

## MINUTES

### LEGISLATIVE EDUCATIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

November 7-8, 2005  
Room 519-S—Statehouse  
State Board of Education Conference Room (November 8)

#### Members Present

Senator Jean Schodorf, Chairperson  
Representative Kathe Decker, Vice Chairperson  
Senator Marci Francisco  
Senator Roger Pine  
Senator Mark Taddiken (November 8)  
Senator Ruth Teichman  
Senator John Vratil  
Representative Barbara Ballard (November 8)  
Representative John Faber  
Representative Deena Horst  
Representative Steve Huebert  
Representative Eber Phelps  
Representative Jo Ann Pottorff

#### State Board of Education Members Present (November 8)

Dr. Steve Abrams, Chairperson  
John Bacon  
Sue Gamble  
Kathy Martin  
Connie Morris  
Carol Rupe  
Iris Van Meter  
Dr. Bill Wagnon  
Janet Waugh  
Ken Willard

#### Staff Present

Mary Galligan, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Deb Hollon, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Carolyn Rampey, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Kathie Sparks, Kansas Legislative Research Department

Art Griggs, Office of the Revisor of Statutes  
Theresa Kiernan, Office of the Revisor of Statutes

## **State Department of Education Staff Present**

Dale Dennis, Deputy Commissioner

## **Conferees**

Donna Shank, Chair, Kansas Board of Regents  
Reginald Robinson, President and Chief Executive Officer, Kansas Board of Regents  
Dr. Robert Masters, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Kansas Board of Regents  
Rich Hoffman, General Director, Kaw Area Technical School; President, Kansas Association of  
Technical Schools and Colleges  
Rob Edleston, President, Manhattan Area Technical College  
Camille Kluge, President, Wichita Area Technical College  
Dr. Alexa Posny, Assistant Commissioner, State Department of Education  
Dr. Martha Gage, Director of Teacher Education and Licensure, State Department of Education  
Ron Nitcher, Director of Fiscal Services and Operations, State Department of Education  
Scott M. Gates, Director of the Learning Quest Program, Office of the State Treasurer  
Steve Gering, Deputy Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, USD 500 (Kansas City)  
G.A. Buie, Principal, Anderson County Junior/Senior High School, USD 365 (Garnett)  
Dr. Sally Lundblad, Principal, Louisburg High, USD 416 (Louisburg)  
Denise Wren, Principal, North High, USD 259 (Wichita)

## **Monday, November 7**

Upon a motion by Representative Decker, seconded by Representative Phelps, the minutes of the August and September meetings were approved.

## **Report from the Kansas Board of Regents**

Donna Shank, Chair of the Kansas Board of Regents, reported to the Committee on current activities of the Board, including proposals for legislation under consideration. (Information presented by Ms. Shanks is in Attachments 1 through 5.) Ms. Shank told the Committee that the Board is in the midst of receiving "efficiency reports" from the state universities outlining how the specific campuses are managing their resources and attempting to leverage maximum state funding.

She told the Committee that the Board's Adult Education Program is one of only three in the nation cited by the United States Department of Education as a "Best Practice" state. The designation is the outcome of a study of adult education practices that contribute to learner outcomes. Kansas was selected for being a leader in the performance-based funding process whereby state and federal funding is made available to local programs based on student attainment of state-defined performance outcomes. Kansas has 31 Adult Education centers in 91 locations.

Ms. Shank explained that the Board sets Adult Education performance goals which are different for various programs, such as the general education diploma (GED), bilingual education, and adult literacy programs. Funding is based on the number of students who complete their respective programs.

Representative Decker asked if the Board has worked with the Department of Corrections and the State Board of Education to apply the performance-based model more broadly. Reginald Robinson, President and Chief Executive Officer, Kansas Board of Regents, responded that collaboration currently exists at the local level between higher education and elementary and secondary education. He agreed to pursue similar collaboration with the Department of Corrections.

Ms. Shank informed the Committee that in October of 2005, the Board adopted a resolution formally opposing efforts to establish constitutional or statutory revenue and expenditure limits in Kansas, such as the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights (TABOR). In the Board's view, such limits would be devastating to higher education and public services in general. Further, such limits would cause student tuition to rise and limit access for many students to affordable educational opportunities.

