

MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Dwayne Umbarger at 1:35 p.m. on March 4, 2004 in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

All members were present:

Committee staff present:

Carolyn Rampey, Legislative Research
Kathie Sparks, Legislative Research
Theresa Kiernan, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Judy Steinlicht, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Theresa Kiernan, Revisor of Statutes
Gary Norris, Superintendent, USD 305-Salina
Marilyn Greene, Executive Director of School Improvement, USD 305-Salina
Kathy Taylor, Principal, USD 443-Dodge City Middle School
Jackie Feist, Principal, USD 443-Dodge City High School
Tom Biggs, Superintendent, USD 490-El Dorado
John Morton, Superintendent, USD 465-Newton
Fred Kaufman, Superintendent, USD 489-Newton

Others attending:

See Attached List

Chairman Umbarger advised that information has been passed out to committee members from Carolyn Rampey as a follow-up to her presentation on the Augenblick & Myers Study given yesterday. (Attachment 0)

Theresa Kiernan, Office of the Revisor, gave a quick overview of **SB465**.

Dr. Gary W. Norris, Superintendent, USD 305, Salina Public Schools gave testimony in support of **SB465**. Dr. Norris emphasized that every child deserves a quality education regardless of the color of his skin or where he lives. Some children need more time and resources to gain proficiencies. School finance must evolve to a discussion of each individual child and what resources it will take to position that child to reach their potential and beyond. Dr. Norris stated that he was tired bickering over the amount of money the district receives. He believes it is time to move beyond discussing the dollars that go into each school district's treasury and move to "the dollars it costs" to do what we are mandated and morally obligated to do for each child. (Attachment 1)

Marilyn Green, PhD, Executive Director for School Improvement for Salina Public Schools, presented categorized charts representing white students, Hispanic students, black students, free & reduced lunch students, ELL students and students with disabilities, to show the percentage of children in each category performing/not performing at a proficient level. These statistics were based on the State Math Assessment Test for the school year 2002-03 for 4th, 7th & 10th grade and the State Reading Assessment Test for the school year 2002-03 for 5th, 8th, & 11th grade.

The percent of proficiency dropped significantly from the 4th grade math assessment to 7th grade and again in 10th grade. In reading, the proficiency rate dropped in most categories from 5th grade to 8th grade but a few categories improved, but by 11th grade all scores were lower. This data shows that the job of educating these students to proficiency is not being done. These results are not satisfactory. Dr. Green believes that schools can reverse this trend. She says that thousands of highly successfully teachers must be retrained because their job description has been changed and they must have extended learning time for these students that are failing. Dr. Green said another component could be provided at no cost and that is courage to change and find out what is required to teach all of Kansas children. (Attachment 2)

Kathy E. Taylor, Principal, Dodge City Middle School, gave testimony in favor of **SB465**. Kathy told the committee that her school has 800 students of which 58% are Hispanic, 26% are second language learners, 14% are identified with special education needs, and 62% are classified as at-risk. These

CONTINUATION SHEET

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students for years have performed below their peers and they realized they needed different tools to make a difference with this population. They knew that it would take money to accomplish this and began to actively seek resources outside of state general fund money. They secured federal dollars through grants such as Gear Up, 21st Century Learning Communities and Title III initiative with Kansas State University. These dollars enabled the instructors to be trained on reading strategies, to gain insight into additional research based instructional techniques that are effective with second language learners and to have the 8th grade reading class cut in half. They were also able to provide after school and summer learning opportunities. With these changes, reading scores improved dramatically in all categories. Without the additional funds, they would not have been able to accomplish this improvement. (Attachment 3)

Jacque Feist, Principal, Dodge City High School, told the committee that, like the middle school, scores at the high school improved with the changes made with the grant money. Jacque said it was the belief of the staff that it is in the best interest of the community for these students to be educated. It takes more time to teach these students and time requires money. Jacque asked the committee to take into consideration all of our students when determining what is fair and equitable in establishing a school finance formula. (Attachment 4)

Dr. Tom Biggs, Superintendent of Schools, USD 490, El Dorado, told the committee that schools have been underfunded for 10 years. Dr. Biggs explained to the committee how the changes covered in **SB465** on low enrollment weighting, capital outlay and local option budgets would affect the schools. Dr. Biggs believes that **SB465** solves the funding problems stated in Judge Bullock's Preliminary Order. (Attachment 5)

Dr. John Morton, Superintendent, USD 373, Newton Public Schools, told the committee that their number of students with special needs, students that qualify for free and reduced lunches and students whose primary language is not English has increased and their fiscal resources have been stretched. With additional funding, they could provide smaller class sizes and provide additional resources to support student learning in order for students to meet NCLB accountability standards and provide early childhood services to meet the needs of more young families who reside in the school district. (Attachment 6)

Fred Kaufman, Superintendent, USD 489, Hays, spoke in favor of **SB465** on behalf of Schools for Fair Funding. **SB465** would provide enough money to educate all school children in Kansas. The cost seems high, but Mr. Kaufman asked the committee to remember that for the past twelve years we may have been operating under a system that was unconstitutional, some districts were under-funded to begin with twelve years ago, funding hasn't increased at an inflationary rate over this time period, schools have an increased set of demands, and during this time there have been tax cuts, not increases. (Attachment 7)

Time did not allow for two additional conferees. Chairman Umbarger stated the hearings would be continued on another day. Meeting was adjourned at 2:33 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for March 8, 2004.