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Education Committee  
March 14, 2011

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[CONFIRMATION]

The Committee on Education met at 1:30 p.m. on Monday, March 14, 2011, in Room 1525 of the State Capitol, Lincoln, Nebraska, for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on gubernatorial appointments. Senators present: Greg Adams, Chairperson; Gwen Howard, Vice Chairperson; Bill Avery; Abbie Cornett; Ken Haar; Ken Schilz; and Kate Sullivan. Senators absent: Brenda Council. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: We're going to go ahead and start this hearing of the Education Committee. Welcome, everyone who is here and given there are so few of you, I will skip the formalities that I normally would at the beginning of a session of the committee. And we will move right on to our first order of business which are a list...which is a list of several gubernatorial appointments. And we will have some here in person. We will have some on the phone. Our first one is on the phone, and we will begin with Wayne Camara, an appointment to the Technical Advisory Committee for Statewide Assessment. And Becki, is Wayne available? He's on the phone. Wayne, can you hear me? This is Greg Adams, Chair of the Committee. [CONFIRMATION]

WAYNE CAMARA: Yes, I can. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: All right. Thank you. Wayne, the whole committee is not here yet. I apologize but we've got enough that we're going to get started. I appreciate you getting on the phone when you did. We have Senator Ken Haar from the 21st District; Senator Kate Sullivan from the Cedar Rapids area; and more as they start to come in. So if we could begin, Wayne, is this a reappointment? [CONFIRMATION]

WAYNE CAMARA: Yes, it is. I've served one term previously. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: All right. Wayne, maybe you could start by...we have some bio material that you've already forwarded to us in our hands, but maybe it would be helpful to kick off our discussion if you could just give us a little of your background and maybe talk briefly about the work that's already been done as a member of this committee. We'll ask some questions and go from there. [CONFIRMATION]

WAYNE CAMARA: Sure. My background is my doctoral studies were at the University of Illinois in Champaign Urbana in psychology, and from that point I worked at several locations including the American Psychological Association in Washington, D.C., where I assisted with assessment and testing work and also public policy work in assessment, national assessment. And then for 16 years I've been working at the College Board. I'm currently the vice president of research and I direct the status missions and the test development work on the SAT, on the advance placement test book, and a range of other assessments. I serve on technical advisory committees for a number of groups such as Nebraska. I am...I serve on the technical advisory committee specifically for the

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature  
Transcriber's Office

Education Committee  
March 14, 2011

---

state of Pennsylvania and the state of Texas, in addition to Nebraska. I also serve on one of the common college and career readiness assessment consortium called PARCC, which has about 22 states, which are members of that consortium and other research groups. And in the past few years I've been assisting the Department of Education on the Nebraska state assessment as it transitioned in the past couple of years from really a system of local assessment that were coordinated and reviewed through the state to a more centralized assessment system that has operated in the last couple of years. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: Thank you, Doctor. That was...that's a good start. And now what we'll do is to open it up for questions from the committee members who are here and I'm looking now at those members and asking if any of them have questions. Senator Sullivan has a question for you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Senator Adams. And thank you, Dr. Camara. Obviously, you bring a wealth of experience to the table in this arena and obviously the makeup of the commission must not be defined only to Nebraskans. So do you represent a particular role with your membership? [CONFIRMATION]

WAYNE CAMARA: Probably, I don't think that any of us are represented in a specific role or constituency. I think what we're asked to do, each of us, is to sort of represent the expertise in our science. So I think at least there are three of us, Richard Sawyer and Brian Gong who are technical members, and then we also have two local members from Nebraska, a teacher and a superintendent. And I think probably of the technical members, none of which come from the state of Nebraska, we've been appointed rather than to represent our view or perspective or constituency or discipline, but rather to represent broadly expertise in testing and measurement and really accountability system. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: And as you mentioned in your opening statement, here in Nebraska we're moving from one system of more local emphasis to one of more centralized at the state level. So what kinds of, I guess, philosophies are you bringing to the table to help guide us? [CONFIRMATION]

WAYNE CAMARA: Sure. Well, I mean, probably the...I think the move to a more centralized standardized assessment as Nebraska is doing is probably much more consistent with traditional accountability assessments that go out in most states, out virtually in all states now. But the model that Nebraska had followed, while I think it did have an awful lot of strength and positive, and I think it was probably popular in many of the local areas, was not ideal for the kind of statewide standardized decisions that you would want to make if you're comparing districts like you really want to track the progress of students and the quality of education statewide. I think it certainly had (inaudible) in terms of learning and providing teachers with the type of authentic

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature  
Transcriber's Office

Education Committee  
March 14, 2011

---

assessments that they really appreciated, yet in terms of accountability it wasn't standardized. I'd probably say that, you know, what my perspective is on measurement is that when you're trying to make decision and manage and monitor data, assessment data, educational data, economic data, any type of data, it really is important to establish a firm metric on something that can be measured, and then to have the same yardstick or the same ruler or scale measuring it each year. And I think that's what the state has done. And so my perspective really is very much in support of standardized testing. While we understand students (inaudible) a variety of different ways, under different conditions, with different teachers, it's very difficult to administer different assessments in different ways to different students at different times, and then take all of those difference in any meaningful way and make comparisons or ensure that they're fair and reliable. So, you know, my perspective is, honestly, is if there's a standardized assessment where the students have the same opportunities at the same time, that generally the same types of questions so that we can really exam how students who perform year to year, groups perform year to year, and we can make those kind of decision in terms of evaluating the quality of education, consistently across schools and across the spectrum. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you very much. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: Are there any other questions from the committee? If not, Doctor, seeing none, we'll end this conversation and I want to do so by thanking you for the work that you've done so far for the state of Nebraska. [CONFIRMATION]

