

14 March 91

Tom:

You asked about the essentials of the C/S provision of HF 350. Here's a memo that may help.

Who else, if anyone else, should get it at this point?

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Pete and I decided Joe should be invited. But I ran into a little difference in concept and objectives when I called him. Specifically, about who to include on the 22nd.

Joe is thinking and talking confrontational re: the Federation, for this meeting. ("They have to understand they'll be going against what some of their own members want", etc.)

I told him I wasn't persuaded it's a winner to bring in teachers to argue against their leadership. And I suggested that may not be the tone you'd be inclined to take . . . figuring that the meeting will open basically with your decision last August to put the group together, with what it discussed and decided, etc.

Joe may call you. I suspect he'll be guided by your advice.

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Carol Ericson will be helpful in a couple of ways behind the scenes.

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Jim Walker will be there. Ruth Anne is out of the city all week.

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I'd gotten some help last summer from the folks in the co-op department at Doherty, Rumble & Butler . . . about whether the co-op law would work, for a group of teachers wanting to form a school.

I called over there today, saying I'd like to bring over a copy of the bill, with that provision in it.

I got a call back from Dan Mott, for heaven's sake. He works in the co-op department there. I told him a bit about what's under way, and about your involvement. He promised to look at the bill and to let us know what he thinks. Maybe also how he could be helpful.

The 'Charter School' provisions of HF 350

1. This is a modified version of a bill first drafted, apparently, late in the 1990 session for use in the event the charter schools idea became a topic of serious discussion in conference.
2. Treat what follows as tentative. I will be talking with staff next week, and that may answer some of what now look like questions.
3. Essentially, it appears, the bill would let a variety of sponsors start up a new school, if the school came up with some good idea about learning that nobody else had thought of, and so long as their school complies with all the laws and rules that existing schools have to comply with.
4. It seems to be fairly restrictive. The school must be located within the area of the chartering organization. The state board is not an eligible chartering organizing. The "courses of study" must meet or exceed "applicable educational standards" for similar courses in the district in which the school is located unless the state board waives a rule. Each type of board may grant a maximum of two charters. (There are four types: local district, education district, intermediate district, joint powers board.)

The group proposing to start a school must form a "team". The team must include "public educators", parents and community residents. (This carries forward the "team" notion that the MSBA put into the law in 1987 as its solution to the site-management discussion, and which appears again in Sec. 15, where HF 350 mandates the creation of a "site-management team" to which the local board "may delegate any of its powers or duties".)

Also, Subd. 14 contains a list of other things the governing body of the school must do; which further imply and require a conventional school operating in the conventional way. It must establish arrangements for "use of textbooks, computers, libraries and media centers; assignments of teachers, aides, clerical staff; career development and in-service activities and "other arrangements and procedures determined by the local board to be necessary . . ."

There is to be an advisory committee appointed jointly, it appears, by the school and the local board and made up of two teachers, three "employees of the entity governed by the local board" and two parents. The local board may amend or revoke a charter after consulting just with this advisory committee.

Pupils attending are to be counted as resident in the district in which the charter school is located. The money would go to that district, which would turn over "at least 85% of the basic revenue" to the school.

Finally: The governing body (of the school) "is governed by law applicable to independent school districts."

5. Some questions our working group covered are unclear in this bill, and may not have been addressed. Nothing says what legal form the organization^{allow} proposing the school would have, or could have, or must have, or must not have. There's nothing specific about deseg: Presumably that's covered by making the governing body of the school subject to law applicable to independent school districts; although there would probably be some questions about how exactly that would apply.

6. Some things are consistent (or not inconsistent) with the other bills. The term could run up to seven years. Chapter 179A would apply to the governing body of the organizing forming the school: ie, a separate bargaining unit. Presumably an existing school could generate a 'team' that would form an organization and apply for a charter. This is not clearly specified, however.

7. In a nutshell: More requirements and less money. Why would anybody do it?