Mr. Robinson continued the report on Board activities with a preliminary overview of possible legislative initiatives which the Board would finalize by the end of October. He agreed to provide the Committee a list of items formally approved by the Board when it becomes available.

Mr. Robinson highlighted technical education reform as a priority issue for the Board, largely because the institutions have an "outdated and convoluted" funding mechanism. He said a technical education task force has been created to make findings and recommendations to the Board.

Mr. Robinson also cited the deferred maintenance backlog as a concern of the Board. The items under Board consideration for introduction during the 2006 Session are the following:

- Interest Ownership of University Funds (2005 SB 73 and 2005 HB 2021)—Allow institutions to keep interest earnings on tuition and fees.
- Student Health Care Insurance Procurement—Allow the Board to procure health insurance for all students and employees of Regents institutions.
- State University Purchase of Insurance—Allow state universities to purchase insurance products, except employee health insurance, at the campus level.
- State Purchasing Authority—Delegate purchasing authority to state agencies.
- Authority to Contract with State Universities—Clarify who is authorized to legally obligate a university.
- Concurrent Enrollment—Include technical colleges on the list of eligible institutions and allow gifted freshman and sophomore students to participate.
- Technical College Transition—Allow an option for technical colleges to remain under the governance of a school district board of education.
- Simplification of Disposition of Bequests—Allow state universities to sell land received from gifts or trusts without approval of the Legislature.

- Technical College Adult Basic Education Mill Levy Authority—Allow a school district to transfer its local tax levy authority for Adult Basic Education to the governing board of a technical college.
- Kansas Wetlands Cheyenne Bottoms—Allow Fort Hays State University to request \$250,000 to operate the Kansas Wetlands Educational Center at Cheyenne Bottoms.
- Proprietary Schools Statutory Clean Up—Update obsolete language.
- Board Retirement Statutory Clarification—Clarify recent statutory amendments to the Board's retirement plans.
- Property Sale—Authorize Kansas State University to sell university-owned property.

The Committee instructed the Revisor to prepare drafts of approved items for the Committee's consideration at the December meeting.

### **Technical College and Area Vocational School Waiting Lists**

The matter of waiting lists at technical colleges and area vocational schools was assigned the Committee by the Legislative Coordinating Council. Dr. Robert Masters, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Kansas Board of Regents, introduced the topic by saying that funding limitations have restricted the capacity of technical institutions to meet student demands for programs ([Attachment 6](#)). He included in his testimony a list of technical programs with waiting lists for the fall of 2005 which shows a total of 860 students.

Dr. Masters told the Committee that technical education is a priority of the Board and that the staff has been developing a new funding model for technical education which would be implemented for school year 2007-08. In addition, he said the Board staff would explore changes in structure and governance for technical institutions in order to improve the technical education system.

Senator Vratil inquired whether increased state aid is the only alternative to address program waiting lists and suggested that technical institutions have the authority to raise student tuition in order to expand programs.

Rich Hoffman, General Director of Kaw Area Technical School (Topeka) and President of the Kansas Association of Technical Schools and Colleges, explained to the Committee that compilation of a waiting list is made difficult by the necessity to take into consideration whether jobs will be waiting for students who complete various programs ([Attachment 7](#)). He said the decision to add more programs must take into account labor force demands and also the ability of individual students to succeed. For that reason, he said his institution is selective as to who can enter a program and has developed a rating scale to rank potential students on the basis of their ability to succeed.

Mr. Hoffman was critical of current funding mechanisms for technical institutions and said that for many years the institutions have not received additional money for educating more students. In his own institution, he has not expanded classes with a high demand due to revenue constraints, has dropped a program with high employer demand for graduates because of its high cost per student, and told Topeka business leaders that his institution has no money to help businesses locate or expand in Topeka. His institution also has raised student tuition. He said that some of the problem in meeting student demands has been due to the difficulty of finding qualified instructors in health care fields and in locating facilities for clinical training.

Rob Edleston, President of Manhattan Area Technical College, described the frustration of telling eager students they may have to wait a year or more to get the training they need in order to earn a sustainable income (Attachment 8). He focused on the nursing shortage and said there are hundreds of people in Kansas who want to become nurses and enter other health care fields, but programs are not available to meet the demand. (Staff Note: According to Dr. Master's data, more than 700 of the 860 students on the fall 2005 waiting list want to take courses in health care fields.)