WAYNE CAMARA: Thank you very much. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

WAYNE CAMARA: Bye-bye. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: With that, we will move on to our second candidate also to the Technical Advisory Committee for the Statewide Assessment, and that is Dr. Dallas Watkins, superintendent. Is he on the line now? About five minutes yet? Okay. Well, we'll just give ourselves five minutes for Dallas. This is Greg Adams. [CONFIRMATION]

DALLAS WATKINS: Hi, Senator. How are you? [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: Well, just fine. How about you? [CONFIRMATION]

DALLAS WATKINS: (Laugh) Well, I'm home and the pile is diminishing slowly on my desk, but I am getting to it. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: All right. All right. And it's too bad we're on the record here

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature  
Transcriber's Office

Education Committee  
March 14, 2011

---

because there's other things I'd like to say about you or to you, but I...  
[CONFIRMATION]

DALLAS WATKINS: Well, I'm glad we're on the record just to spare me a little.  
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: (Laugh) Just to protect you? I understand. Dallas, this is, as you well know, the reappointment to the Advisory Committee for Statewide Assessment and we have the committee here at this time. And what I would like you to do, I think most of the people on the committee are familiar with you, if you could just very briefly talk to your background and then answer some questions if there are any from the committee.  
[CONFIRMATION]

DALLAS WATKINS: Okay. Thanks. I didn't know they were all there when we were visiting earlier. I hope I didn't bother them with our chatter. But good afternoon all of you and I think there are a couple new ones. Most of you I've met through time with education-related issues. I'm a superintendent and I've been an administrator for 31 years, 21 of those as a superintendent. It involves numerous state committees and continue to be involved with some other things at the statewide level. My background, I have a doctorate from the University of Wyoming and specialist, a master's degree in administration from UNK. And the undergraduate major was social sciences and that's my background. I don't...do you need much more than that? [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: Well, we've got the crime report and those kinds of things in front of us now, so. (Laughter) [CONFIRMATION]

DALLAS WATKINS: I'm hoping that you could delete maybe before we got to the public read it, so. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: Well, the fact that your undergraduate degree is in social studies, that covers a lot of territory. No, that's fine, Dallas. So I'm going to open it up for questions now. Are there questions for Dallas? Senator Avery's got a question.  
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR AVERY: Yes, you mentioned...this is Bill Avery. [CONFIRMATION]

DALLAS WATKINS: Hi, Senator. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR AVERY: Since Senator Adams mentioned your undergraduate degree, I see you have a doctorate from Wyoming. What's that in? [CONFIRMATION]

DALLAS WATKINS: Educational administration. The emphasis would be educational leadership and then a (inaudible) curriculum instruction. [CONFIRMATION]

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature  
Transcriber's Office

Education Committee  
March 14, 2011

---

SENATOR AVERY: Any background in testing? [CONFIRMATION]

DALLAS WATKINS: The traditional exposure that you'd have to the master's specialist, the doctorate. You'd have some exposure in measurement and some analysis. It would just be one or two courses or chapters with the courses. It's not my major area, no. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR AVERY: Okay. Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: Are there other questions? Senator Sullivan. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Senator Adams. And thank you, Mr. Watkins, for being willing to serve. I wondered if in this role...is this going to be a reappointment for you? [CONFIRMATION]

DALLAS WATKINS: Hi, Senator Sullivan. Yes, it is. I've been on the committee and had this hearing a couple of years ago and this is a reappointment. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. And as we move from more local-based testing to the statewide testing, what are some of your, I guess I'd have to say, hopes and dreams for what you hope to achieve in your membership on this committee? [CONFIRMATION]

DALLAS WATKINS: I...you know, I've seen an evolution in those...reading some national information also, we will be looking more...and the state is already moving in this direction with the Department of Ed board and their staff improvement rather than a snapshot of a grade from year to year that might be a different group that they're testing and it's the data we had in the past. But I think we will see more improvement-based instruction and I'll certainly...this will be our role on the committee (inaudible) simply advisory and the Department of Ed board will...State Board of Education will make those decisions as well as the Legislature. I think the improvement thing is good because we're measuring a child. I do believe that we're going to be looking at the curriculum itself, the content, the subject, not as much as the committee but as a state. And as educators that will come. And I think instruction itself will get more attention than we've seen in the last ten years with assessment. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

DALLAS WATKINS: You're welcome. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: Are there other questions? Dallas, are you satisfied with the direction that we're heading and the way we're going about it at the department with our changeover to a statewide assessment? [CONFIRMATION]

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature  
Transcriber's Office

