

Approved: 3/18/93
Date

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Dave Kerr at 1:30 p.m. on March 17, 1993 in Room 254-E of the Capitol.

All members were present.

Committee staff present: Ben Barrett, Legislative Research Department
Avis Swartzman, Revisor of Statutes
LaVonne Mumert, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Representative Barbara Allen
Janet Schalansky, Director of Workforce Development, Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services
Representative Henry Helgersen

Others attending: See attached list

HB 2188 - Establishing the KanLearn program of incentives for school attendance for certain recipients of aid to families with dependent children

Representative Barbara Allen explained and testified in support of HB 2188 (Attachment 1). She said the bill establishes the KanLearn program as a pilot project in Harvey, Montgomery and Saline Counties and is designed to encourage teenage welfare recipients to stay in school and graduate from high school by providing financial incentives and other support services. Representative Allen advised that the program would sunset in 1996, unless extended, and is designed to measure progress of participants. She said that funding sources would be 59% federal and 41% state, and the fiscal note of the pilot project is estimated to be \$210,000 SGF excluding child care. Representative Allen discussed reasons why the program is based on incentives rather than sanctions. She talked about the connection of KanLearn to KanWork and emphasized that education is essential to increase economic self-sufficiency for welfare recipients. She pointed out that SRS would be responsible for developing rules and regulations establishing academic, behavior and attendance standards as part of administering the program. In responding to questions from Committee members, Representative Allen said that the prepared fiscal note is somewhat misleading because it includes the cost of child care, which is already included in the regular child care budget.

Janet Schalansky, Director of Workforce Development, Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, testified in support of HB 2188 (Attachment 2). She said that the bill would provide some of the services to teen parents who stay in school for which they would be eligible if they dropped out of school and became mandatory for KanWork. She estimated that the total cost for implementing KanLearn statewide would be about \$3 million. Ms. Schalansky stated that she believes the project will result in future savings in public assistance. She advised that SRS would work with individual school districts in setting standards. Senator Hensley suggested that coordination with court services officers might be helpful.

Representative Henry Helgersen spoke in favor of HB 2188. He described the KanLearn program as an attempt to save money in the long term rather than continuing to deal with funding constantly increasing caseloads.

Senator Walker made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 15 and 16, 1993 meetings. Senator Emert seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

SB 67 - School finance, definition of enrollment, new school facility

Chairman Kerr reminded the Committee of the motions to amend SB 67 pending from the March 9, 1993

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, Room 254-E Statehouse, at 1:30 p.m. on March 17, 1993.

meeting. Upon a vote, the substitute motion carried. (The substitute motion was to return line 28, page 2, to original language.)

Senator Langworthy made a motion to further amend SB 67 by adopting the draft amendment discussed at the March 9 meeting (Attachment 3). Senator Corbin seconded the motion, and the motion carried. Senator Walker requested that his "no" vote be recorded.

Senator Emert made a motion to further amend SB 67 by deleting lines 18, 19 and 20, on page 3 and to direct the Chairman to write a letter, on behalf of the Committee, to the Committee on School District Finance and Quality Performance recommending that the definition of "new school facility" be studied and further recommending that provisions relating to declining enrollment also be studied. Senator Frahm seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Senator Frahm made a motion that SB 67, as amended, be recommended favorably for passage. Senator Langworthy seconded the motion, and the motion carried. Senator Walker requested that his "no" vote be recorded.

The Committee was provided with a newspaper article from *The Johnson County Sun* concerning Blue Valley Schools (Attachment 4) and a newspaper article from *The Riley Countian* regarding the Parents as Teachers program (Attachment 5).

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m. The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for Thursday, March 18, 1993.

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

TIME: 1:30 PLACE: 254-E DATE: 3/17/93

GUEST LIST

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>ORGANIZATION</u>
Dan Hermes	Topeka	DB
Jim Spurgeon	Wichita	Private
Barbara Cole	Topeka	KNEA
Michael J. Drillon	Longview	St. Bd. of Ed.
Cornie Huesed	Topeka	SLB & Co
Bob Elliott	Wichita	Federation of Teachers
Donna Newfeld	Newton	WAMFC
RUTHAN HEBERT	NEWTON	WAMFC
Jim Zavallo	Overland Park	USD #51
Wanda [unclear]	Topeka	USA / KAC C
Linda Leming Carter	Topeka	KDHR
Janet Schalausky	Topeka	SRS
Maria Boyd	Topeka	Protestant Sen. Jones
Craig Grant	Topeka	KNEA
Robney Vanzandt	Topeka	KNEA
Wileen Stephens	✓	BV 229 #
Robin Nichols	Wichita	USD 259

