

MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jean Schodorf at 1:40 p.m. on January 30, 2006, in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

Committee members absent:

Committee staff present: Deb Hollon, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Kathie Sparks, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Theresa Kiernan, Revisor of Statutes  
Shirley Higgins, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Craig Grant, USD 497 School Board member (Lawrence)  
Jim Edwards, Kansas Association of School Boards  
Mark Desetti, Kansas National Education Association  
(KNEA)  
Dale Dennis, Deputy Commissioner, State Department of  
Education

**SB 348—School districts; board meetings; yearly schedule of date and time of meetings**

Theresa Kiernan, Revisor of Statutes Office, noted that **SB 348** was introduced at the request of the Lawrence school districts. She explained that the bill amends current law which directs the local school boards to publish their upcoming meetings for the year. Under current law, districts must publish a resolution that states the regular time the board is going to meet, the regular hour, the day of the week, and the week of the month. The amendment would provide that the district adopt a resolution setting a yearly schedule of regular meetings, but the resolution would still specify the place and the time of the commencement of the meeting.

Craig Grant, a member of the USD 497 school board in Lawrence, testified in support of **SB 348**. He explained that the bill would basically change what happens during a school board's organizational meeting in July. Currently, a board establishes a certain day of the month for regular meetings. The bill would provide that the board set the actual meeting dates for the fiscal year and publish the dates. In his opinion, this change would alleviate any unnecessary confusion and minimize the number of possible date changes that a board would make during the school year. (Attachment 1)

Jim Edwards, Kansas Association of School Boards, testified in support of **SB 348**. He noted that some districts are already operating as described in the new language, but the bill would provide the clarification needed. (Attachment 2)

There being no others wishing to testify, the hearing on **SB 348** was closed.

Senator Teichman moved that SB 348 be recommended favorably for passage, seconded by Senator Vratil. The motion carried.

**Overview of Kansas elementary and secondary school issues**

Mark Desetti, KNEA, discussed the following challenges which public schools face:

- The achievement gap;
- Ever growing challenges in the context of funding actions since 1993;
- The educator shortage;
- Shifting funding sources; and
- The extremist anti-government agenda. (Attachment 3)

Mr. Desetti also commented on the Legislative Post Audit cost study analysis for K-12 education. He noted that the study confirmed the findings of previous studies, and the overall funding level identified in the study was not significantly different from other studies. He pointed out that the significant challenges within the

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study which be believed needed to be addressed by the Legislature ( transportation weighting, vocational weighting, teacher salaries, and low enrollment weighting). (Attachment 4)

Senator Schodorf turned the Committee's attention to a previously heard bill, **SB 369** concerning school finance relating to local option budgets (LOB).

In response to questions raised at the hearing, Theresa Kiernan, Revisor of Statutes Office, distributed copies of a table which compared the current law relating to the LOB contained in K.S.A. 72-6434 with **SB 369**. (Attachment 5)

Dale Dennis, Deputy Commission, State Department of Education, distributed a table regarding the statutory formula which determines the average budget per pupil of general LOB for each district. He explained, "With this formula, this depicts what the state average is for that enrollment group." (Attachment 6) In addition, he distributed copies of a table listing school districts along with columns of information relating to the LOB. (Attachment 7) He explained that his staff used the formula to compute the figures shown in column 7. He noted, "If you see a zero in column 7, in essence, you are above the average. And, if there is a number in column 7, that's the amount you are below the average. We'll take that number when were through auditing and convert it into a percent. And we did this low to high. The majority of the districts will probably be on the list because this is one year up. Some of them will be real small. Blue Valley has an authority for 29 percent, so it doesn't make any difference whether above or below. They have the authority without this. But, in their case, they get \$196.00, which would compute to 1 percent or 2 percent, whatever it happens to be. This is just a simple calculation. Each year, you compare each district with their appropriate enrollment with a table you put in statute. And it's updated every year. The numbers on this table were less last year. There's a slight increase because of the authority you gave them last year."

Mr. Dennis responded to Committee questions concerning the difference between the provisions in the bill and current law. Senator Lee requested that he provide a list of the current LOBs – the percentages that have been adopted and the mill rate required to go to the total amount allowable by law. She commented, "I'm a no on this bill because I think what we're doing with local option budgets to our poorer districts is outrageous."

Senator Vratil moved that SB 369 be recommended favorably for passage, seconded by Senator Allen. Committee discussion regarding the LOB provisions in the bill followed. On a call for a vote on Senator Vratil's motion, the motion failed on a show of hands.

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

The next meeting is scheduled for January 31, 2006.

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