Education Committee  
March 14, 2011

---

DALLAS WATKINS: Senator, I...yeah, that's difficult. You know as a public school administrator, and I was a teacher also, the challenge is enormous. Am I satisfied with the direction? Yes. Is it really challenging, have we answered the question, and is it the truest picture of both the child and the instructor's ability and all the other factors that influence one (inaudible) and class? We haven't got there yet. But we're doing a better job of recognizing the challenges we have, but the data and reporting to the public is so difficult. It's not hard to get people numbered. But it's hard to give enough information that people understand things. And I've got to believe all of you in your professional lives as well as being senators, information is key and yet headlines dictate, you know, moods and emotion and how people react in this world. A necessary thing? Yes, and we deal with it. And I think we are dealing with it but we haven't accomplished satisfaction yet of educating the people, the public, and ourselves as what we should be doing with assessment completely. I do think, though, the assessment movement, as challenging as it's been in the last ten, twelve years, has taught us to do a better job of identifying it as what we what to teach, what we want people to learn, what is assessed, and I think textbooks and methodology have both improved because of it. But we're not done yet, Senator. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: Dallas, what do you think...I'm going to ask a broader question that maybe deviates from your appointment duties. In terms of our data system in Nebraska and what are we...what kinds of things are we missing to help you and your colleagues do your job? [CONFIRMATION]

DALLAS WATKINS: I hope this is (inaudible) (laugh) and I'm trying to be respectful. If this is an appointment, you wouldn't want just my editorial opinion. But you've been around me enough, that it's pretty easily given. I think that small staff is all that they are. I think that diversity from one school to another, we can see now what it is. The snapshot of the school ranking versus another school's ranking, if it were based on the same test but truly different audiences or test takers, we need to do a better job of segregating data, I think, especially for media purpose, and possibly political purpose. And I don't know that I can make a difference but I could certainly share my opinion and hopefully there's enough of it including, senators, that you know...I don't think anyone intentionally distorts that one number not knowing all those demographics that it's not the best thing in the world. I think we're making improvement there. I do believe that we will see changes. I mean, when we look at improvement models rather than just a standard square model for a school. The (inaudible) for No Child Left Behind versus the school of a standard for the state has conflicted people's ability to separate those when everyone thinks everything is the same thing. They all are assessments and they all score but, you know, you're looking at 30 and more typically in the No Child Left Behind grouping, whereas with the state standard expectations, we're looking at schools and grades. [CONFIRMATION]

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature  
Transcriber's Office

Education Committee  
March 14, 2011

---

SENATOR ADAMS: Thank you, Dallas. Are there any last questions for Dr. Watkins? It seems strange to call you Dr. Watkins, Dallas. [CONFIRMATION]

DALLAS WATKINS: Well, it seems strange to hear it. (Laughter) [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: Thank you, Dallas. Appreciate your call-in. [CONFIRMATION]

DALLAS WATKINS: You're welcome. And I'm going to go back to a real board meeting tonight. I'm going to study that packet so whatever you guys do, I still have to move forward, so. (Laughter) Thanks for listening to me. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: That's right. That concludes our two appointments to the Technical Advisory Committee for Statewide Assessment. We'll now move on to the State College Board of Trustees and we do have one of our appointments present, Gary Bieganski. I hope I didn't butcher that too badly. [CONFIRMATION]

GARY BIEGANSKI: You did very well, thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: And Gary is present and, Gary, welcome and thank you for being here today. And following along on the same lines as you listened to the other two appointees, if you could give us a little background on yourself and we'll ask some questions. [CONFIRMATION]

GARY BIEGANSKI: All right. Good afternoon. I am Gary Bieganski and you have a copy of my resume. I've been a hospital administrator for quite a number of years. I was in McCook, Nebraska for 30 years as the hospital administrator. Prior to that Atkinson, Nebraska, five years, and now I do interim hospital CEO work. I kind of fill in between administrators sometimes when there's an opening. And I've enjoyed my time on the Board of Trustees for Nebraska State Colleges. I am a reappointment and that comes about because I had completed the term that Steve Lewis had prior. And so I've served for about four...pretty close to five years on the Board of Trustees for Nebraska State Colleges. And I reapplied because I enjoyed the work I was able to do and I started down this path because I wanted to give something back to the state colleges. That's where I was educated. I graduated from Chadron State College and had worked there for a period of about five years, and so I wanted to go back and serve and work on the college board. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: Thank you, Gary. We'll open it up for questions. Are there any? Oh, Gary, given that you've...yes, please. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HAAR: I would ask some. There's been some talk of putting all the colleges and universities under one board. And just sort of give us some reaction to that. Don't know where that's going to go, but... [CONFIRMATION]

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature  
Transcriber's Office

Education Committee  
March 14, 2011

---

GARY BIEGANSKI: Well, I understand there may be a study for that. But, you know, I've spent some time looking at and been to other institutions, and I think that the state colleges have a really significant role to play in Nebraska in the education process. I think we serve an excellent niche for those people that are interested, perhaps, in a smaller college and the work that we are able to provide to them. You know, and when I started, I picked up a couple of facts that were kind of new to me, and one is, that probably anywhere from 50 to 60, maybe 65 percent of our students are first generation from that family attending college. And I thought, well, that will probably change as we go along, but it's still about the same. And so we've been serving that population and doing it very well. I think that is an area for us to be able to respond to and work with and serve. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HAAR: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: Other questions? Well, Gary, let me ask along those same lines. We have seen dramatic growth in our community colleges and community college enrollment and certainly university systems always have initiatives that are future oriented. Where do you see the state colleges being at five years, ten years from now here in Nebraska? [CONFIRMATION]

