

MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jean Schodorf at 1:40 p.m. on February 19, 2008, in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

Committee members absent:

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 Krebs, Kansas Association of School Boards
Mark Desetti, Kansas National Education Association
Stuart Little, Shawnee Mission School District
Bill Reardon, Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools

SB 405 – School finance; kindergarten pupils

SB 473 – School finance; pupils attending all-day kindergarten; phase in counting as one pupil

Tom Krebs, Kansas Association of School Boards, testified in support of **SB 405** and **SB 473**. KASB believes that both bills would be a positive step for helping districts better prepare their students as they strive to meet the challenges that lie before them as they move from kindergarten towards graduation. He noted that both bills call for funding of all-day kindergarten, but each bill uses a different approach. KASB is mute on which approach is wiser, but firmly believes that one or the other should become law this year. (Attachment 1)

Theresa Kiernan, Revisor of Statutes Office, explained that **SB 405**, which was recommended by the Legislative Educational Planning Committee (LEPC), would phase in the counting of pupils who attend all-day kindergarten by increasing the current one-half pupil count by one-tenth each year. She distributed copies of a suggested amendment which would clarify that the pupil enrolled in half-day kindergarten shall be counted as one-half pupil (“half-day” inserted on page 1, line 27, before “kindergarten”). (Attachment 2) She went on to explain that **SB 473**, which is the Governor’s recommendation, would be a three-year phase in, beginning in school year 2009-2010. This bill would provide that a pupil enrolled in and attending a full-day kindergarten at an attendance center with an enrollment of at least 61 percent pupils who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals under the national school lunch act would be counted as all-day kindergarten in school year 2009-2010. In the next school year, the percentage requirement would be reduced to 33 percent. All pupils enrolled in and attending full-day kindergarten would be counted as one pupil in school year 2011-2012 and each school year thereafter.

Mark Desetti, Kansas National Education Association, testified in support of **SB 405** and **SB 473**. He contended that all-day kindergarten makes sense for families in today’s economy, for at-risk students, and for children who are not at-risk. Additionally, all-day kindergarten would make a difference in student learning, and schools would no longer have to run buses mid-day. He pointed out the parents who do not want their children in all-day kindergarten would not be forced to do so. KNEA supports both bills, but views **SB 473** more favorably because at-risk students would be addressed one year earlier. (Attachment 3)

Bill Reardon, Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools, testified in support of **SB 473**. He explained that all-day kindergarten was implemented in every elementary school in Kansas City in the current school year, which doubled the amount of children in full-day kindergarten. The increase in pupils dramatically increased costs for the district. Despite the additional costs, the district rejected a multi-year phase in of all-day kindergarten due to the results of a study the district conducted. A graph attached to his written testimony shows the results of that study. The district paid for all-day kindergarten by canceling or reducing existing programs for other students within the district. Mr. Reardon said the district supports **SB 405** but feels that **SB 473** is preferable because providing funding for the first year for the poorest schools would be a positive step in closing the achievement gap, and the 2009 implementation date would allow legislators to cast a pro-education vote without increased funding in the next fiscal year. (Attachment 4)

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At the conclusion of his testimony, Mr. Reardon informed the Committee that Diane Gjerstad, Wichita Public Schools, asked him to relay to the Committee that Wichita Public Schools support **SB 473**.

Senator Schodorf noted that written testimony in support of **SB 405** and **SB 473** was submitted by Bill Brady, Schools For Fair Funding (Attachment 5), and written testimony in support of **SB 473** was submitted by Cheryl Semmel, United School Administrators of Kansas (Attachment 6).

Stuart Little, representing the Shawnee Mission School District, testified in support of **SB 405** for the same reasons cited by other conferees. He explained that the Shawnee Mission School District charges parents for all-day kindergarten, and the district would like to see the \$250.00 monthly fee removed.

There being no others wishing to testify, the hearings on **SB 405** and **SB 473** were closed.

Senator Schodorf opened a discussion on a previously heard bill, **SB 404** concerning the Kansas Academy of Mathematics and Science (KAMS).

Theresa Kiernan, Revisor of Statutes Office, noted that **SB 404** was introduced at the request of LEPC. She then summarized the statutory changes in the bill as discussed at the hearing on the claim. She distributed copies of the balloon amendments (Attachment 7) and responded to questions from committee members regarding qualified admission and fees and tuition for Kansas students and out-of-state students.

Senator Hensley moved to amend **SB 404** as shown in the balloon, seconded by Senator Lee. The motion carried.

Senator Lee moved to recommend **SB 404** favorably for passage as amended, seconded by Senator Teichman. The motion carried.

Attention was turned to another previously heard bill, **SB 507**, which would create the Mathematics, Engineering, Technology, and Science Education Innovation Council (METS).

Matt Todd, Revisor of Statutes Office, reminded the Committee that, at the hearing on the bill, the conferee for the Kansas Association of School Boards expressed concern that the Council did not include any members from local school boards. In addition, the conferee was concerned that one of the duties within the scope of the Council was to examine the design, promotion, and implementation of a plan requiring every eighth grade student to come up with a flexible career plan. He distributed copies of balloon amendments addressing these concerns. (Attachment 8)

Senator Teichman moved to amend **SB 507** as shown in the balloon, seconded by Senator Lee. The motion carried.

Senator Teichman moved to recommend **SB 507** favorably for passage as amended, seconded by Senator Vratil. The motion carried.

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

The next meeting is scheduled for February 20, 2008.

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