BARBARA P. ALLEN
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STATE CAPITOL, ROOM 174-W
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TOPEKA

HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS
VICE CHAIRMAN: FINANCIAL INSTITUTION & INSURANCE
MEMBER: TAXATION
RULES & JOURNAL
JOINT COMMITTEE SPECIAL CLAIMS
AGAINST THE STATE

March 17, 1993

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today on **H.B. 2188**, which establishes the KanLearn program. The sponsors of this bill introduced it because we are unwilling to accept current trends of growing teenage welfare caseloads, and because we want to use this program to objectively measure whether a high school education can have a positive impact on the lives of teenage public assistance recipients. As you will see in one of the charts attached to my testimony, there has been an increase of 2,020 teens on AFDC from FY 1984 to projected FY 1994, or an increase of 22.1% in the number of teenagers on public assistance over the last ten years.

The goal of KanLearn is to encourage teenage welfare recipients to get a high school education, so they can obtain a job and move off welfare. Specifically, financial incentives, and other support services such as child care, transportation, and tutoring and mentoring, would be offered to 13-19 year olds who are: recipients of cash assistance; parents themselves or residing with their natural, adoptive, or foster parents, or legal guardian; not exempted from attending school under state law (religious or home schooling reasons); not the parent of a child 90 days old or less; and who have not graduated from high school or received their GED.

H.B. 2188 calls for the KanLearn pilot project to be offered in three KanWork areas of the state. SRS suggests these pilots be placed in Harvey, Montgomery, and Saline counties. Standards for school attendance, behavior, and academic performance, for purposes of determining eligibility for financial incentives and support services in the KanLearn program, would be implemented by SRS through the Rules and Regulations process. (See attached letter from Secretary Donna Whiteman.) Assuming federal waivers are received, the pilot project would be implemented in the fall 1993 school term.

The KanLearn program is a model, which is sunseted in 1996. If the results do not show that KanLearn participants have a higher high school graduation rate than non-KanLearn participants, the program should be eliminated.

Sen. Education
Attachment 1
3/17/93

The KanLearn pilot program should be structured so that the progress of participants is regularly evaluated, and so that the desired results of the program are objectively measured:

- 1) does school attendance improve for KanLearn participants?
- 2) are KanLearn participants more likely to stay in school and graduate?
- 2) are KanLearn participants more likely to get a job?
- 3) do KanLearn participants ultimately become productive adults and avoid long-term welfare dependency?

I believe the state **should** be in the business of providing special educational incentives for these kids, so that we can help reinforce the importance of a high school education. Most, if not all of them, need incentives to stay in school, because they come from homes where incentives to learn may not be present.

The public assistance population in Kansas is **already** at a disadvantage for competing successfully in the job market because of racism, sexism, and the stigma of being on welfare. We should provide an added incentive through the KanLearn program for teenage welfare recipients to learn, so they can realize the connection between education and success.

Funding for KanLearn would be 59% federal and 41% state. The Department of SRS estimates the fiscal note to the SGF for FY1994 to be \$210,136, excluding child care. This figure is based on a pilot project in three KanWork counties, and includes financial incentive payments at minimum levels, as well as auxiliary services such as transportation, tutoring, and special financial assistance payments. It excludes child care, as this service would already be provided for this population within the regular child care budget.

INCENTIVES RATHER THAN PENALTIES -- This is not the first time you have seen the KanLearn bill in Kansas. It was originally introduced in the form of a penalty, so that recipients who do not stay in school have their welfare benefits reduced. The bill before you provides incentives rather than sanctions for several reasons:

First, using punitive measures, although sometimes politically attractive, are not the answer to keeping kids in school. The states of Wisconsin and Ohio have "Learnfare" education/welfare reform programs, under which a family's AFDC grant is reduced if the child misses more than a designated number of days. In Wisconsin, the program withheld \$3.4 million from welfare families in the first year of the program. However, the program

failed to demonstrate improved school attendance among teens subject to Learnfare; and during the second year of the program, the number of sanctions did not decline.

Second, students are not going to learn the value of an education through financial sanctions. But they might learn the value of an education through positive incentives for returning to class, through mentoring and tutoring services, and through counseling to help resolve the personal or family problems that might be the cause of poor attendance.

Third, cutting a family's welfare grant may be a way to punish a child who refuses to attend school regularly, but it hurts innocent children and other family members, and may leave the family without sufficient income to pay the rent. In a family which is already struggling to survive, imposition of financial sanctions on a child with poor school attendance will only serve to create adversaries between parent and child, and to increase tension and stress in the home.

