

MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jean Schodorf at 1:40 p.m. on February 14, 2008, in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

Committee members absent:

Committee staff present: Sharon Wenger, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Carol Toland, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Theresa Kiernan, Revisor of Statutes Office
Matt Todd, Revisor of Statutes Office
Shirley Higgins, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Senator Barbara Allen
Mark Tallman, Kansas Association of School Boards
Stuart Little, Shawnee Mission School District 512
Bill Reardon, Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools
Bill Brady, Schools for Fair Funding
Jan Lariviere, Associate Director for Teacher Development,
University of Kansas
Dr. Joe Steinmetz, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and
Sciences, University of Kansas

SB 532 – School districts; school finance; non-proficient pupil weighting

Sharon Wenger, Legislative Research Department, explained that **SB 532** would increase the non-proficient pupil weighting that each school district currently gets (.0465) to the regular at-risk weight rate (.456). She noted that the fiscal note on the bill was approximately \$72 million.

Senator Barbara Allen testified in support of **SB 532**. She explained that the issue of funding for non-proficient at-risk students was brought to her attention by the Shawnee Mission school district. She went on to explain that the 2006 Legislature initiated the non-proficient at-risk aid category and funded it at \$10 million, and the 2007 Legislature renewed the program, made it permanent, and again added \$10 million. She pointed out that the bill would equalize the funding rate for non-proficient at-risk students with the funding rate for regular at-risk students. She commented that poverty is the most obvious indicator of at-risk students; however, every child who meets the federal poverty requirements to generate at-risk revenue is not necessarily at-risk. In her opinion, every child who is proven not to be meeting math and science achievement objectives is at risk and requires extra services, regardless of the family's income. She noted that, because the costs associated with implementing **SB 532** are so great, the Committee may want to discuss a phase-in program for non-proficient funding to rise and eventually equal regular at-risk funding. (Attachment 1)

Mark Tallman, Kansas Association of School Boards (KASB), testified in support of **SB 532**. He explained that, although KASB has not adopted a position regarding the specific level of non-proficient weighting, their school finance resolution for 2008 supports an increase in both poverty and non-poverty based criteria for at-risk funding; therefore, KASB supports the concept of **SB 532**. (Attachment 2)

Stuart Little testified in support of **SB 532** on behalf of Shawnee Mission School District 512. He explained that the number of at-risk children under the federal poverty (free lunch) guidelines continues to increase in the Shawnee Mission school district. At the same, there are a number of students who are non-proficient according to test scores, but the funding the district receives for them is disproportionately small compared to the funding received for those who generate revenue under the at-risk program simply because of poverty. Because these students are not below the federal free lunch guidelines does not eliminate their needs or the district's responsibility to serve. In his opinion, school districts should be funded at the same rate for regular at-risk and non-proficient at-risk. (Attachment 3)

Bill Reardon, representing Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools, testified in opposition to **SB 532**. The Kansas City school district was not opposed to an increase in school funding in the third year of the school finance law; however, the district believes that adding new dollars to the base would be more appropriate.

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE Senate Education Committee at 1:40 p.m. on February 14, 2008, in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

Mr. Reardon noted that full funding of the third and final year of the school finance law will still fall short of the Legislative Division of Post Audit's recommendation for at-risk students and will be dramatically below the Legislative Post Audit's recommendation for base state aid. The district believes that new state dollars should first be used to achieve the recommended level of funding. (Attachment 4)

Bill Brady, Schools For Fair Funding, testified in opposition to **SB 532**. He commented that **SB 532** was an excellent attempt to enhance the funding which was established with the passage of **SB 549** in the 2005 legislative session. He noted that proponents of **SB 549** acknowledged that it did not meet the actual costs identified in the Legislative Post Audit study. Schools For Fair Funding believes that the Post Audit study should remain as the blue print for future school finance decisions. Furthermore, Schools For Fair Funding believes that it is important to focus on the huge challenges facing public schools over the next few years in meeting annual yearly progress (AYP) goals. Noting that schools with large numbers of at-risk students will need the most resources to meet the AYP goals, he urged the Committee to avoid the temptation to direct very limited resources into areas not proven to provide the desired results. (Attachment 5)

There being no others wishing to testify, the hearing on **SB 532** was closed.

Informative Presentation on Ukan Teach, University of Kansas

Jan Lariviere, Ukan Teach Program Coordinator, KU Center for Science Education, began the presentation by posing the question, "Where are the future STEM leaders going to come from if our science and mathematics education programs collapse?" She then discussed the teacher shortage in Kansas and described successful models used to encourage more students to become math and science teachers. Dr. Joe Steinmetz, Dean of the KU college of Liberal Arts and Sciences, presented information on STEM teacher development and funding for Ukan Teach. (Attachment 6)

Senator Schodorf called the Committee's attention to the minutes of the January 29, 30, and 31 meetings.

Senator Vratil moved to approve the minutes of the January 29, 30, and 31 meetings, seconded by Senator Ostmeyer. The motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 18, 2008.