GARY BIEGANSKI: I think we will still have that role and I think we're trying to respond to some certain areas. At least, definitely, I see in Chadron, you know, with some of the agricultural programs that we're doing and some other networking we're doing, particularly in Wyoming and with some other colleges, where they can get their first couple of years and then come in and finish a four-year degree. And I'm speaking now mostly along, you know, the agricultural lines as area to grow. And I think we've always had just an outstanding reputation and filled a niche in teacher education, and I still see that that is going to be a need for the future. Certainly we've expanded into business areas with business administration and bachelor's and master's degree programs. So I think we will still be serving those areas. Still growing, you know, we're not kind of spiking up and spiking down. We're fairly constant and hope to continue and I think we will continue to be able to serve those areas. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: What kind of a student, besides first generation student, what kind of student are you attracting that you are managing to attract, in effect, away from a university system or away from a community college system? [CONFIRMATION]

GARY BIEGANSKI: I think we have quite a few, you know, students in each of those areas. Some call them nontraditional students or retread students, however you particularly like to label them. But they are students from the area who have experienced great career changes for some reason or another and staying abreast to the technology changes that are coming about. So there are many of those are kind of



Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature  
Transcriber's Office

Education Committee  
March 14, 2011

---

from the area or from the region that come back and go through the programs that we have. We are also expanding some online courses that we've been doing, you know, via various electronic means. And I'd like to say that those are very high quality, online courses that we're able to provide and interact with the students. And if we can have them...you know, there are opportunities where they come to campus, not always do they do that though. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: All right. Are there any other questions? Then let me ask you one more. If we gave you the latitude to change state colleges in any way you wanted, what would it be? [CONFIRMATION]

GARY BIEGANSKI: I think that we would...I would like to see us continue to grow and expand in the opportunities that have to do particularly with automation and computer changes that's come about to really be able to enhance many of our programs along those lines. And I would like to see us stay in some of the basic areas that we have, teacher education, for one of them; growing in the agricultural area; continuing to help with, you know, business administration in economics. But really it's developing people to be entrepreneurs and I think many of those return and stay in our areas, in the rural areas. And then I've help start and been just tremendously pleased with the RHOP program. We have that at Wayne and we have that at Chadron and we're also starting some programs in Peru. But, you know, those are specifically targeted to students out in the rural areas. We guarantee them...you know, they keep their grades up, they're able to enroll and come in and go right into specific health professions. And I think we have a very high success rate--70 percent or better of those students when they complete at the Med Center, returning back to the rural areas. And there is a vast need, as I have worked with, for physicians, for lab techs, for physical therapists, just go through the whole line for those people to be back in our rural areas to provide healthcare locally. And we've been very successful with that RHOP program in having them return to the rural areas. Very vital. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: All right. One more time. Yes, Senator Haar. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HAAR: RHOP means what? [CONFIRMATION]

GARY BIEGANSKI: Rural Health Opportunities Program. And it's the type of program where we are guarantee...when a student is interested, they apply and it's very competitive. We select the students from each of the campuses. They go through at least a three-year program, sometimes a four-year program at the state colleges. And then they're automatically slotted into like being a physician, going to the Med Center or pharmacist or med tech or nurse or some of those areas. They're guaranteed a slot to go in. So they go in and compete, you know, with everybody that's there and they've been very competitive. They've done very well. And so it just really gives some of the people from rural areas an opportunity to really do what they want to in the health

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature  
Transcriber's Office

Education Committee  
March 14, 2011

---

professions. And like I say, many, many of them return back to the rural areas.  
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HAAR: Do you have any idea of what percentage of teachers that graduate from the state colleges come back to rural Nebraska? [CONFIRMATION]

GARY BIEGANSKI: I'm sorry, I don't. But I can tell you it's 100 percent in my family. (Laughter) And we have several generations. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HAAR: Yeah, good. Okay. Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: Senator Howard. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HOWARD: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a quick question. I noticed you didn't put down the name of your senator. You kind of on the fence with that or...? [CONFIRMATION]

GARY BIEGANSKI: No, not necessarily. But working in different areas, is it McCook, Chadron, or where I am right now in Ainsworth? (Laughter) [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HOWARD: It's where you live. (Laughter) [CONFIRMATION]

GARY BIEGANSKI: So you never know where I'm going to pop up from sometimes. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HOWARD: Who is your state senator? [CONFIRMATION]

GARY BIEGANSKI: I'm sorry, I'm blank right now. I live in Chadron, Nebraska right now. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HOWARD: We'll have to make a note of this here. (Laugh)  
[CONFIRMATION]

\_\_\_\_\_ : Senator Louden. [CONFIRMATION]

GARY BIEGANSKI: Louden, LeRoy Louden. If you'd have said LeRoy or the last name, I could have got it. (Laughter) [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HOWARD: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: Yes, Senator Sullivan. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Senator Adams. As you were talking about the

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature  
Transcriber's Office

Education Committee  
March 14, 2011

---

RHOP program, it made me think of another thing. I don't remember the bill that's going to be before the Legislature this session, it has to do with internships for students to basically place them from colleges and universities here...make internships in businesses affordable or...and available to them. I would assume that this is something that the board would choose to promote? [CONFIRMATION]

GARY BIEGANSKI: Oh, yes. Yeah, I'm a strong believer in that, and like to be able to see the students actually out, you know, having that hands-on, real-life experience and we certainly do that in the medical field all the time. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: Any other questions? Gary, thank you for your service as well as coming all the way in today. We appreciate it. [CONFIRMATION]

GARY BIEGANSKI: Thank you. I appreciate it too. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: Our next Board of Trustee candidate will be calling in at 2:15. Stan, what I might do is, we have this block of time in between these two persons if you'd like to make comment, why...if you'd state your name, spell it for the record.  
[CONFIRMATION]