CONNECTION of KANLEARN TO KANWORK -- The Department of SRS presented a review of the KanWork/JOBS program last month to the House Appropriations SRS subcommittee. Testimony from Secretary Donna Whiteman stated, **"Either Kansas will continue to fund increases in the AFDC program, or it will develop a quality job training self-sufficiency program."**

Secretary Whiteman also told the subcommittee that, in her opinion, **one of the two biggest problems with KanWork was the education component**, and specifically, the failure of many KanWork clients to get their GED. Her testimony in support of **H.B. 2188** in front of the House Appropriations Committee stated, "[o]ur experience has been that the lack of education among Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) recipients is their greatest barrier to achieving self-sufficiency."

It's clear to me that **EDUCATION** is the key to developing a successful jobs program! **Although many circumstances often combine to force a family into welfare dependency, the underlying cause is most often lack of education.** Studies show there is a strong correlation between education and income, and in fact, as one of the attached charts shows, high school graduates in 1990 earned \$4,000 to \$6,000 more annually than those that dropped out.

In Kansas, we are facing an **education crisis** within our welfare population. Many people on public assistance don't receive schooling that will prepare them for the workforce. **In fact, more than 40% of the clients**

entering the KanWork program have not completed high school or obtained a GED. The Department of Labor estimates that the incidence of learning disabilities for the AFDC population in the JOBS program is between 25% and 40%, and Secretary Whiteman believes the actual percentage of learning disabled KanWork clients is between 60% and 80%!

The state of Kansas must expend 55% of the JOBS budget on a federally-mandated target group. It's interesting to note that first priority is given to the target group population, which includes families in which the custodial parent is under age 24 and has not completed high school or is not enrolled in high school or an equivalent course.

States **should** use their financial resources to strengthen the linkages between education and welfare. One of the goals of the KanWork/JOBS program is to slow the growth of cash assistance costs by increasing economic self-sufficiency for welfare recipients. The KanLearn program is an effective tool to help us reach that goal, because it will provide incentives for kids to graduate from high school, so that they can ultimately recognize the connection between education and success, and move off of welfare and into the workforce.

Thank you Mr. Chairman. I will be happy to answer questions.

**Possible Incentive Payments For KanLearn Participants
(as determined by the Secretary of SRS)
Three Pilot KanWork Counties**

Completion of two semesters of high school, and enrollment to attend next semester ----- not less than \$100

Graduation from high school, and receipt of a high school diploma -----
not less than \$250

Other Possible Services/Payments ----- mentoring, tutoring, transportation to and from school, special financial assistance payments determined to be necessary for child to stay in school, subject to appropriations.