Mr. Edleston argued that funding for technical education is more than offset by the return on the dollar when graduates become productive members of the workforce. He presented examples of graduate earnings which show that returns to the state in the form of taxes paid exceed the amount of funding needed for training.

In response to a question from Representative Decker, Mr. Edleston said there are five \$500 nursing scholarships, four scholarships in the electric power-distributing field, and several other undesignated scholarships available for students. He said some area businesses pay the tuition for their employees to upgrade their skills and also donate equipment to the school.

Mr. Edleston said his tenure at the institution is only 11 months and he has not made a decision about raising tuition again. He noted that there is a strong tradition in Kansas of making vocational training available to residents at a low cost.

Camille Kluge, President of the Wichita Area Technical College, said the issue is economic development and quality of life, particularly as it relates to meeting workforce demands for health care (Attachment 9). She told members that a proprietary school, the Wichita Technical Institute, is expanding in the Wichita area in order to meet the demand for more medical programs. She said the Wichita Area Technical College has been unable to meet job training demands in the health care area and now is facing competition from a private school. Her point was that the cost of a similar program in another proprietary school in Wichita is about \$20,000, compared to \$5,500 for the program at her institution. Her concern is that only those students who can afford to pay proprietary school fees will be able to get training in health care fields where already there are serious shortages.

The problem the Wichita Area Technical College faces is that its operating budget decreased from \$13.5 million in FY 2002 to \$9.2 million in FY 2005 as a result of changing to a new governance structure. This was because the former governing board—USD 259—subsidized programs at the Technical College. Due to the reduction, capital improvements have not been made, programs have been dropped, and the number of full-time equivalent employees has gone from about 1,000 to 570.

In response to a question from Representative Decker about private sector support, Ms. Kluge said the Wichita Clinic provides facilities and mentoring for clinical training and Precision Pattern, Inc., donates equipment and gifts. In response to a question from Representative Phelps

about how much additional funding the institution needs, Ms. Kluge said she does not have a precise figure but simply restoring the money the institution lost when it moved from governance by the USD 259 Board of Education to its new governing board would be a big help.

Ms. Kluge was asked whether technical institutions suggest to students on waiting lists that they enroll in another technical institution with program capacity. She responded that most technical institutions serve place-bound students and do not have dormitory space for nonresidents. Ms. Kluge said student tuition had been raised in recent years by two and one-half to six times its former level, depending upon the cost of the program, and she considers that tuition is at its limit. Senator Vratil disagreed and said that tuition could double and still be cheaper than tuition at four-year institutions. Ms. Kluge responded that such an increase would limit access to technical training and cause many students to incur additional debt.

At the conclusion of the hearing, the Committee asked the staff for additional information about how technical schools and colleges are funded. That information will be presented at the December meeting.

## **State Assessments**

Dr. Alexa Posny, Assistant Commissioner, State Department of Education, made a report to the Committee on the results of the 2005 state assessments of Kansas students (Attachment 10). Significant points in her presentation were the following:

- Participation rates in all tested areas (reading, mathematics, history and government, and science) are up compared to 2004 and are higher than in 2003.
- The percentage of students scoring at the proficient level and above in reading increased over the prior year and over the last five years for all student subgroups.
- The reading proficiency gap is closing, based on ethnicity and eligibility for free or reduced-price lunches.
- The percentage of students scoring at the proficient level and above in mathematics increased over the prior year and over the last five years in total, although proficient English as a Second Language students in the 10th grade did not increase over 2004 and the number of proficient African-American and Hispanic students declined over a five-year period. The increases in proficient students in mathematics also were not as great for 10th graders as for 4th and 8th graders.
- The mathematics proficiency gap is closing for African-American and Hispanic 4th and 7th graders, but has increased for African-American and Hispanic 10th graders.
- The percentage of students at the proficient level or above in mathematics who qualify for free or reduced-price lunches has increased over the past five years.