STAN CARPENTER: Thank you, Senator. You bet. Senator Adams, members of the committee, my name is Stan Carpenter, S-t-a-n C-a-r-p-e-n-t-e-r, and I'm the Chancellor of the Nebraska State College System. And I would just take a few moments of your time to tell you how very pleased I am that Gary Bieganski and Cap Peterson, who you will be hearing from shortly, have asked to be reappointed to our Board of Trustees. Both trustees are dedicated to the Nebraska State College System, committed to our mission, work hard for each of our institutions and the system, and understand what it is that we're about and what we're trying to accomplish in the system. They support our mission of access and they are always on guard to make sure that our tuition rates are as affordable as they can be for our students. Gary is the chair of the academic personnel and student life committee and has been for three years now. And Cap is the chair of the finance facilities and audit committee and has been doing that, I think, now for two or three years as well. Before that he was on that committee as Gary was on the academic affairs committee as well. They are people who I turn to for advice and counsel, not only at the board meetings but between board meetings, and they have provided a great service to us in the state college system and I would be most appreciative if you would give them very positive consideration for reappointment.  
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: All right. Thank you, Stan. Are there any questions for Stan? Just out of courtesy, Stan, and I should know the answers to these things and I don't. How

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature  
Transcriber's Office

Education Committee  
March 14, 2011

---

many members to the Board of Trustees, where do you meet, how often do you meet?  
[CONFIRMATION]

STAN CARPENTER: Sure. Senator, there are seven members on the Board of Trustees, six who are appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Legislature, and the Commissioner of Education, Roger Breed, serves by virtue of his office. We meet generally five or six times a year depending upon what the board wants to do, and we meet at each institution once a year and then the other meetings generally are held here in Lincoln either two or three times a year, and we meet about every six to eight weeks. Before that we have council of presidents meetings that bring all the information to us and then we bring that to the board and so on and so forth. We have three standing committees. As I said, the finance and facilities and audit committee, the academic personnel and student life committee, and the enrollment and marketing committee. And each of those committees has two trustees on it. And the chair of the board who generally serves a two-year term, although they're like an annually...floats back and forth between those three committees on any particular meeting day as necessary. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: And your authority, you build budget...what's the authority of the Board of Trustees? [CONFIRMATION]

STAN CARPENTER: Well, the board obviously has a governance authority over the state college...State College System. Clearly building budgets, financial matters, academic program matters, student affairs matters, anything that you can imagine that goes on in higher education, that is the role of the board to govern that. And I must say that our board understands what governance means and that is to set the policy and set the direction, make sure that the hired hands are doing their job, and then they don't try to micromanage. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: Okay. Any last questions for Stan? Senator. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Just one. Speaking of membership. Thank you, Senator Adams and Dr. Carpenter. Of those six members, do you try to spread out the membership in terms of their connection to the respective state colleges? [CONFIRMATION]

STAN CARPENTER: Senator, since I've been here we've generally had representation from areas where the state colleges are. Currently, as you've read, Cap Peterson lives in Wayne. Before that he...Sheryl Lindau, who was a trustee, lived in Wayne. Gary lives in Chadron as does Larry Teahon, who is the chair of the board. And you'll be having a confirmation hearing for Bob Engles coming up in a couple of weeks and he lives in southeast Nebraska in Auburn. So they generally relate to those areas, but there's no specificity in statute or in any other way that we have to have that and I don't think it hurts us to do that. But I would also say, Senator, that our board and every board

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature  
Transcriber's Office

Education Committee  
March 14, 2011

---

member understands that their fiduciary duty is to the system and not to a particular institution. So while they might be close to an institution, they recognize that they don't represent that institution. I think that's a very important distinction. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

STAN CARPENTER: Yes, ma'am. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: Any other last questions? If not, thank you, Stan.  
[CONFIRMATION]

STAN CARPENTER: Thank you, Senator Adams. I appreciate the opportunity.  
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: And we will stand at ease here for about 3 minutes. Committee, (recorder malfunction). [CONFIRMATION]

CARTER PETERSON: All right. Well, thank you, Senator. I appreciate the opportunity to do this by phone. On my first one, I was at the...in the legislative committee and this works out better for me today if it works out for you. I appreciate it. My background, I'm in the insurance business and have been in the insurance business for over 30 years. And during that time to time, in my previous life, I was a K through high school teacher for five years. After that I served on the Wayne School Board for 12 years, and on the state as a district representative on the state school board for about four years. And I've also taught as an adjunct professor at Wayne State College. I did that for eight years while Senator Conway was performing his duties for the Senate. And I'm now on my first...just completed my first term with the State College Board of Trustees. So I've had an extensive time within the education world. I enjoy it very much. I think we can do a valuable service to our students and our youth in the state of Nebraska and I'm trying as much as I possibly can do to uphold that. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: All right. Thank you, Carter. I appreciate that and the first question comes from, as I'm looking around the room, it's coming from Senator Haar.  
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HAAR: Well, I'll ask the same question that I asked of Gary. And there's been some talk in terms of economies and so on to just put the state colleges under the UNL Board of Regents. So it would just be one Board of Regents for university and state colleges and just wondering what you think the advantages are to having a separate Board of Trustees for state colleges? [CONFIRMATION]

CARTER PETERSON: That's a good question. We think that in the state colleges when we're performing the services as far as that we're a teaching institution, that our

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature  
Transcriber's Office