LEARNFARE PROGRAMS IN OTHER STATES

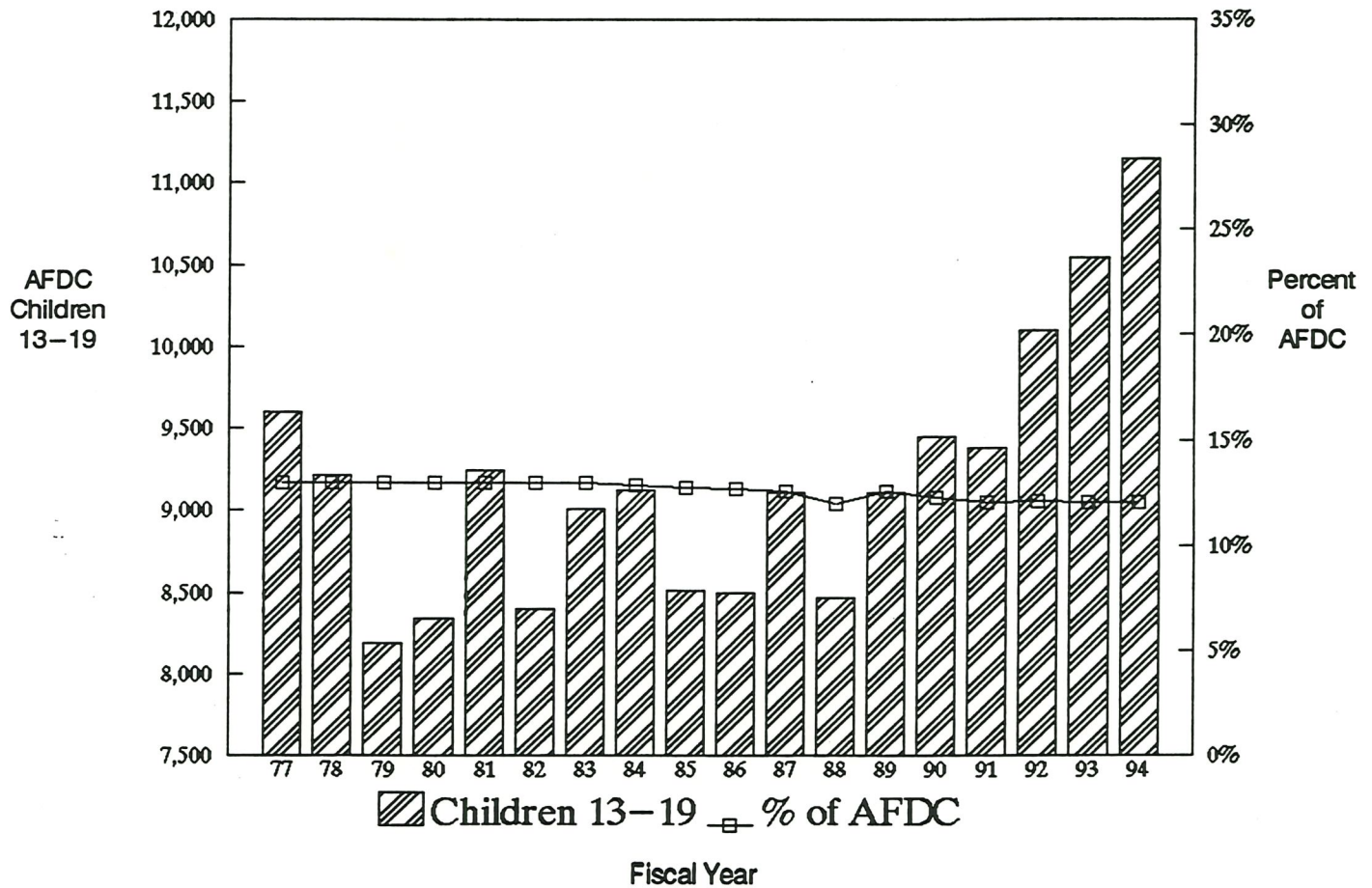
Several other states have adopted or proposed Learnfare programs involving both an incentive and a penalty. The following summarizes other state programs. In some cases these programs are already operating; in other cases, they are current proposals or reflect pending waiver requests:

CalLearn	Teen parents receive a \$50 grant supplement each month if attending high school or GED, or a \$50 reduction if not attending
Maryland	Grant is reduced by a maximum of 30 percent if certain behaviors including school attendance are not maintained
New York	GradFare -- Targets teens age 16 - 18 years of age; sanctions nonschool attendance; restores grant if child returns to school; as an incentive to return to school, the lost grant amounts are paid in a lump sum to the household upon graduation
Ohio	Teen parents receive a \$62 grant supplement if attending school; \$62 reduction if not attending school
Washington	Require parents under age 20 to show progress in completing high school or GED or grant terminates
Wisconsin	13 - 19 year old target group; sanctions for poor school attendance; grant reduced by the equivalent of one person

Department of Social & Rehabilitation Services
March 13, 1993

AFDC School-age Children (Ages 13-19)

FY	Total AFDC	Children Ages 13-19		
		Children 13-19	as a % of Total	Percent Change
1977	73,952	9,595	13.0%	
1978	71,007	9,213	13.0%	-4.0%
1979	63,123	8,190	13.0%	-11.1%
1980	64,273	8,339	13.0%	1.8%
1981	71,276	9,248	13.0%	10.9%
1982	64,737	8,400	13.0%	-9.2%
1983	69,433	9,009	13.0%	7.3%
1984	70,896	9,125	12.9%	1.3%
1985	66,661	8,511	12.8%	-6.7%
1986	67,124	8,501	12.7%	-0.1%
1987	72,492	9,106	12.6%	7.1%
1988	70,789	8,470	12.0%	-7.0%
1989	72,479	9,108	12.6%	7.5%
1990	76,880	9,452	12.3%	3.8%
1991	78,017	9,379	12.0%	-0.8%
1992	83,570	10,092	12.1%	7.6%
1993	87,500	10,542	12.0%	4.5%
1994	92,500	11,145	12.0%	5.7%



COMPARISON OF AVERAGE WAGES EARNED

MEN

1 - 3 Years of High School

4 Years of High School

1970

WAGES	\$8,514	\$9,567
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% OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE	89.0%	--
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1990	\$20,902	\$26,653
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% OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE	78.4%	--
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WOMEN

1 - 3 Years of High School

4 Years of High School

1970

WAGES	\$4,655	\$5,580
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% OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE	83.4%	--
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1990	\$14,429	\$18,319
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% OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE	78.7%	--
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dropouts in the year that they dropped out:

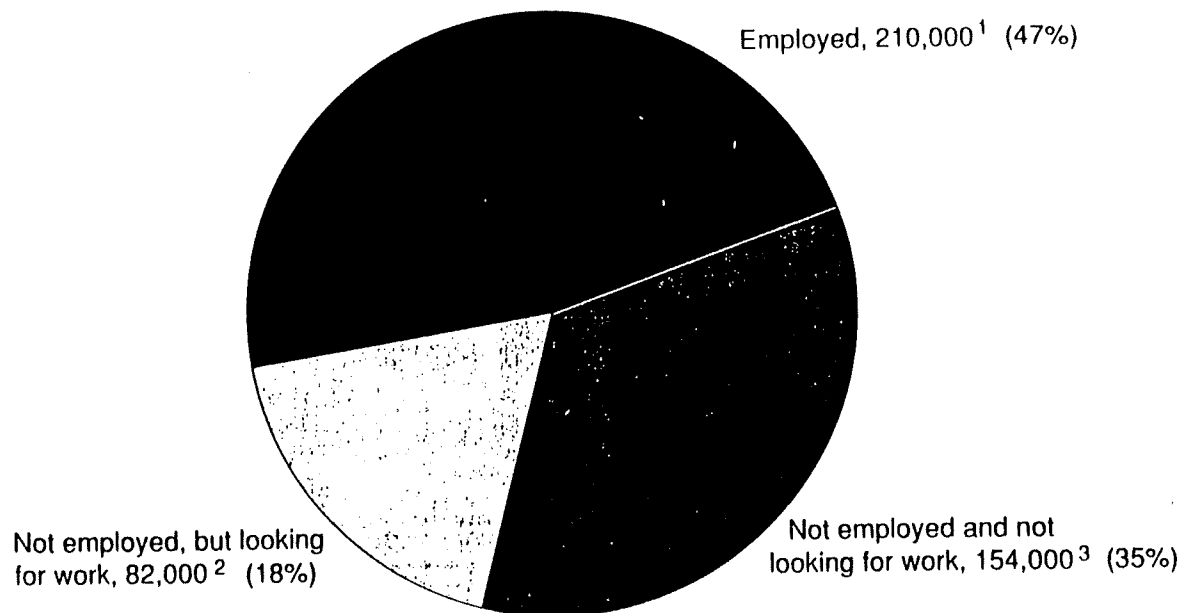
Numbers in thousands]

Year	Civilian labor force status ²			Number not employed and not looking for work
	Labor force participation rate	Percent employed	Percent unemployed ³	
1977	60	74	26	285
1978	63	66	34	272
1979	64	68	32	268
1980	63	64	36	264
1981	63	58	42	247
1982	63	68	32	220
1983	64	67	33	214
1984	67	64	36	199
1985	64	72	28	203
1986	66	62	38	169
1987	59	73	27	225
1988	65	72	28	154

dropped out from any grade without completing high school during the year. The labor force participation rate is the percentage of those seeking employment. The labor force participation rate is the percentage of those seeking employment. The labor force participation rate is the percentage of those seeking employment.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment of School-Age Youth, Graduates, and Dropouts*, various years; and unpublished tabulations.

Employment status of 16- to 24-year-olds who dropped out of school in 1988-89



Total persons who dropped out between October 1988 and October 1989 = 446,000

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment of School-Age Youth, Graduates, and Dropouts*, various years; and unpublished tabulations.

The job outlook for high school dropouts is generally dismal. In October of 1989, only about one-half of those who had dropped out in the previous 12 months were employed. Some of those not working were looking for jobs, but many more were neither employed nor looking for work. A much larger proportion of dropouts (35 percent) than noncollege-enrolled high school graduates (15 percent) were not in the labor force (see Indicator 38).



JOAN FINNEY, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF KANSAS

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL
AND REHABILITATION SERVICES

DONNA WHITEMAN, SECRETARY

March 16, 1993

Rep. Barbara Allen
Statehouse, Room 174W
Topeka, KS 66612

Dear Representative Allen:

In response to information on the possible implementation of HB 2188, an act establishing the KanLearn program, we have determined it will be necessary through rules and regulations to establish criteria which addresses a student's completion of two semesters of school. We believe criteria could include the following factors: 1) Attendance and Behavior. We believe students must adhere to their school's policy on attendance and standards of behavior. 2) Students would be required to make progress toward graduation consistent with their school's performance standards, i.e. the student must receive a passing grade in five classes needed for graduation. The number of classes or credits would be adjusted according to the curriculum and method of counting credits in the local school district. 3) special education students would need criteria consistent with the Individualized Education Plan(IEP). The criteria should be easy to document so the school district would not be required to issue extra or special reports, and easy to interpret so SRS staff can determine the student's eligibility for the incentive without extensive research or follow-up.