- The percentage of students with significant cognitive disabilities performing in the top three performance levels increased for ten-year-olds but not for students age 13 and 16. Dr. Posny interpreted these results to mean that students who have serious learning disabilities are being challenged by the assessments and are not being given meaningless evaluations.
- All subgroups of students showed improvement on the history and government assessment, although less improvement was shown for 11th graders.
- The achievement gap on the history and government assessment is closing for African-American and Hispanic students, except for those in the 11th grade. The gap has narrowed for students who are eligible for free and reduced-price lunches, based on the history and government assessment, except for 11th graders who qualify for free lunches.
- All subgroups of students showed increases in science, although the five-year gap has not narrowed for 10th graders who are Hispanic or who are eligible for free lunches.
- In school year 2005-06, assessment tests in reading will be given to students in grades 3, 8, and 11, and mathematics assessments will be given to students in grades 3, 8, and 10.

Dr. Posny informed the Committee that, of the 26,267 teachers who teach at least one core content class, 25,110, or 95.6 percent, are highly qualified. "Highly qualified" means the teacher has demonstrated competence through a major in the content area or on the basis of workshops, experience, professional development, and other professional activities. The content area with the lowest percentage of highly qualified teachers is foreign language, for which only about 85 percent of the teachers are highly qualified. But Dr. Posny said some foreign language teachers are competent teachers in spite of not having obtained certain academic credentials.

Dr. Posny explained to the Committee that a school is placed "on improvement" when it fails to make annual yearly progress for two consecutive years. "Annual yearly progress" is determined on the basis of as many as 40 indicators, including assessment results and graduation and attendance rates. Title I schools that fail to make annual yearly progress are subject to sanctions which include transporting students to another school and being the subject of corrective actions taken by the district. Dr. Posny said the 121 schools which did not make annual yearly progress in 2005 consist of 23 elementary, 45 middle, 44 high, and 6 special schools.

Dr. Posny told the Committee that Kansas students do well on the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) and explained that NAEP is considered the "nation's report card" in the sense that it is the only assessment given samples of students nationwide that allows comparisons to be made among states on subject area knowledge in reading and mathematics. In each state, approximately 2,500 students are assessed for each grade level and subject. Since 1996, students with disabilities and English language learners have been included in the testing, with accommodations, if necessary.

In discussion with Committee members, Dr. Posny said parents whose children attend schools which are on improvement have the choice to move their children elsewhere, but parents

tend to want to leave their children where they are. She said schools on improvement are providing supplemental services and tutoring in order to provide extra support to students who need it. Because local boards of education are constitutional entities, Kansas does not have the option of a "state takeover" of schools that fail to meet standards of the No Child Left Behind Act. Instead, schools that need to improve generally restructure their curriculum, according to Dr. Posny.

Dr. Posny told the Committee that the newly reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is patterned after provisions in the No Child Act, meaning that if Kansas fails to meet No Child standards, likely it will fail to meet certain IDEA standards as well. On the matter of state standards, Dr. Posny said the statutory requirement that the State Board of Education review standards every three years is impractical because the interval is too short to revise standards before they are reflected in the assessments given students. She explained that it may take a year and a half to develop new standards and another year to set the cut scores. There is no time to implement the new standards before it is time to consider revising them again. She said an interval of five to seven years would be more practical.

The Committee instructed the staff to draft legislation for consideration at the December meeting which would lengthen the review interval.

## **Issues Relating to Teachers**

Dr. Martha Gage, Director of Teacher Education and Licensure, State Department of Education, presented information relating to teacher recruitment, retention, and retirement (Attachment 11). Dr. Gage said the number of new teachers generally is declining from 2000 and that this has implications for the state's ability to adequately staff classrooms, particularly in hard-to-fill areas. Also of concern are the numbers of teachers who leave the profession or who retire.

In order to address some of these concerns, Dr. Gage said the State Board of Education has approved restricted licenses, which are awarded individuals who have a degree, have developed a relationship with a school district which agrees to employ them, and are working with a higher education institution to obtain necessary coursework so that they can be licensed to teach. Individuals who are participating in these alternative routes to teacher certification are eligible to begin teaching immediately as they work toward their permanent license.

Dr. Gage stressed the importance of the Teacher Mentor Program, which provides stipends of \$1,000 for experienced teachers to mentor beginning teachers. The program has been funded with \$1.0 million for school year 2005-06, which will allow teachers to mentor new teachers in their first year of teaching.

