

MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jean Schodorf at 1:35 p.m. on February 26, 2008, in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

Committee members absent: Anthony Hensley- excused

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: None

Report of the Senate Education Subcommittee on Virtual Schools

Senator John Vratil, Chairman of the subcommittee on virtual schools, distributed copies of the Report to the Senate Education Committee, which was prepared by the Kansas Legislative Research Department. (Attachment 1) He informed the Committee that the subcommittee met four times in February. The subcommittee received input from Legislative Research staff, Legislative Post Audit, representatives of virtual schools across the state, and the subcommittee also considered the minutes of a December 6, 2007, conference meeting that was attended by 20 out of 25 virtual schools across the state. He briefly summarized the subcommittee's conclusion and recommendations, which were summarized on page two of the report. He reported that the subcommittee recommended that the Senate Education Committee request the introduction of a bill to implement the recommendations of the subcommittee and that the bill be introduced during the 2008 session through an exempt committee.

Senator Ostmeyer moved to introduce a bill concerning virtual schools as recommended by the subcommittee, seconded by Senator Pine. The motion carried.

ACTION ON BILLS PREVIOUSLY HEARD:**SB 399 – School districts; mandatory attendance of kindergarten, age of eligibility**

Theresa Kiernan, Revisor of Statutes Office, reviewed the provisions in the bill. She then distributed copies of a balloon amendments on page 6 and 7 of the bill wherein original language was stricken and new language was inserted to provide that no child shall be required to attend kindergarten if the child is a member of a religious denomination which objects to the attendance of kindergarten and if a written statement is filed with the board of education of the school district in which the child resides. (Attachment 2)

Senator Lee moved to amend SB 399 as shown in the balloon, seconded by Senator Teichman. The motion carried.

Senator Vratil moved to amend SB 399 on page 4, line 11, by striking the word “seven” and inserting the word “six”, seconded by Senator Teichman. The motion carried.

Senator Apple moved to recommend SB 399 favorably for passage as amended, seconded by Senator Pine. The motion carried.

SB 407 – Transfer of authority of certain early childhood education programs to Kansas State Department of Education

Sharon Wenger, Kansas Legislative Research Department, distributed copies of a chart comparing the provisions in SB 407 with current law and the Governor's proposal. (Attachment 3)

In response to questions raised by the Committee about the federal Head Start program, Mary Basket,

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Director of the Kansas Head Start Association, explained that federal Head Start does not have a state administrative component. The federal dollars go directly from Washington to the local programs. However, there is a Head Start collaboration office in each state. In Kansas, the collaboration office is housed in SRS, but SRS has no administrative funding or oversight responsibility for Head Start. She further explained that there are 24 Head Start programs based in Kansas. Of those 24, 15 have Early Head Start programs, and they have a strong connection with Head Start. Some federal dollars go directly to local programs for Early Head Start. There are also dollars that go through the state for the Kansas Early Head Start program, and that funding is allocated by the Legislature. She also explained that some of the Kansas Head Start programs are part of the pre-k pilot, depending in the community.

Senator Steineger moved to recommend **SB 407** favorably for passage, seconded by Senator Vratil. The motion carried.

Senator Schodorf called attention to the minutes of the February 19 and 20 meetings.

Senator Apple moved to approve the minutes of the February 19 and 20 meetings, seconded by Senator Ostmeyer. The motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:25 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 27, 2008.