

## MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Steve Abrams at 1:30 pm on Monday, January 26, 2015, 144-S of the Capitol.

All members were present

Committee staff present:

Lauren Douglass, Legislative Research Department  
Mark Savoy, Legislative Research Department  
Erna Fabert, Kansas Legislative Committee Assistant  
Jason Long, Office of Revisor of Statutes

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

Scott Frank, Legislative Post Auditor

Others in attendance:

[See Attached List](#)

### **Possible bill introductions**

Chairperson Abrams asked if there were any new bills to be introduced to the Committee. There were none.

### **Presentation by:**

Chairperson Abrams then introduced Scott Frank who presented a Summary of K-12 Performance Audits conducted by Legislative Post Audit (LPA). ([Attachment 1](#))

Mr. Frank stated that the goal of LPA is to make legislators aware of the large body of work that has already been done in K-12 education. He feels these reports are tools that can help legislators target funding more accurately. Some of the audits performed have been in the area of General School Finance, At-Risk Programs, Special Education, English as a Second Language, Vocational Education, Virtual Schools, School District Efficiency and various other miscellaneous audits.

Mr. Frank then reviewed portions of the report which he felt would most interest committee members, to include a review of the process of estimating base-level costs for regular education using an input and outcomes-based approach; additional costs for special education students; additional costs for vocational education; additional costs for transporting students who live more than 2.5 miles from school; and how education costs vary in different regions of the state.

In response to a question Mr. Frank stated that it took 25 people working six months to do this study.

Other questions dealt with how can the legislature know if the districts are spending their money effectively; are the figures used projections, or historical; and how accurate the free lunch program determinations are in predicting at-risk funding.

## CONTINUATION SHEET

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Mr. Frank explained that the number of free lunch students is used as a base number for a proxy measure of at-risk funding. One statistic that did emerge was that approximately 17% of students who signed up were not eligible for the free lunch program. This equates to about 23,000 students receiving but not eligible for free lunches, contrasted with 7,000 who were eligible but not receiving. Also, the free lunch numbers were greater than census poverty levels.

Senator Tyson questioned how LPA received access to the data for free lunch programs, as it was her understanding that state agencies are limited on sharing information with each other. Mr. Frank responded that LPA has a limited login through the Post Audit Act.

In response to additional questioning, Mr. Frank reported that the efficiency audits are about saving costs from outside the classroom, such as savings in food services, transportation, supply vendors, payroll and maintenance costs. LPA will frequently make recommendations regarding school closures, or closing buildings on a school campus, but it is up to the individual districts to implement those recommendations.

He emphasized that LPA does not have personnel who can make decisions about classroom issues, other than looking at block versus traditional schedules and classes with low enrollments.

Senator Schmidt asked if the districts have an opportunity to respond to suggestions that have been made. Mr. Frank responded that the LPA brainstorms ideas, prioritizes them and then narrows them down to 8 to 10 items that can be thoroughly researched. Those recommendations are then shared with the district, and they have an opportunity to respond to what has been suggested. The district can officially respond to all the recommendations and the LPA periodically reviews whether the suggestions have been implemented. If recommendations are not adopted that is reported to the administration. Senator Hensley further responded that during the efficiency audits superintendents, as well as school financial officers can provide feedback to the audit committee.

In response to Mr. Frank's reporting that the Virtual School Audit will be coming out next week, committee members asked if they could receive a copy of that report. Mr. Frank stated that he could either send out copies or he could follow up with a presentation to the committee.

Additional question topics were: lengthening school days; shortening school weeks; how class capacity numbers are determined; charter school costs and possible closures; IT problems at smaller schools; equipment losses; how school closure recommendations are handled and whether audits could address the issue of teacher effectiveness.

Chairperson Abrams thanked Mr. Frank for his detailed report. He then reminded members of the Microsoft dinner on February 10 and asked them to please RSVP to Ms. Fabert, Committee Assistant.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 pm.

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES of the Committee on Education at 1:30 pm on Monday, January 26, 2015, 144-S of the Capitol.

The next meeting of the Senate Education Committee will be held on Tuesday, January 27, 2015 at 1:30 pm in Room 144-S of the Capitol.