

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Ron Highland at 1:30pm on Wednesday, March 11, 2015, 112-N of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Representative Valdenia Winn – Excused

Representative Carolyn Bridges – Absent

Committee staff present:

Sharon Wenger, Legislative Research Department

Sue Mollenkamp, Kansas Legislative Committee Assistant

Tamera Lawrence, Office of Revisor of Statutes

Edward Penner, Legislative Research Department

Nick Myers, Office of Revisor of Statutes

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

Cindy Couchman, 2009 Teacher of the Year

Dyane Smokorowski, 2013 Teacher of the Year

Jeff Baxter, 2014 Teacher of the Year

Jeri Powers, 2008 Teacher of the Year

Representative Jerry Lunn

Mike O'Neal, CEO, Kansas Chamber

Mark Tallman, Kansas Association of School Boards

Others in attendance:

[See Attached List](#)

Chairman Highland asked for a motion to accept the committee minutes for February 16 and 17.

Representative Bradford moved and Representative Hedke seconded the minutes be accepted. The motion passed.

Hearing on: HB2378 — Establishing the Kansas legislature award for teaching excellence program.

The Chairman opened the hearing on **HB2378**. Tamera Lawrence gave a briefing on the bill and answered questions from committee members.

Cindy Couchman opposed **HB2378** offering her view of the differences between the program being proposed and the program currently in place. ([Attachment 1](#))

Dyane Smokorowski spoke against **HB2378** telling of her experiences as the 2013 Teacher of the Year and expressing her concerns about doing away with the current program. ([Attachment 2](#))

Jeff Baxter gave opposition to **HB2378** emphasizing the benefits of the current program and speaking of his experience as the 2014 Teacher of the Year. ([Attachment 3](#))

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES of the Committee on Education at 1:30pm on Wednesday, March 11, 2015, 112-N of the Capitol.

Jeri Powers read opposing testimony on **HB2378** from Norman Conard, Executive Director, Lowell Milken Center for Unsung Heroes, which is located in Ft. Scott. Mr. Conard indicated the current Kansas Teacher of the Year program is considered a model for other states. ([Attachment 4](#))

Written testimony in opposition to **HB2378** was submitted by:

Arthur Commons, 2010 Teacher of the Year Team ([Attachment 5](#))

Carol Strickland, 1999 Teacher of the Year ([Attachment 6](#))

Jenny Nash, 2014 Teacher of the Year Team ([Attachment 7](#))

Keil Hileman, 2004 Teacher of the Year ([Attachment 8](#))

Katie Perez, 2014 Teacher of the Year Team ([Attachment 9](#))

Marilyn Broadie Fox, 2009 Teacher of the Year Team ([Attachment 10](#))

Dr. Ruth Waggoner, 2003 Teacher of the Year ([Attachment 11](#))

Tiffany Richard, 2012 Teacher of the Year ([Attachment 12](#))

Representative Lunn spoke as a proponent of **HB2378** stating it was never his intention when crafting this bill to do away with the benefits of the current program. He spoke of consulting with the Kansas Department of Education and the Milken Family Foundation prior to crafting the bill. He stated his desire is to honor excellence in teaching and to provide incentives that will inspire teachers to strive toward that excellence. ([Attachment 13](#))

Mike O'Neal supported **HB2378** stating the Kansas Chamber does not take a position on the mechanics of how the bill would work. Their interest is in supporting teaching excellence and strong outcomes. ([Attachment 14](#))

Mark Tallman spoke in favor of **HB2378** based on the concept of the bill, but he did not have a stance on which program should be used. ([Attachment 15](#))

The hearing was closed.

The meeting adjourned at 2:53 p.m.

The House Education Committee will meet next on Thursday, March 12, at 1:30 p.m. in Room 112-N of the Capitol.