I am hopeful this information will be of help to you. If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact my office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Donna L. Whiteman".

Donna L. Whiteman
Secretary

DLW:JKS:cjd
cc:Janet Schalansky

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND REHABILITATION SERVICES
Donna Whiteman, Secretary

Testimony before the Senate Education Committee
H.B. 2188 - KanLearn
March 17, 1993

SRS MISSION STATEMENT

"The Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services empowers individuals and families to achieve and sustain independence and to participate in the rights, responsibilities and benefits of full citizenship by creating conditions and opportunities for change, by advocating for human dignity and worth, and by providing care, safety and support in collaboration with others."

The Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services wishes to express support for House Bill 2188 which establishes the KanLearn pilot project. We believe this action will give teens a clearly understandable and monetarily tangible reason to pursue their education and reduce the likelihood of their future dependence on public assistance. Our experience has been that the lack of education among Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) recipients is their greatest barrier to achieving self-sufficiency. This is illustrated in the data and experience we have gained in the KanWork program. Our data shows 40% of the clients entering the KanWork program have not completed high school or obtained a GED. This project has the potential to reverse the downward spiral of chronic, generational welfare dependency and give teens on assistance the keys to a better future.

Currently teenagers receive cash assistance as a member of a family unit. If the child drops out of school and is 16 years of age or older he/she becomes a mandatory KanWork participant. There are no stipulations if the child is under 16. Should a teenager become pregnant, the baby would become part of the assistance plan of the family. As long as the teen parent stays in school the only service available would be child care, if needed. If the teen parent drops out of school and becomes mandatory for KanWork, then he/she would be eligible for all the KanWork support services, i.e., transportation, child care, special allowance, and education or training funds if needed. HB 2188, KanLearn, would provide some of these services prior to the teen dropping out of school and thus would encourage some teens to stay in school.

As indicated earlier, some AFDC teenagers, sixteen years of age and older, are already being served through the JOBS program in Kansas. SRS has estimated that 35% of 16 to 19 year old dropouts are returning to high school or an equivalent education as a result of conciliatory efforts mandated by the JOBS program. The remaining 65% are sanctionable under JOBS and their needs can be removed from the cash assistance payments. The KanLearn project could provide good incentives to help these teens choose to stay in school.

We would propose the KanLearn project be administered as part of the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training Program (JOBS) as an educational

Sen. Education
Attachment 2
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component to target adolescents. We suggest piloting the program for two years in Harvey, Montgomery, and Saline counties. Although it will be necessary to obtain federal waivers to exempt the incentive payments as countable income in a family's public assistance case, many of the changes will only require state plan modifications. We would not anticipate any problems in getting federal approval, as similar programs have been implemented in other states.

The KanLearn program will require extensive coordination among all levels of SRS and the Kansas Board of Education in the development and maintenance of accurate and efficient reporting tools. We believe through the rules and regulations process, criteria should be developed which requires the student to be making progress toward graduation and to be following school attendance and behavior policies. We feel this effort will be justified by the future savings that will be realized through diverting teens from long term dependence on public assistance.

On page 3, following line 20, by inserting a new section as follows:

"New Sec. 2. (a) The board of any district to which the provisions of this section apply may levy an ad valorem tax on the taxable tangible property of the district each year for a period of time not to exceed two years in an amount not to exceed the amount authorized by the state board of tax appeals under this section for the purpose of financing that portion of the costs attributable to commencing operation of one or more new school facilities which is not financed from any other source provided by law. The state board of tax appeals may authorize the district to make a levy which will produce an amount that is not greater than the difference between the amount of costs directly attributable to commencing operation of one or more new school facilities and the amount provided for such purpose under the school district finance and quality performance act. If the district is not eligible, or will be ineligible, for school facilities weighting in any one or more years during the two-year period for which the district is authorized to levy a tax under this section, the state board of tax appeals may authorize the district to make a levy, in such year or years of ineligibility, which will produce an amount that is not greater than the actual amount of costs attributable to commencing operation of the facility or facilities. At any time after the final levy of a tax authorized under this section is certified to the county clerk, the board of any district to which the provisions of this section continue to apply may initiate procedures to renew the authorization to levy such a tax subject to the conditions and in the manner provided in this section for initial authorization to levy the tax and, at two-year intervals thereafter, may renew in like manner and subject to like conditions such authorization for successive two-year periods.

