

7 April 91

We had a chance late Saturday to bring Sen. Reichgott up to date on the House hearing, as per the discussion with you on Thursday.

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She has decided to make some changes in her Senate bill. You may want to talk to her about those. They follow the discussions this week with the MSBA and the teacher groups.

The most important area has been the sponsor. The version that appears in the omnibus aids bill will drop the post-secondaries. But it will hold tight re: the state board.

It will also go with licensed teachers, period.

Other than that the changes are minor -- but useful; and will let her point to a number of cases where she's listened and been responsive.

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One point came out of these discussions it might be worth passing on; perhaps re: Wednesday's hearing.

Opponents keep saying, "We can do this now." (Which means let a school be site-managed, as well as start a new school.)

At the earlier meeting a lot of the discussion challenged this. Tom, Jim, Joe and others talked about how hard it really is to do the kind of thing the bill would make possible. And certainly teachers can't "do it" now.

The other possible response is quite different. It's to agree. To say, "Of course the district can do it now." The point is that only the district can do it now. The bill would let somebody else 'do it', as well.

That connects with the other major point these groups were making in Sen. Reichgott's sessions: that "this is not the way to improve public education." "Help all schools," they like to say, to create the impression that choice, or charter schools, helps only the few.

Everybody wants to improve public education. People simply disagree about how to do it. The major groups want inputs: more authority, more resources, even more mandates. It's an 'inside' strategy. The Legislature wants some models, that will hopefully pull the rest of the schools along. It's a dual strategy: inside and outside.