## **Federal Programs**

Dale Dennis, Deputy Commissioner, and Ron Nitcher, Director of Fiscal Services and Operations, State Department of Education, presented information on federal funding for education (Attachments 12 and 13). For FY 2006, expenditure of federal funds is estimated to be \$383,897,954. Of the total, \$131.2 million is for nutrition programs, such as the National School Lunch Program, the Special Milk Program for Children, and the Child and Adult Care Food Program; \$98.5 million is funding under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; \$5.8 million is for secondary vocational education programs; and the remainder is for elementary and secondary



education programs. The latter category includes Title I funding, which is targeted for low-income students. Mr. Nitcher and Mr. Dennis explained that Kansas' share of Title I funding has declined because Kansas' proportion of low-income children, based on 2000 census data, has declined, even though the total number of children living in poverty has increased.

Funding for programs under the No Child Left Behind Act is estimated to be \$175.6 million in FY 2006. Mr. Dennis said federal funds generally have been available for test development and other implementation costs, but states are concerned that funding for ongoing services may not be available. Examples of ongoing services include extended-day programs, summer school, and other special services and programs to address the needs of students who fail to achieve proficiency.

Mr. Dennis explained that the United States Department of Education has issued information critical of states for allowing unspent balances of federal funds to build up. He speculated that the Department is trying to counter complaints from the states that the federal government has not adequately funded programs that are federally mandated. According to Mr. Dennis, the information is misleading because, at the time it was issued, the end of the federal fiscal year was still some months away and most of the balances were to be used to operate programs that would not be completed until the fiscal year ended.

Mr. Dennis concluded his presentation by telling the Committee that 358 students whose families were displaced by Hurricane Katrina are in Kansas schools. He said these children are expected to cause school districts additional expenses in excess of \$3.0 million. Mr. Dennis said he hopes the federal government will reimburse Kansas for these expenditures.

## **Tuesday, November 8**

### **Learning Quest**

Scott Gates, Director of the Learning Quest Program, Office of the State Treasurer, gave the Committee a report on the Learning Quest Program ([Attachment 14](#)). Important points made by Mr. Gates were the following:

- As of October 28, 2005, total assets of the Kansas 529 programs (Learning Quest and Schwab 529) were \$1.114 billion.
- Approximately 49,000 individuals own more than 80,000 accounts.
- Kansans own 36,500 accounts, or 45 percent of total accounts. Kansans who hold accounts total 19,500 and represent 40 percent of all account holders.
- More than \$820.0 million invested in the Kansas 529 programs is invested by non-Kansas residents.

Mr. Gates told the Committee that State Treasurer Lynn Jenkins has actively marketed and promoted the programs. He said promotional expenses are paid by American Century Investments, which is under contract to administer the program. In response to a question, Mr. Gates said the

contract with American Century will expire at the end of 2006 and bids again will be let, at which time other companies would have the chance to become manager.

Mr. Gates said the Treasurer's Office intends to ask the 2006 Legislature to introduce legislation to make two program changes. One would allow Kansas residents to receive an income tax deduction regardless of which 529 plan they choose, including 529 plans from other states. (Presently, the benefit to Kansas taxpayers is only for holders of Kansas 529 plans.) In addition, the Treasurer's Office would like to remove the penalty imposed on Kansans who withdraw funds within one year after opening an account.

Senator Schodorf instructed staff to prepare drafts of the requested amendments for consideration by the Committee at the December meeting.

In response to a question about the amount of return on Learning Quest accounts, Mr. Gates said the return varies, depending upon the account. (Account holders can choose low-risk or aggressive portfolios.) Currently, returns are between 2.3 percent to 14.8 percent.

## **High School Reform**

The staff presented a memorandum entitled *Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation High School Reform Projects*, which describes Gates Foundation efforts to support high school reform across the nation ([Attachment 15](#)). Central to the reform is the creation of small high schools, which promote greater student interaction with teachers and other students.

Steve Gering, Deputy Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, USD 500 (Kansas City), told the Committee the Kansas City district implemented and discarded several reform efforts over the years and finally settled on a small learning-community model whereby students are placed in groups of 150 to 250 students where they stay for the rest of their high school years ([Attachment 16](#)). Students are able to change groups, but Mr. Gering said few do. The reason for the small groups is to improve the quality of relationships and to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Learning is personalized and the group is collectively responsible for results. Mr. Gering said each high school has between six and eight of these learning communities and the initiative has been implemented without building new schools or remodeling existing facilities.