(b) The state board of tax appeals may adopt rules and

regulations necessary to properly effectuate the provisions of this section, including rules relating to the evidence required in support of a district's claim that the costs attributable to commencing operation of one or more new school facilities are in excess of the amount provided for such purpose under the school district finance and quality performance act.

(c) The proceeds from the tax levied by a district under authority of this section shall be deposited in the supplemental general fund of the district, budgeted in the local option budget of the district as an addition to the amount of such budget adopted under authority of and in accordance with the provisions of K.S.A. 72-6433, and amendments thereto, and used exclusively to supplement amounts expended from the general fund of the district for payment of the costs attributable to commencing operation of new school facilities.

(d) The provisions of this section apply to any district that (1) commenced operation of one or more new school facilities in the school year preceding the current school year or has commenced or will commence operation of one or more new school facilities in the current school year or any or all of the foregoing, and (2) is authorized to adopt and has adopted a local option budget in an amount equal to the state prescribed percentage of the amount of state financial aid determined for the district in the current school year.";

By renumbering sections 2 and 3 as sections 3 and 4, respectively;

In the title, in line 9, before "amending", by inserting "providing for the levy of ad valorem taxes for commencing operation of new school facilities;"

The Sun Newspaper
3-3-93

BV officials: Big enrollment at new high school is no financial bonanza

By Jacqueline Lehatto

Sun Staff Writer

Blue Valley residents who think the school district will get a financial windfall because of the enthusiastic enrollment at the new high school are in for a surprise.

Current state school finance legislation provides an additional \$900 in funds for each student attending schools opening this August. Base funding is \$3,600 per student.

The problem is, according to interim co-superintendent Gary Gordon, additional money needed to open the new high school is more than double \$900 per student. At 1,223 students enrolled, the \$900 per student kicked in by the state leaves a big shortfall, not a windfall.

In the Kansas Senate Education Committee is an amendment to Senate Bill 67 aimed at easing the financial situation for districts faced with large increases in population and building costs. The amendment would allow the districts to raise the actual costs of opening a new school through local sources.

Sen. Bob Vancrum said the amendment would be introduced next week.

Blue Valley suffered a loss in Topeka last week when an amendment to Senate Bill 102 was defeated on the Senate floor. The amendment would have allowed Blue Valley and other districts to raise expenditures by 1 percent to cover the increased costs of staff benefits.

The amendment was defeated, Vancrum said, because it would have only benefited five districts in the state. The amendment for new school expenses would help more districts, he said.

Gordon based his estimate of the actual money needed for the new schools on past experience. When Harmony Elementary and Harmony Middle schools opened last year, the additional \$900 per student brought in approximately \$600,000. The cost to open the schools was actually \$1.9 million.

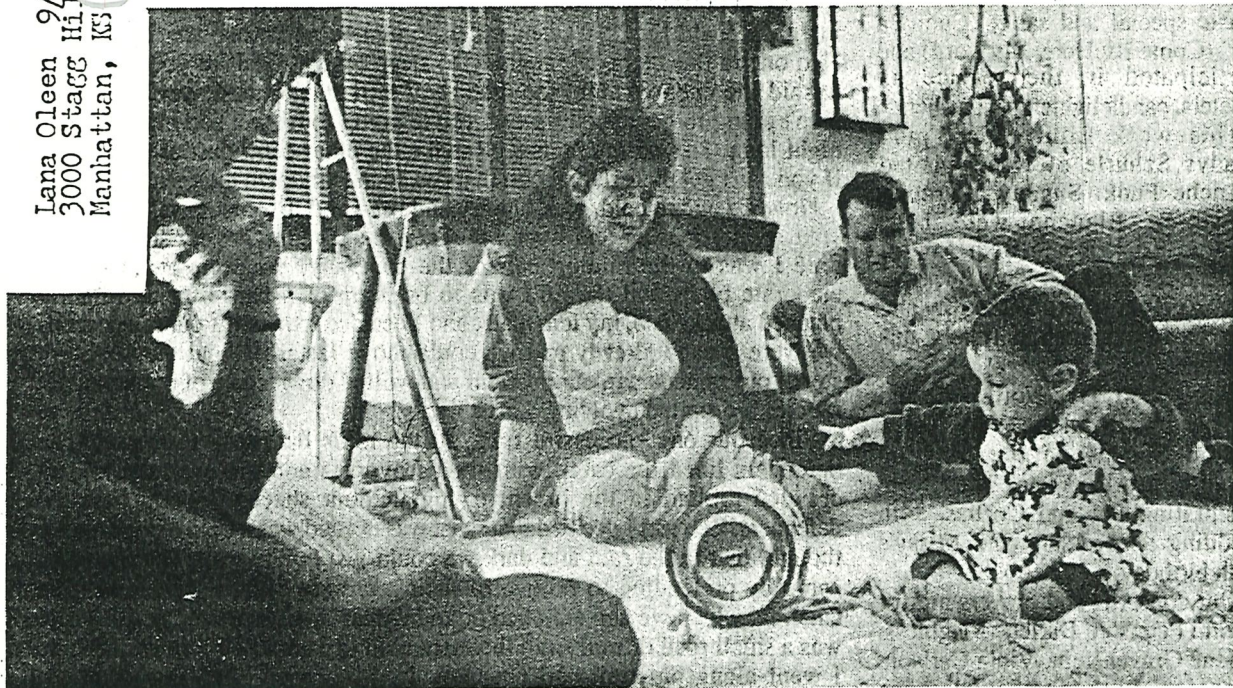
Blue Valley, Gordon said, accounts for 17 percent of all new students in Kansas, putting it No. 1 on the list of student population growth. Olathe is second.

