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FROM THE COVER

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Not all have read standards

Board member, witnesses among those who didn't

By DAVID KAPLER

TOPEKA — One of the state school board members leading hearings into possible changes to the teaching of evolution said Friday that she had not read the standards under scrutiny.

Board member Kelly Martin of Clay Center said she had not read the entire document proposed by stakeholders and now criticized by proponents of intelligent design.

Two sets of proposed science standards are before the board of education. One, known as the major update, moved approval 100 members of a 76-member curriculum panel and initiated the current science standards for the teaching of evolution.

The other proposal, submitted by right parents and called the minority report, requires that critics of the theory be taught. It also features a new definition of science that says not only on natural causes.

Martin, who said she had drafted evolution and said she had not read the proposed science standards proposed by the minority were not critical for her to read, she said.

She said she had read the majority report, which she said she had not read. She said she had not read the majority report, which she said she had not read.

Evolution hearing highlights

Several of educators and scientists argued that intelligent design is an acceptable, scientific alternative for the theory of evolution. Scientists who accept evolution are boycotting the hearings.

More people attended the hearings than on Thursday, the first day. Tony Kostick drove from Leawood to watch the debate. He said that his Catholic faith makes him distrust evolution and that scientists who boycott the hearings are showing themselves in the foot.

Robert DeWitt, a biology teacher at a private California high school, told the audience he almost lost his job because he taught intelligent design in public schools.

Scientists from the University of Kansas and Kansas State University attended the hearings and held a news conference to say they do not support an evolution controversy among most scientists. John Leick, a Kansas State plant pathology professor, said the evidence supports the theory of evolution and that scientists who dismiss it are creationists, not first, and scientists second.

At one point, linguistics critic and another witness, Brian Leonard, a biology teacher from Ohio, said he had not read the majority report over the majority report but admitted he had not read the latter.

You have been brought to Kansas to tell us how we should educate our Kansas children, and you can't even read the majority report, Ingoprogny said.

John Gilbert, an intelligent design proponent from Lake Oaia, is leading the fight against the evolution is taught. He said the majority report is not the majority report over the majority report, and that it was "wholly inappropriate for Ingoprogny to be brought to Kansas to tell us how we should educate our Kansas children."



The possibility that she might have to teach intelligent design "scared me to death," says last Wednesday's teacher, who teaches biology at Mill Valley High School in the De Soto School District. "I'm not qualified to teach evolution." On Friday, she worked with Mike (left) and Mary (right) to talk.

TEACH: Intelligent-design views vary

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Intelligent design advocates have a variety of views on how to teach the theory in public schools. Some believe it should be taught as a separate subject, while others believe it should be taught alongside evolution.

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For unsolved cases, heartbreak endures

By BRITNEY WILLIAMS

TOPEKA — In the past four years, police checked DNA to see whether Phyllis Doe might be one of three girls missing from an updated country.

She was identified as Erica Green. But those three girls are still missing, along with thousands of other children, and the many fingers for their families and the police who have run out of leads.

"I think about her all the time," said Mary Caspowski, the grand daughter of the girl who disappeared in Lacombe, Wash., six years ago.

An update on the cases of the three girls once thought to be Phyllis Doe.

Teahk Lewis

Mary Caspowski drives a van covered with faces and names of her missing granddaughters.

"We're missing the best ones," Caspowski said. "I hope one day you'll be coming back."

Rita Wilson

Her case was to eight years ago when it was discovered she was not living in Miami with her legal guardian and another woman.

The grandchild claimed that a social worker had taken her to a year-old in north Tulsa, 2001 for medical testing and never returned, according to newspaper reports. The girl's disappearance was announced for

Coming up

"Cold Cases Files," which featured the Precious Doe case, will return that episode Saturday on ABC Television at 8 p.m.

The show plans to run an updated version of the case soon, a spokesman said.

For television's "America's Most Wanted," which featured Precious Doe at least three times, will update the case soon, a spokesman said.

"We had coming to these changes is a very important event to try and give some closure to everyone involved," said Ed Gaffney, a spokesman for the Miami Dade state attorney's office.