Education Committee  
March 14, 2011

---

professors are in the classroom we're providing teacher education, and some within the RHOP program and business education. And we have a different type of, maybe, mission. We feel that all of our students that do come out of there, which is about 9,000 students that do it on a yearly basis that we have as enrolled in our three colleges, they come on back and provide a lot of things back to the rural areas. They go out in the rural area and they come on back after they get their education and support the rural area. I think that's an important part. And I think that the state college system has worked well within that as well as the university on its separate one. I don't really see by putting them all under one where there's going to be any savings for the state of Nebraska. I think they're both very efficient. And I know the state colleges have already shown that they can be efficient through some tough times and still provide the education. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HAAR: Okay. Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: Are there other questions? Carter, may I ask then...I'll ask you also the same question I asked of Gary. We see the numbers of students increasing rather significantly every year to the community colleges, and I'm not making a judgment call as to whether or not that's good or bad. The community colleges are filling a niche. We know that the university system has its goals and its sights set. We're five years from now, ten years from now, where do you see the state colleges? How do you see them looking? [CONFIRMATION]

CARTER PETERSON: Well, I still think that there is always going to be a place and the state colleges, I think, is always going to have an increase in enrollment every year. I know that's kind of a bold statement I'm making for each individual college, but we've kind of held in with that particular thing and some of the things that we're doing with South Sioux City and the community college out of Norfolk, and we've put another one in South Sioux City, I think that's just going to be just leaps and bounds of growth for us. What we've done down in Peru with the state colleges having...oh, I think it was LB174, I believe it was on the task force, that one rate for all, for outside students to develop to southeast as well as some of the things we're doing out with Chadron, with Wyoming and South Dakota, Colorado. I just think that the colleges have a real bright future on the state college system. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: Thank you. I'll ask the committee one more time. Any questions? I guess not. We're going to let you off the hook. Thank you for your service to the state and we appreciate you calling in this afternoon. [CONFIRMATION]

CARTER PETERSON: Well, thank you. I appreciate it all. Bye now. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: Bye. Becki, our next appointment is Darlene Starman. Was she calling in? Okay. Thank you for joining us this afternoon. And our procedure here is

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature  
Transcriber's Office

Education Committee  
March 14, 2011

---

pretty simple. We have the Education Committee here in our hearing room and, of course, this is a public hearing. Not many of the public here right now, but what we would like to do, we have your resume that you forwarded to the Capitol here in front of us, and if you could simply start by taking a moment or two and telling us about yourself and then answer any questions that the committee has, that would be appreciated. So, Darlene, I'll turn it over to you. [CONFIRMATION]

DARLENE STARMAN: You want me to tell you about myself. Okay. Well, I was initially appointed to the board, I believe, three years ago to fill an unexpired term. I've enjoyed my time on the board. I think I have almost 100 percent attendance with the exception of one meeting where I had to be out of town, but I think I've been a productive member of the board and would appreciate your support for reappointment. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: All right. Thank you, Darlene. With that, I will open it up for questions and there's a Senator named Avery here that had his hand up very quick. (Laughter) [CONFIRMATION]

DARLENE STARMAN: Oh, God. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: Now maybe what we should do is close the hearing room, Darlene, to understand what that comment meant...but, Senator Avery. (Laughter) [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR AVERY: Be careful, I'll blow the whistle on you about being an Avery voter. (Laughter) [CONFIRMATION]

DARLENE STARMAN: Hey, that's secret. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR AVERY: I was going to ask if you would...if you have an opinion on the current debate about federal funding for the corporation for public broadcasting and would you be willing to share it with us? [CONFIRMATION]

DARLENE STARMAN: Well, it doesn't help when our own leaders at PBS are saying and doing the things that they're doing. I have spoken with our Congressional delegation about if they need funding at that level. I don't feel very hopeful with our House Congressional delegation. We may get more support from Senator Johanns, but at this point I wouldn't count on any more support for federal funding for PBS, for public broadcasting. What's your thought? [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR AVERY: Are you suggesting that the funding will be ended or they will not be increased? [CONFIRMATION]

DARLENE STARMAN: Will not be increased and it may very well be ended as I

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature  
Transcriber's Office

Education Committee  
March 14, 2011

---

understand it. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR AVERY: But you would not support that would you, being on...?  
[CONFIRMATION]

DARLENE STARMAN: No. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HAAR: Okay. That's what I was after. Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: Senator Haar. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HAAR: Well, Darlene, this morning on...I was listening to NPR on the way in to work and apparently those interviews were edited considerably and from a two-hour interview down to a few minutes and I... [CONFIRMATION]

DARLENE STARMAN: I heard that as well. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HAAR: ...things taken out of context and so on, so it's probably good the guy was fired but it was still an edited interview which is very disappointing.  
[CONFIRMATION]

DARLENE STARMAN: Now I will say what I understand of Juan Williams and was very upset when he was fired from NPR last year. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: Senator Sullivan, did you have a question? [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Senator Adams and thank you, Ms. Starman. In light of, though...aside from all these controversies going around, just in light of limited resources both at the state and the federal level, what role do you think the commission is going to have to assume in terms of just taking on more responsibility for the future funding of this programming? [CONFIRMATION]