"This is a very unusual situation," Gordon said, "And it calls for unusual (financing) methods." He said the district appreciates the \$900 per student assistance from the state, "But it's not very realistic."

Sen. Education
Attachment 4
3/7/93

T-to help the children

Iana Oleen 9/93
3000 Stagg Hill
Manhattan, KS



Matthew Messerla is the center of attention during an in-home visit by Becky Kacirek, left, and Matthew's parents, Dawn and David. A can and clothespins provide some "homemade" fun. Photo by Romelle VanSickle

By Donna Sullivan, Feature Writer

The role of parents in the early development of their children has always been viewed as an important one. Now there is a program designed to encourage them in their roles as their child's first educator.

With the support of then Governor Christopher "Kit" Bond, the Parents As Teachers Program or PAT, was first introduced in 1981 in Missouri. In 1984 legislation was passed requiring it to be offered by every Missouri school district.

In March of 1990, the program came to Kansas. In August of 1992, Cathy Griffiee and Becky Kacirek were hired to serve the six districts in the Twin Lakes Educational Cooperative. They began seeing families in October. School districts in the Twin Lakes Cooperative are Washington/Greenleaf; Barnes/Linn/Hanover; Morganville/Green/Clay Center/Wakefield/Longford; Miltonvale/Glasco; Randolph/Olsburg; and Riley County.

The program is funded by the Kansas State Board of Education and the districts it serves, each paying fifty percent. Each school district is allotted a certain number of openings according to the amount it contributes towards the cooperative's fifty percent.

The services offered by the program include home visits by a certified parent educator, group meetings with other parents, information and guidance, periodic screening to detect possible learning sensory or developmental problems, and a referral network for special services.

The parent educator makes in-home visits every four to six weeks. She brings with her a lesson plan in one of four developmental areas - motor, intellectual, language, and social.

"All the things we teach are basically things that people have been doing for hundreds of years," says parent educator Cathy Griffiee. "The value of the program is to encourage parents to keep trying those same things and stressing that those things are still of value."

PAT is a big promoter of home-made toys and using every day objects to stimulate and teach a child, "so often parents think that toys have to be elaborate or computerized, when actually kids today are still thrilled with old boxes and wrapping paper," says Cathy. Examples of their home-made toys include picture books made from zip-lock bags, rattles out of detergent bottle lids, and pull toys made from an oatmeal box or shoe box.

In addition to the home visits, the program offers monthly group meetings that alternate between Washington and Clay Center. These meetings offer parents a chance to share parenting experiences with other parents. Sometimes a speaker is invited in.

Cathy stresses that although the Parents-As-Teachers program is through the Twin Lakes Developmental Center, it is not a special education program. All children from birth to three years of age are eligible regardless of income. Since the openings are limited, she would like a waiting list of at least five people from each school district she

even has one baby on her waiting list that hasn't been born yet. As soon as a woman reaches her third trimester of pregnancy she can be put on the waiting list.

Eight-month-old Matthew Messerla and his parents, David and Dawn, have been in the program since he was about three months old. "It has really been a good program for us," says Dawn. "There's a lot of useful information and it reassures us that we're doing O.K."

Eight-month-old Anna Sharp is a baby from the Riley County district that has been in the program for about two months. Her mother, Deanna, is very enthusiastic about PAT. "I think it is a very worthwhile program that everyone should be involved in, even if they have older children," she says.

Places in the program open up when a child turns three and "graduates." A slot will become available in the Riley County District in mid March. Cathy urges anyone interested to call her and get their name on the waiting list. She can be reached at 632-3178, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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