

MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jean Schodorf at 1:40 p.m. on March 1, 2005, in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

Committee members absent: Senator Apple—excused

Committee staff present: Carolyn Rampey, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Theresa Kiernan, Revisor of Statutes
Shirley Higgins, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Senator Jim Barnett
Elizabeth Yanik, Emporia State University
Ted Vannocker, Principal/Superintendent, Marais des
Cygnes Valley, USD 456
Diane Lindeman, Kansas Board of Regents
Bill Reardon, Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools

SB 44—Teacher Service Scholarship Program; preference for math and science teachers

Senator Jim Barnett, the author of **SB 44**, noted that the bill was the result of regional and statewide interest in dealing with the need for math and science teachers in the state. The bill provides incentives for high school graduates to pursue a career in math and science. It would add math and science educators to the definition of teachers who are in critical shortage, and it would give priority to math and science teachers who stay within the state and teach for a period of up to four years. (Attachment 1) Senator Barnett explained that the scholarship is currently \$5,000 per year for students who attend a state educational institution or a Kansas private postsecondary educational institution.

Senator Barnett distributed copies of a balloon of the bill and explained the amendments shown. He explained that the middle school model starts at fifth grade, not sixth grade; therefore, “six” is changed to “five” on page 1, line 30, and on page 2, line 12. He noted “certification” is changed to “licensure” on page 2, line 11. (Attachment 2)

Theresa Kiernan, Revisor of Statutes Office, explained that the bill would amend the current Teacher Service Scholarship Program by adding to the definition of hard-to-fill teaching disciplines the teaching disciplines of math and science for any of the grades five through twelve. She noted that the definition section was amended to define what a “state educational institution” is and what a “private postsecondary educational institution” is. She explained that language on page 2 says that preference shall be given to qualified students who have been accepted for admission to or who are enrolled in an approved course of instruction leading to the certification as a teacher in the disciplines of mathematics and science. She explained that it was necessary to strike language on page 2, line 23, to clarify that “institution” does not refer to an out-of-state institution but only to an educational institution in Kansas.

Elizabeth Yanik, a teacher of mathematics at Emporia State University, testified in support of **SB 44**. She emphasized that, with the approaching retirement of many experienced math and science teachers, the projected number of graduates in teacher preparation programs may not provide a sufficient number of replacements. She noted that, with No Child Left Behind, the credentials for middle school mathematics teachers require more hours in their content areas. Now middle school mathematics teachers will be certified as 5-8 or grades 6-12 teachers. Therefore, a bill which highlights service scholarships for those intending to teach science and mathematics in grades 6-12 is most welcome. (Attachment 3)

Ted Vannocker, Marais des Cygnes Valley District 456, testified in support of **SB 44**. He noted that Kansas classrooms have faced a shortage of mathematics teachers for over twenty years, and the lack of qualified mathematics and science teachers becomes more of a problem with each new school year. He noted that, although the bill will not solve the problem, it is a positive attempt to respond to the needs of Kansas students. (Attachment 4)

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE Senate Education Committee at 1:35 p.m. on March 1, 2005, in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

Diane Lindeman, Director of Financial Assistance, Kansas Board of Regents, commented that, as currently drafted, **SB 44** would have no fiscal effect on the Kansas Teacher Service Scholarship Program. However, she felt it was important to note that the current program states that, subject to appropriation, the maximum award allowed for this program is 70% of the cost to attend a state educational institution in Kansas. She explained that, prior to current law, the maximum award amount was \$5,000. The Board of Regents has continued to award at the maximum level of \$5,000 to enable more students to receive scholarship funding. If the Board had followed the 70% maximum, the scholarship award would be approximately \$8,000. She noted that, if **SB 44** had been in effect for FY 2005, and if preference had been given to math and science teachers, 36 additional math and science applicants could have been awarded scholarships. Awarding the additional 36 math or science applicants at the \$5,000 level would have cost an additional \$180,000. (Attachment 5)

Bill Reardon, representing Kansas City, Kansas, Public Schools, testified in support of **SB 44** with the addition of a provision to ensure specific incentives for accepting employment in high need districts and a provision to include alternatively licensed candidates. He noted that, although it is imperative that the pool of qualified mathematics and science teachers be dramatically increased, urban districts also face the challenge of recruiting teachers to areas with high concentrations of at-risk and bilingual students. The bill does not address the lack of qualified teachers in these fields. He suggested that the scholarship program also be made available to teacher candidates in alternative licensing programs to assist the transition of persons with mathematics and science degrees to the education field. (Attachment 6)

There being no others wishing to testify, the hearing on **SB 44** was closed.

Senator Schodorf called the Committee's attention to the minutes of the February 8, 9, and 10 meetings.

Senator Vratil moved to approve the minutes of the February 8, 9, and 10, 2005, meetings, seconded by Senator Steineger. The motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 2, 2005.