DARLENE STARMAN: Well, we have an excellent foundation now that, as I understand it, has met and exceeded all of its fund-raising goals. We may have to rely more on private dollars to fund NET in the future. But since half of our...at least half of our funding or more comes from the state, that's very, very important as well, and if I have to lobby the Governor and our state senators, I'm certainly willing to do that.  
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: In the process of doing that, what's the message that you send in terms of the value of this kind of programming and why it should have...receive some support from taxpayer dollars? [CONFIRMATION]



Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature  
Transcriber's Office

Education Committee  
March 14, 2011

---

DARLENE STARMAN: Well, I think it's the educational benefit to our schools in Nebraska. It's very valuable. I, having grown up in rural Nebraska, I'm from your part of the country, Senator Sullivan. I'm from Petersburg, Albion area. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: I wondered if you were. That's a very familiar name there. [CONFIRMATION]

DARLENE STARMAN: Yes, yes, I think you probably know my brother. But I know the value of this...to the schools up there, the rural areas and I think I could seek...or continue support of NET simply because of the value to our rural, to our rural educational institutions in Nebraska. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you very much. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: Are there any other questions for Darlene? Anyone? Darlene, we're at end and I appreciate you calling in today and certainly we all appreciate your service to the state of Nebraska. [CONFIRMATION]

DARLENE STARMAN: Thank you for what you all do. Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: Charles, this is Senator Adams. Thank you for joining us this afternoon, and... [CONFIRMATION]

CHARLES WARD: Well, I want to thank you for doing this teleconferencewise. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: Well, good, we're glad that it works out. We have the Education Committee here right now in public hearing with only a couple of empty seats. We're doing pretty good today. And what we would like to do, we have in front of us the resume of things that you had sent in. And if you could initiate the discussion by just very briefly telling us about yourself and maybe your work up to this point on the Board of Educational Lands and Funds. And then I'm going to open it up for questions, and when the questions are ended, then we're done. [CONFIRMATION]

CHARLES WARD: Okay. I don't know where you want me to start or stop, but... [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: Tell us a little bit about yourself. [CONFIRMATION]

CHARLES WARD: Well, I graduated from Chadron from Valentine, then from Chadron State College and I taught school for three years and then I went back into the plumbing and heating business and run a cow and calf operation with the plumbing and heating. We had about 120 head of cows that we calved every year. And I did that for several

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature  
Transcriber's Office

Education Committee  
March 14, 2011

---

years and I retired from the plumbing and heating business, and we sold all of the cows, and had exotic animals, and one thing or another, and that's basically, that's who I am. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: All right. We're going to open it up for questions now from members of the committee. Senator Sullivan's got a question. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Hi, Charlie. Thanks for phoning in today. Is this a reappointment for you? [CONFIRMATION]

CHARLES WARD: Is it a real what? [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Is this a reappointment or are you going to be new to the board? [CONFIRMATION]

CHARLES WARD: No, no, it's a reappointment. I'm at large. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Oh, I see. Okay. [CONFIRMATION]

CHARLES WARD: And I'm the sixth person at large there. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. Just a general question about the school lands and educational lands. What's your feeling about keeping them or over time selling more of them? [CONFIRMATION]

CHARLES WARD: Well, we really don't have much choice there. The Legislature pretty well dictates what they want us to do. And as far as our fiduciary duties will allow us, we're trying to comply with what your demands are, or your wishes, I should say, and your wishes. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Which are? [CONFIRMATION]

CHARLES WARD: To sell off some of the land and we're getting rid of most...the less desirable land as quick as we can get it sold. But we're not going to give it away. I mean, it's got to be an assessed or appraised value. And there's a lot of people really don't want to buy the land. They would rather lease than own. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. And so when you say in terms of getting rid of it, you're looking at the least desirable ones first? I guess, I'm just... [CONFIRMATION]

CHARLES WARD: Correct. Correct. The lowest priced...I really shouldn't say least desirable. They're land that return the least on the investment, basically what the value of the land and everything is. That was probably a poor statement I made there.

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature  
Transcriber's Office

Education Committee  
March 14, 2011

---

Something that returns like a four and a half percent or four percent return on what the investment is, those are the types of properties that we are trying to dispense at first. But if somebody comes along and wants to buy some land, hey, if they're willing to pay, we're willing to sell and trade, so. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Do you basically wait for that opportunity or are you actually...is there any sort of a plan to do any marketing? I guess that's what I was wondering. [CONFIRMATION]

CHARLES WARD: Well, there is some of it that's on the priority landfill list that are there all the time. So if somebody is adjoining it or they want some of that land, why, they could step forward on some of that and purchase it at any given time that they want it. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

CHARLES WARD: You betcha. Thank you for asking. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: Are there other questions? Senator Avery has a question. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR AVERY: Mr. Ward, I'm looking at your resume here and I see that you are a veteran. [CONFIRMATION]

CHARLES WARD: Yes, sir. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR AVERY: What military branch were you in? [CONFIRMATION]

CHARLES WARD: Army. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR AVERY: Army. [CONFIRMATION]

CHARLES WARD: Yeah, RA68030716, sir. (Laughter) [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR AVERY: Yeah, I...you never forget those, do you? [CONFIRMATION]

CHARLES WARD: No, sir. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR AVERY: No, I still know mine too. So were you in Vietnam? [CONFIRMATION]

CHARLES WARD: No, I was in during Vietnam and I was sent to Alaska. Really surprised me. I was in the (inaudible) battery and I wound up being sent to Fairbanks,

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature  
Transcriber's Office

Education Committee  
March 14, 2011

---

Alaska. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR AVERY: Well, I'm sorry for you. [CONFIRMATION]