The case also has prompted change in Florida social services.

Britney Williams

She was 7 when she was last seen in the Richmond, Va., area on Aug. 10, 2000.

Her name had been brought with a cousin, Kim Parker, who took custody of the child when she was about 12. The girl, mother died of AIDS.

Following Britney's disappearance, an FBI report was connected on federal fraud charges in 2003 for missing Social Security payments received for the girl. Parker is in a federal prison.

Her name changes have been filed related to Britney's disappearance, and authorities now fear she might not have survived without drug treatment for her HIV infection.

A national search began in early 2003 after Parker reportedly said she gave the girl to two women friends in August 2003. But unlike the Precious Doe case in Kansas City, there has been no large community effort to solve Britney's disappearance.

According to Hennessey County police Lt. Doug Perry, "She's been kind of forgotten."

To reach Britney Williams, call (816) 234-4789 or e-mail to britney@ksstar.com.

Relatives recoil at news of slaying

By JOE ROBERTSON

MIAMI, Fla. — Harrell and Michelle Johnson told relatives in spring 2002 that they were going to Kansas City to get jobs.

In reality, Harrell was fleeing the court records about her involvement in a series of murders for which she was wanted for arrest and history.

The trip to Kansas City was an order as a series of troubles for the couple. But family members never suspected the couple would be accused one day of killing and then disappearing Michelle Johnson's daughter during that April trip.

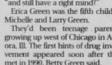
They look back over the four years since Erica Michelle Marie Johnson's failed attempts to get off drugs and keep custody of the three children she had with Harrell, whose name reads "Halle."

"I just don't know how she could do that," said Erica's grandmother, Betty Green, whose son Larry was Erica's father. "She used to bring Erica over and she'd always look so pretty. Erica always had that pretty smile."

Harrell's stepmother, Louise Lewis, sat across from Green in her Michelle Johnson living room and wondered how Michelle could keep the killing she's accused of a secret.



Betty Green



Larry Green

DOE: Girl's final days were filled with abuse

Continued from A-1

to remove Erica from the woman who had raised her from birth. She planned to get the other later.

Erica seemed excited at first to follow her. But she had to be with her biological mother. But she broke into tears when they left the only home she had ever known, Driskell said.

"Michelle was her mother but still was basically a stranger, because she hadn't raised Erica that much," Driskell said.

Harrell, Erica cried often. After two weeks, the crying appeared to push Harrell Johnson over the edge, Driskell said.

"He would beat her for crying, for peeing on herself, if she wouldn't sit, whatever," Driskell said. "He would beat her sometimes with a wet lamp."

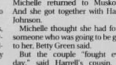
Some hearings made the girl vomit, which brought on another beating, Driskell said.

"We could hear her screaming in the back bedroom," Driskell said. She didn't intervene because it wasn't her business, but she said Michelle that Harrell should ease up. Michelle never really responded.

Once, Driskell said Harrell Johnson started out of the back bedroom and told Michelle "You better go take care of your... daughter, or I'm going to do something bad."



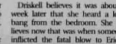
Michelle Johnson



Harrell Johnson



Michelle Johnson



Harrell Johnson

According to court records, Michelle and Harrell told police they took Erica's body from the bedroom window after dark.

Hodge clipped in her yard mysteriously disappeared about that time, Driskell said.

When police found the girl body, Driskell remembers, Michelle seemed outraged by the crime. Not long afterward, she packed and left, perhaps for Chicago.

Michelle called weeks later, Driskell said she told her that the dog girl looked like Erica.

"She said, 'Oh, no. I have Erica here with me.'"

Michelle returned to Kansas City months later with Harrell and a baby born in the fall of 2003. They signed with Driskell's mother before she shackled them out.

The couple eventually returned to Moaklee.

Louise Driskell said she had a feeling that Erica could have been Precious Doe, but not strong enough to report it to police.

Michelle "always had an excuse for everything, and we believed her at the time," Louisa Driskell said. The Star's Louisa contributed to this report.

To reach Louisa Driskell, please contact (816) 234-4638 or send e-mail to louisa@ksstar.com.