

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Steve Huebert at 1:30 pm on Monday, March 16, 2020, in room 218-N of the Capitol.

All members were present

Committee staff present:

Deborah Bremer, Committee Assistant  
Edward Penner, Legislative Research Department  
Jason Long, Office of Revisor of Statutes  
Matthew Willis, Legislative Research Department

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

Senator Molly Baumgardner  
Ethan Belshe, Kansas Department for Children and Families  
Dr. Jane Adams, Keys for Networking, Inc.

Others in attendance:

[See Attached List](#)

**Hearing on: SB384 — Requiring a Kansas foster care children annual academic report card.**

Chairperson Huebert opened the hearing on **SB384**.

Revisor Jason Long gave an overview of the bill. ([Attachment 1](#))

Senator Baumgardner spoke as a proponent of the bill. She wrote this bill (based on the Indiana bill that was put into statute last year), as the Chairperson of the Senate Education Committee, because of the lack of information and continuity among the foster care children, the Department of Children and Families and the school systems. She believes in data, as the basis for policy change. At this point there is not enough data to make effective policy in relation to foster care children and their educational journey. This bill would gather the necessary data needed to comprehend the present situation and begin to craft any changes needed to support these children as they navigate the system. There are many reasons that children end up in Foster Care. 2,397 children were placed in Foster care in the past 6 months. In the shifting sands of foster homes, parents who are not able to care and support their children; schools are often the most stable piece of their lives. There are presently 8,000 children being fostered. We must help them, they are ours, she urged the Committee to pass this bill so data can be gathered and supportive policy for these children can be crafted. ([Attachment 2](#))

There was a short discussion with the Representatives and Senator Baumgardner.

Ethan Belshe spoke as a proponent for this bill on behalf of the Kansas Department for Children and

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Families (DCF). DCF supports this bill wholeheartedly. They will use the data to improve outcomes for foster youth. Presently, they send the Kansas Department of Education a data file every day, for every child in the KS school system. DCF requests that there be a small amendment in the bill to add the number and percentage of foster youth participating in the Mental Health Intervention Team Pilot Program. ([Attachment 3](#))

Dr. Jane Adams spoke in favor of the bill from her viewpoint as representing a family organization for parents and their children who have severe emotional behavioral problems. Her organization uses the tool of a report card, to share a student's history, quick information and a clear snapshot of their education so far. She noted that foster kids have many elective classes because they are easier to transfer into if the student comes in mid-semester. Data gathering is important but data intervention is key to helping these children catch up and get the credits they need to graduate and to succeed. ([Attachment Testimony 4](#)) ([Attachment Handout 5](#))

Chairperson Huebert closed the hearing on **SB384**.

**Final action on bills previously heard**

The Chairperson called for final action on **SB230**.

Revisor Jason Long gave an overview of the bill.

Representative Johnson questioned whether salary levels are normally addressed in Kansas statute. Revisor Long answered that he could not find anything of this kind in present statute. In practice, salary is set by the overseeing Secretary of said Department and approved by the Governor.

Representative Johnson introduced a balloon amendment to SB230 moved, Representative Samsel seconded, the passage of a balloon amendment #2. ([Attachment 6](#))

Chriz Dally, Chair of the Kansas Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (KCDHH), in response to a direct question, gave an explanation about the process by which the salary of the staff is decided at this point. Presently it is set by the Secretary of the Department of Children and Families (DCF). If there is another way to address it, so that it is more equitable, she would be glad to discuss that, but she feels it is fair to have equal pay among state employees that serve jobs with equal responsibility.

There was a brief discussion about how salaries are set. The question is whether a salary should be put into Kansas Statute. There was an observation about what appears to be tension between DCF and KCDHH. The agencies are working on trying to strengthen the relationship, Chriz Dally stated, and the other changes in the bill will help but she is not sure if the salary issue will be agreed on.

Representative Johnson stated he is concerned about the consequences and precedent that this type of

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legislation sets. He closed on his amendment.

The Chairperson called for action on the Johnson amendment to remove the language that would set the salary level of the Kansas commission for the deaf and hard of hearing executive director to be comparable to the salaries of executive directors of other commissions.

Representative Johnson moved, Representative Samsel seconded, the passage of the balloon amendment #2 to **SB230**. Motion passed.

The Chairperson called for final action on **SB230**.

Representative Toplikar moved, Representative Dietrich seconded, **SB230** as amended be recommended favorably for passage. Motion carried.

The Chairperson called for final action on **SB271**. He explained that he would like to use this bill as a shell because the House already has a position on it.

Representative Dietrich proposed to strike the contents of **SB271** (High density at risk weighting) and replace it with the contents of **HB2519** (Student's right to know).

Revisor Jason Long reviewed **HB2519** and **SB271**. The Student's Right to Know was substantially amended by this Committee to primarily serve as an advisory bill to inform students of higher education opportunities. Representative Benson noted that there was also a change that identified "students" as 7th grade through 12th grade.

Representative Dietrich moved, Representative Karlskint seconded, to strike the entire contents of **SB271** and replace it with **HB2519**. Motion carried.

Chairperson Huebert proposed adding **HB2573** (Civics Test) as a balloon amendment to **SB271**. Revisor Jason Long explained the **PROPOSED Substitute for HB2573** was slightly amended, after consultation with the Kansas State Board of Education, and the bill now was more suggestive in encouraging public and private schools to have students pass the United States citizenship naturalization test that is necessary for immigrants to pass in order to become citizens. ([Attachment 7](#))

Representative Dietrich made a motion to add the proposed substitute for **HB2573** to **SB271**. Representative Johnson seconded. There was a discussion in which the Chairperson explained that he had worked with the State Board of Education and that the bill now is an encouragement rather than a requirement that students take the test.

Representative Dietrich moved, Representative Johnson seconded, to add **Substitute for HB2573** into

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**SB271.** Motion passed.

Representative Dietrich moved, Representative Helmer seconded, to pass **House Substitute for SB271** as amended favorably for passage. Motion passed.

Chairperson asked for final action for **SB284**, disability placards. Jason Long gave an overview of the bill.

Representative Dietrich moved, Representative Schreiber seconded, to change the effective date of **SB284** to be the publication in the Kansas Register. Motion passed.

Representative Dietrich moved, Representative Thomas seconded, to pass out **SB284** favorably as amended. Motion passed.

Chairperson Huebert asked for final action on **SB384** without objection. There was a short discussion but no objection to working the bill the same day of the hearing.

Representative Dietrich moved, Representative Benson to pass out **SB384** favorably.

Representative Clayton moved, Representative Karlskint seconded, to conceptually amend **SB384** as per the request from the Department of Children and Families. Motion passed.

The Revisor will make these amendments.

Representative Benson requests information about how the Department of Children and Families (DCF) plans to get a non-duplicative count. He wants to have good data. Staff will work to get that request sent to DCF.

Representative Dietrich moved, Representative Clayton seconded, that **SB384** be passed favorably and that the Office of the Revisor be granted the ability to do technical cleanup. Motion passed.

The Chairperson noted that the future is unsure for the Committee because of the Covid-19 situation, but thanked them for all the good work that they have done.

Chairperson Huebert adjourned the meeting at 2:40.