CHARLES WARD: Well, I would have never hesitated going to Vietnam I'll guarantee you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR AVERY: I don't have any more. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: All right. Senator Haar has a question. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HAAR: Following up on Senator Sullivan's question because I'm still learning all of this stuff. Is there a certain place where you stop selling school lands or is that just something that keeps going? [CONFIRMATION]

CHARLES WARD: Well, the Legislature wanted us to sell down to about a quarter of what we had for the portfolio, for the educational portfolio, and we've been selling down whenever we get an opportunity. You know, we can't give the land away, so if somebody steps forward and wants to purchase some of that land, and they're willing to pay, why, we become the willing seller. You know, you do also realize when we sell property, if you come to buy a school section, let's just...I'm going to put out a pretty close to a scenario of what happened. You come to me and you say, I guarantee you \$10 an acre for that land, because we have to have a guaranteed bid before it even goes up for an auction. And you guarantee us \$10 an acre. Well, then it goes to a public auction and let's say you have a neighbor or somebody else that wants to buy this property totally out of the area, and they can run you up on that property to whatever they think it's worth or whatever they're willing to pay. So, really, I think we come out the best of all worlds when we do have a sale of property because most of the time, or a lot of the time, there's two or three people that are interested in it when it does come up for public auction, if it's something that somebody is desirable of. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HAAR: Okay. Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: Are there any other questions? Charles, I might ask one. I've got a neighbor that...this is Senator Adams. I have a neighbor that owns some ground out around Valentine and he always complains to me about how well we as a state maintain school lands. And I've tried to probe a little bit deeper to find out what the real issue is and it's just a general dissatisfaction. Do you have any comment about that? [CONFIRMATION]

CHARLES WARD: How we take care of the land? [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: How we maintain the land that we're leasing. [CONFIRMATION]

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature  
Transcriber's Office

Education Committee  
March 14, 2011

---

CHARLES WARD: Well, I don't know of any particular instances where the land is not maintained in a pretty decent kind of condition. If somebody abuses the land, then we go in and have them put out a grazing plan and get the land back in condition, if that's what you're asking me. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: I think it may be. He's never very definitive with me despite all of my questioning. He just kind of likes to kick the dirt. He does talk a lot about cedar trees and fences and those kinds of things. [CONFIRMATION]

CHARLES WARD: Oh, we are pretty aggressive with cedar trees. In fact, we just...Bobby Schwartzkopf was at our last meeting and according...contrary to what everything he said has been told to him and everything, a guy put some goats on some property and let them run in there and then he took half of them out and left half of them in there, the goats make a lap around the pasture every day and he said they're bleeding the Leafy Spurge to death and were eating the cedar tree. And then we also aggressively go after cedar trees, you know, by cutting, and, you know, shearing and grinding to actually remove them if they're deemed to be a nuisance or a problem. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: All right. Thank you, Charles. Senator Schilz from Ogallala has a question for you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SCHILZ: Thank you, Mr. Ward, thank you so much. And just to...since somebody asked about school lands and things like that, I can guarantee you that there's some land out there that isn't being taken care of properly. And we have asked the School Land Board to clean up there...there's a little pie that we have leased that goes along with another section and somebody has turned that little pie land that's on a correction line in the county basically into a dump, and we've asked our local guy out there to clean that up for probably 15 years now. So if there's not...and I can show you specifics because it is our land. So if you're serious about that, get ahold of me. (Laugh) [CONFIRMATION]

CHARLES WARD: I am. I am. I'm serious about it. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SCHILZ: Okay. I just...I didn't want to pile on, but... [CONFIRMATION]

CHARLES WARD: In fact, I would...I would get ahold of our guy and have him...this is at Ogallala? [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SCHILZ: Yes. [CONFIRMATION]

CHARLES WARD: Okay. [CONFIRMATION]

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature  
Transcriber's Office

Education Committee  
March 14, 2011

---

SENATOR SCHILZ: And what it is, somebody...a bunch of folks have come out there and I mean, we're talking about old washers and dryers and... [CONFIRMATION]

CHARLES WARD: Oh, your talking about a piece of ground right there where you turn off to go into Ogallala and that's... [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SCHILZ: No, that's not true. It's in between Ogallala and Brule south, but we can get into that some other time. This won't have any bearing on how I vote for you. But I just said, if you're looking for specifics, they're out there. [CONFIRMATION]

CHARLES WARD: Yeah, yeah, if we know of them, we sure want to address them. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SCHILZ: Oh, your guy knows about it. I can tell you that. (Laugh)  
[CONFIRMATION]

CHARLES WARD: Okay. I will make note of it and I'm at large so there's no reason I couldn't go check it out. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SCHILZ: I appreciate it. Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

CHARLES WARD: In fact, I...yeah, we'll get that taken care of. Thank you.  
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: Are there any other questions? If not, Mr. Ward, thank you for your service to the state and thank you for taking the time this afternoon to join us.  
[CONFIRMATION]

CHARLES WARD: Oh, I appreciate it and I enjoy the job. It kind of goes along with my background. I like being able to...I guess, maybe it's kind of payback. I like the country I live in and I want my children and my grandchildren to grow up in the same type of society, and if we don't kind of help take care of it a little bit, it won't be there.  
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: All right. Thank you, sir. Goodbye now. [CONFIRMATION]

CHARLES WARD: You bet. Thank you. Have a good day. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: That will end our hearings. [CONFIRMATION]