and it would give them the option. He said that he would have no problem with amendments to the bill and thought that some more work could be done on the bill before the committee voted.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment At: 3:00 P. M.,



SENATOR CHET BLAYLOCK, Chairman



BETSY CLARK, Secretary

CB/bc

No exhibits were transmitted with the minutes.

Senate COMMITTEE ON Education

VISITORS' REGISTER

NAME	REPRESENTING	BILL #	Check One	
			Support	Oppose
Gordon Morris	MALCO	SB127	✓	
Betty T. Lund	Pavalli Co. Dept. of School	SB127	✓	
Michael J. Shand	Cent Mt Sp Ed Co-op	SB 141	✓	
Kay McKenna	MACEE	SB 141	✓	
Rellen Evans	S.W.M.T. Ed Coop + MCASE	SB 141	✓	
KARL ROOSA	POWELL CO. SCHOOLS	SB 141 127	✓	
Jim [Signature]	MSA	141 143	✓	
Vern Barkell	Yellowstone West Coop	SB141	✓	
Jail Jay	WPS	141	✓	
Wayne Buchanan	BPE	143 141	✓	
W. W. Kay	SAM	143 147	✓	
Bob Anderson	MSBA	141	✓	
CHIP ERDMAN	MREA	141	✓	AS AMENDED
CHIP ERDMAN	MREA	143 127	✓	✓
Kay McKenna	MACEE	127		✓
Jail Jay	WPS	127		✓
Bob Anderson	MSBA	127		✓
Kay McKenna		143	✓	
W. W. Kay	S.A.M.	127		✓
Karl Roosa	POWELL CO-SCHOOLS	143		✓

(Please leave prepared statement with Secretary)