

MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jean Schodorf at 1:35 p.m. on January 18, 2007, in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

Committee members absent: Carolyn McGinn- excused
Pat Apple- excused

Committee staff present: Sharon Wenger, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Ashley Holm, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Theresa Kiernan, Revisor of Statutes
Shirley Higgins, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Senator Vicki Schmidt
Reginald Robinson, President and CEO, Kansas Board of Regents

Senator Vicki Schmidt requested the introduction of a bill relating to students whose driver's license is suspended after being expelled from school due to behavior on school property which resulted in or may have resulted in serious bodily injury to others. She explained that a constituent's child was expelled in September and attended an alternative school for the remainder of the school year. The following August, the student enrolled in a regular high school. At that time, the student received a notice from the Department of Revenue that his driver's license would be suspended for one year. She explained further that the current law provides that the school district has three days, excluding holidays and weekends, to report these types of incidents to the appropriate law enforcement agency, and the agency reports the incident to the Division of Motor Vehicles. She noted that, in this particular case, the school district had hired a new security officer in May of the year her constituent's child was in the alternative school, and the officer turned in all of the reports from the previous year. Upon receipt of the report, the Division had no avenue to not suspend the license. Thus, the student was punished for two years instead of one. The bill would provide that a student's license could not be revoked if the notice to the Division was not given within the statutory time period. The bill extends the current three-day time period to ten days, excluding holidays and weekends. In addition, the bill includes a due process provision.

Senator Goodwin moved to introduce the bill as requested by Senator Schmidt, seconded by Senator Pine. The motion carried.

Senator Schodorf called the Committee's attention to the minutes of the January 10 meeting. Senator Teichman moved to approve the minutes of the January 10 meeting, seconded by Senator Ostmeier. The motion carried.

Senator Schodorf called upon Reginald Robinson, President and CEO, Kansas Board of Regents, for an overview of higher education in Kansas. Before beginning the overview, President Robinson commented that he thought it was very important that Kansans involved in higher education be familiar with the national conversation taking place with regard to higher education. He noted that U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings appointed a commission to look at a range of issues with regard to higher education, and the final report by the commission is entitled, "A test of Leadership, Chartering the Future of U. S. Higher Education". He commented, "I think it's an important report. I think her focus on higher education is important for the country and important for us in Kansas." He informed the Committee that she will be sponsoring a higher education summit in mid-March, which he planned to attend. He noted that Secretary Spellings is putting an emphasis on directing the higher education community to try to grapple more effectively with costs, and she is pushing for increased access to financial aid to ensure that students have opportunities to pursue a postsecondary education. In addition, she has pushed for a focus on accountability. He said, "I think Kansas can take some great pride in the reality of the fact that the Kansas Board of Regents has been engaged in work that dovetails very nicely with the kinds of initiatives that the Secretary of Education is beginning to roll out."

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE Senate Education Committee at 1:35 p.m. on January 18, 2007, in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

President Robinson then called attention to his written testimony which addressed the higher education aspect of the budget Governor Sebelius proposed for FY 2008, the Board's recent work, and the Board's initiatives for the 2007 legislative session. (Attachment 1) He went on to discuss a related memorandum prepared by Diane C. Duffy, Vice-President, Finance and Administration, Kansas Board of Regents, regarding the key components of the Governor's recommendations for higher education for FY 2008, which included the following components: (1) operating increases for postsecondary institutions, (2) student financial assistance increases, (3) other postsecondary education programs, (4) initiatives, and (5) issues regarding the pay plan for state universities and state employees, transfers from the State General Fund, and a change in State Treasurer fees. A table comparing the Governor's FY 2008 increased recommendations for higher education state appropriations with the Board's request and with adjusted FY 2007 appropriation levels was attached to the memorandum. (Attachment 2)

President Robinson distributed copies of an overview on deferred maintenance of state university buildings which he presented the Senate Higher Education Task Force on January 16. (Attachment 3) He clarified that the funding which had been previously established for "crumbling classrooms" did not create a new funding stream for deferred maintenance. With regard to deferred maintenance, he noted, "The key challenge for the Board and the universities at this point is to take some next steps in presenting information that we hope to present soon. Essentially, what the Board has done is to direct state universities to construct a project list. What the Board of Regents and its stakeholders have been saying with regard to this issue for several months is that we have a \$727.0 million problem, and we are focused now on dealing with \$200.0 million worth of that problem. We think that it's important to make a down payment on coming to grips with that multi-hundred million dollar problem." He went on to say, "The second item about which there was some serious Board discussion has to do with 'new building accountability'. Essentially, it outlines a process for Board supervision of deferred maintenance projects. The Board will not approve construction of new buildings unless the universities also present a comprehensive plan that persuades the Board that the maintenance challenges associated with this new building are going to be dealt with. Third, the Board will outline principles which would establish a rigorous, multi-component threshold that needs to be presented to the Board and approved by the Board as an aspect to getting a new building approved – separate from, do you have the money to deal with the maintenance – have you convinced us that your space demands suggest that you need a new building."

Senator Vratil requested the introduction of a bill which would expand the uses for capital outlay funds. It would allow capital outlay funds to be used for utility services (including gas, electricity, water, telephones, and sewage and solid waste disposal). It would allow the funds to be used for insurance (including property, fire, casualty, and liability insurance) and also for the acquisition of computer software and other computer technology.

Senator Vratil moved to introduce the bill as described, seconded by Senator Goodwin. The motion carried.

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

The next meeting is scheduled for January 22, 2007.