

MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jean Schodorf at 1:35 p.m. on February 13, 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: Tom Laing, InterHab
Senator John Vratill
Senator Nick Jordan
Eric Staffor, Associated General Contractors
Jackie Koehler, Kansas, Inc.
Mark Tallman, Kansas Association of School Boards

Continued hearing on:

SB 408 – Early childhood education programs; transfer of the administration of tiny-k, early head start and the pre-k pilot to State Board of Education

Tom Laing, Executive Director, InterHab, testified in opposition to **SB 408**. He explained that InterHab members are a large part of the state service network for persons with developmental disabilities, and they are deeply involved with the tiny-k program. In his opinion, the bill ignores the differences between the roles of education and the tiny-k program, and it does nothing to address the financial challenges facing the program. He pointed out that the four key components which make the tiny-k network a success are not among the core emphasis of the education system. He noted that the tiny-k program works well despite historic under-funding because of community collaboration. He emphasized that the most prominent unspoken policy question in the bill was: Should public schools become one-stop shops for all children and all families for education and non-education services from birth to high school graduation? He urged the Committee not to assign duties to the public school system for which they are not suited or qualified. (Attachment 1)

Senator Schodorf commented that **SB 407** and **SB 408** address two issues – **B 407** transfers the authority for the pre-k pilot and the four-year-old at-risk while **SB 408** involves federal dollars and requires a Governor's directive to transfer the administration of tiny-k and the pre-k pilot. She noted that, should the Committee decide not to work **SB 408**, **SCR 1614** addresses the same issue and could be considered instead. With this, she closed the hearings on **SB 407** and **SB 408**.

SB 492 – Teachers; licensure; disqualification for issuance or non-renewal, DUI offenses; conspiracy; out-of-state and federal offenses

Senator John Vratil testified in support **SB 492**. He explained that the bill related to **SB 35** which was passed in the 2007 legislative session to “add teeth” to penalties for persons convicted of “driving under the influence.” This legislation added DUI to the list of crimes that cannot be expunged, which inadvertently linked a first-time DUI to the teacher licensing statutes which prohibits the State Board of Education from issuing a license to any person who has a DUI conviction. In his opinion, one mistake made by students early in their life should not prevent them from ever being able to obtain a teaching license. He explained that **SB 492** would change the law so that first and second-time non-felony DUI offenders would still be able to get a teaching license. In conclusion, he called attention to an attachment to his written testimony which listed the crimes for which persons have been refused a teaching license or a renewal of their teaching license for the last ten years. (Attachment 2)

Senator Vratil went on to explain that sexual battery was inadvertently included in **SB 492** when it was

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drafted. Therefore, Revisor of Statutes staff was preparing a clarifying balloon amendment which will list the criminal offenses for which one cannot receive a teaching license.

There being no others wishing to testify, the hearing on **SB 492** was closed.

SB 507 – Creating the mathematics, engineering, technology, and science (METS) education innovation council; members; duties

Matt Todd, Revisor of Statutes Office, explained that **SB 507** was recommended by the Math and Science Education Advisory Committee, which met during the interim. He noted that Section 1 of the bill lists the members of the METS Council, and provides that the METS Council will be part of the Department of Commerce, and the Council would expire on December 31, 2012. He then reviewed Section 2, which sets out the powers and duties of the METS Council. He noted that the Council would be required to make an annual report, including its recommendations, to the Legislature on or before December 31 of each year, but it would have no authority to introduce legislation.

For the Committee's information, Mr. Todd explained that Section 2 of Article 6 of the Kansas Constitution sets out that the Legislature shall provide for a State Board of Education, which will have general supervision of public schools, educational institutions, and all the educational interests of the state except functions delegated by law to the State Board of Regents. He noted that an informal Attorney General's opinion issued last year stated that the Constitution does allow the Legislature to shift some or all of the authority of the general supervision to the Board of Regents. Additionally, the Legislature may also place functions that do not rise to the level of general supervision of educational institutions and interests with other entities. He commented, according to this informal opinion, it does not appear that putting the METS Council within the Department of Commerce would raise any constitutional issues.

Senator Nick Jordan, the Chairperson of the Advisory Committee on Math and Science Education, testified in support of **SB 507**. He noted that, in addition to legislators, the Advisory Committee included business leaders and leaders in the education community. He explained that the results of the Committee's meetings are included in a data book entitled, "The Talent Imperative: Building Kansas' Capacity in Mathematics, Engineering, Technology, and Science." He distributed copies of the book, noting that the development of the data was made possible by a grant from the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. The book includes sections titled: (1) Why METS and Innovation Matter for the U.S., (2) Why METS and Innovation Matter for Kansas, (3) K-12 Indicators, (4) K-12 Math-Science Teacher Corps, and (5) Post-Secondary Indicators. Senator Jordan went on to say that high growth industries in the state are going to demand science and math skills, but there are not enough students with those skills graduating from Kansas universities to meet the demand. He then called attention to copies of the Advisory Committee's report to the 2008 Legislature and gave a brief overview of the Advisory Committee's recommendations, which related to the following topics: public awareness strategies, teacher preparation strategies, teacher recruitment and retention strategies, alignment strategies, and coordination activities. (Attachment 3) In conclusion, he commented, if Kansas does not address the issue of science and math education, the state's workforce will be very weak in the future. He also explained that the Advisory Committee felt that the METS Council should be placed within the Department of Commerce because it related to a workforce development issue.

Eric Stafford, Associated General Contractors (AGC) of Kansas, Inc., testified in support of **SB 507**. Noting that AGC's number one issue is workforce development, he explained that AGC has been developing a statewide, seamless construction program that would feature Kansas high schools, technical schools, colleges and community colleges. The METS Council is one step closer to accomplishing AGC's goal to create an opportunity for Kansas' young people to prepare for a rewarding career in the construction industry. (Attachment 4)

Jackie Koehler, Kansas, Inc., presented testimony in support of **SB 507** on behalf of Stan Ahlerich, President of Kansas, Inc. She called attention to Mr. Ahlerich's written testimony which explained that Kansas, Inc., participated in a statewide strategic planning process in 2007 wherein participants stressed the importance of the workforce and retaining youth in their communities. The importance of mathematics, engineering, technology, and science were also addressed. Many of the responsibilities outlined for the METS Council align with concepts recommended in the 2007 strategic plan. Ms. Koehler noted that Strategy 10 relates to

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educating Kansas students appropriately in areas of mathematics, engineer, technology, and science and informing them of both educational and career options in Kansas, and Strategy 31 stresses the importance of retaining students at all levels by offering programs to engage students in the relevancy of their education to the business world. ([Attachment 5](#))

Mark Tallman, Kansas Association of School Boards (KASB), testified in opposition to **SB 507**. KASB does not oppose the basic concept of the bill but objects to two provisions. He urged the Committee to include a representative of school boards on the proposed council and to remove section 2 (h) which directs the council to examine a plan requiring eighth graders in every public school to develop a “flexible career plan” with career goals for high schools. ([Attachment 6](#))

There being no others wishing to testify, the hearing on **SB 507** was closed.

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

The next meeting is scheduled for February 14, 2008.