Other characteristics of the reform are the involvement of families and student internships in the community. Mr. Gering explained that each staff member has approximately 15 families with whom the staff member forms a relationship to support the student's achievement. The result is that every student and his or her family have a staff member they know who becomes their "advocate."

Mr. Gering told the Committee student performance at the high school level, as measured by graduation rates and student achievement, has improved dramatically in recent years, due, he believes, to the small learning-community initiative. The success is so notable that it has come to the attention of the Gates Foundation, which is in the process of developing a proposal to work with the district to use its methods as a model for Gates Foundation high school reform projects elsewhere. According to Mr. Gering, the Foundation is not realizing expected benefits from some of its other reform projects and is looking for other small school models to study so that successful methods can be applied elsewhere. Mr. Gering said he believes the weakness in some of the Foundation projects is that they focus on the school, not the district. He said the opinion is forming that high school reform must be initiated at the district level. He said the Kansas City district is

considered exemplary in its reform efforts and is visited several times a year by up to 75 people nationwide who want to learn about what the district is doing.

Mr. Gering said he believes the district will be the recipient of a Gates Foundation award to participate in the reform initiative, but the grant has not yet been announced. The district will use the money to expand internships and work-based experiences for 12th graders.

In response to a question, Mr. Gering said the reaction of teachers to the project was mixed: some asked for assignment changes and some retired. But other teachers were eager to participate. However, he acknowledged that the Kansas City district faces a general problem recruiting teachers and filling vacancies at all grade levels.

G.A. Buie, Principal at Anderson County Junior/Senior High School, USD 365 (Garnett), told the Committee the traditional high school model is 60 years old and needs to change if student achievement is to improve (Attachment 17). He said teachers at his school have been challenged to develop curriculum and to implement methods that allow students to learn at their individual levels. To do this, the school faces some constraints due to having to work within traditional boundaries, such as letter grades and a set period of time for instruction. Nevertheless, he said his school has designed a schedule that allows departments to have a common planning time so that teachers have the ability to develop individual learning plans for each student.

Mr. Buie said one area in which his school's efforts differ from Outcomes Based Education is that everything his school does is centered on the student, not on the standards or outcomes. Eventually, the individualized learning plan is linked to curricular standards and indicators, but first the teachers gather information about students' learning styles, likes and interests, and educational backgrounds. From this information, teachers develop an individual learning program for each student. Mr. Buie said the science department implemented the individualized teaching and learning model during the 2004-05 school year and achieved "remarkable" results: Almost 85 percent of the students were at the proficient level or above, compared to fewer than 65 percent three years earlier.

Dr. Sally Lundblad, Principal at Louisburg High, USD 416, told the Committee the traditional high school model was developed for the industrial age and is deeply embedded in our culture (Attachment 18). Our thinking about high school must change if reforms are to be achieved. She said the following components must be present for change to occur:

- Some form of collaborative leadership;
- Personalization of the educational environment; and
- Rigor in curriculum, assessment, and instruction.

Dr. Lundblad said a personal connection between students and teachers is stressed at Louisburg High. She told Committee members both students and teachers were asked to participate in a project whereby students named teachers with whom they felt a personal connection and teachers named students with whom they felt they had a connection. The results revealed that there were students who did not have a staff person with whom they felt particularly comfortable, which became a starting point for faculty to work to try to reach students who needed an advocate. This effort is facilitated by the fact that students are assigned to the same seminar teachers for all four years of high school.

Dr. Lundblad stressed that high school reform means more than just building personal relationships. She said reform efforts must be characterized by higher expectations for students, as evidenced at Louisburg High by the fact that Algebra I is the lowest entry-level math course that is offered. In addition, skills, such as reading, are embedded in all coursework so that, regardless of which part of the curriculum is being taught, students are expected to increase their reading comprehension and to learn to read for content and understanding.

Dr. Lundblad said Louisburg High is in the process of working out an agreement with Johnson County Community College to obtain vocational offerings at the College and also is implementing a pre-school program next year which will make it possible for students to work at the pre-school and get training necessary for them to continue in that field. Other vocational programs and internships also are being planned. The school has implemented a freshman transition program to help high school graduates get a good start at a postsecondary institution.

Denise Wren, Principal at North High, USD 259 (Wichita), described some of the demographic characteristics of North High students (Attachment 19). In particular, she said 43 percent are Hispanic and 73 percent are on free or reduced-price lunches. She said a problem for her school is that many of the students drop out of school to get jobs to help support their families.

Ms. Wren said North High has instituted a policy whereby students are assigned to small learning communities and have the same assistant principal and counselor for their high school career. Particular attention is paid to students who are poor, at risk of dropping out to get jobs, have little parental involvement in their school work, and have no history of educational success. Efforts also are made to recruit ethnic minority teachers and teachers with a "passion for urban students." According to Ms. Wren, Hispanic males present a particular challenge because they have high dropout and low graduation rates.

In spite of these challenges, Ms. Wren said the effort is paying off at North High. She said "demography is not destiny" and instilled at the school are high expectations for safe and orderly behavior and academic rigor. Efforts are paying off because attendance and graduation rates have improved, expulsion and dropout rates have decreased, math and reading proficiencies have increased, and achievement gaps have narrowed.

Ms. Wren conceded that teachers had not adjusted to change as well as the students. She has done away with staff meetings in favor of making workshops available to teachers from which they may choose. Teachers are required to acquire a certain number of workshop points per month.

Senator Schodorf asked the conferees what they would do if they had additional money to devote to high school reform. Mr. Gering said there is a need for highly qualified staff and incentives are needed to attract the best teachers to high-poverty areas. Ms. Wren agreed that incentives are needed to attract and keep teachers in high-poverty urban areas.

Senator Vratil asked if policy positions taken by Kansas-National Education Association (K-NEA) are an impediment to providing incentives to help recruit and retain teachers. Mr. Gering replied that he has had conversations with K-NEA about bonuses for teachers. He mentioned loan forgiveness programs and tax credits as other incentives to consider. Ms. Wren told the Committee that bonuses for teachers had been a "huge battle" in Wichita and that teachers in high poverty schools get a bonus of \$6,500. She added that school district personnel offices need support in their recruiting efforts. Representative Decker noted that some attempts by the Legislature intended to help teachers have been opposed by K-NEA.

Senator Vratil asked if it is not true that school districts already have sufficient money. Mr. Gering replied that such things as the newly enacted policy of the state that it is the goal that 65 percent of funding be spent for instruction is troubling because many successful efforts with students depend upon support staff who would not be counted toward meeting the 65 percent goal.

### **Meeting with the State Board of Education**

Committee members recessed and resumed their meeting in the Conference Room of the State Board of Education. Members of the State Board and the Committee divided into four groups for the purpose of discussing issues of mutual concern, including activities in response to the recent school finance litigation.

Major topics of discussion were the following:

#### **Group I**

- Policymakers need to make the Kansas Supreme Court more aware of educational successes.
- Efforts must be made to overcome resistance to change in the educational community.
- The charter school law must be liberalized in order to give the State Board a more active role in creating charter schools.
- Consideration should be given to scholarships for special education and at-risk students.

#### **Group II**

- Consideration should be given to more extended-day opportunities, professional development, and high school reform.
- Consideration should be given to school choice for at-risk students.
- Funding should "follow the child," and consideration should be given to a second enrollment count date.
- Attention should be paid to what the Supreme Court said in its decision, including the identification and use of actual cost data and comparisons of budgets among districts.

### Group III

- Extended-day, summer school, and competency-based education programs need to be developed and expanded, along with more paraprofessionals in regular classrooms.
- Leadership must come from administrators.
- There should be clearly defined standards and outcomes and less rigidity in schools.
- There should be personalized learning and students who need help should be targeted and provided extra support. Each student should have a personalized learning program.

### Group IV

- Additional funding should be provided high schools that need to reform or schools that are not making annual yearly progress goals and need to improve.
- Reform and improvements need to be accelerated at the high school level.
- There should be more discussions among stakeholders.

At the end of the small group discussion, Dr. Abrams, State Board Chairperson, reviewed a list of items the Board would consider the next day for introduction during the 2006 Session. Senator Vratil informed State Board members that the Committee would be interested in knowing what the State Board adopts as its proposals to submit to the 2006 Legislature.

The meeting was adjourned.

Prepared by Carolyn Rampey

Approved by Committee on:

December 12, 2005

(date)