

Approved March 6, 1991
Date

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

The meeting was called to order by Representative Rick Bowden at
Chairperson

3:30 ~~a.m.~~^{XXX}p.m. on February 27, 1991 in room 519-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Reps. Blumenthal, Pottorff, Lane, Larkin, Reardon, Hensley - All Excused

Committee staff present:

Avis Swartzman, Revisor of Statutes Office
Ben Barrett, Legislative Research
Donna Luttjohann, Secretary to the Committee

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Mark Tallman - KASB
Onan Burnett - 501 Schools
Phyllis Chase - 501 Schools, Truant Officer
Robin Nichols - Wichita Public Schools

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bowden.

Chairman Bowden opened hearings on HB 2162.

Mark Tallman, KASB was the first conferee, proponent of HB 2162. He stated that this would be a positive step toward control of truant students. (Attachment 1).

Onan Burnett, 501 Schools, introduced Phyllis Chase, a truant officer at the 501 School District. She stated the bill would reduce costs and be a more effective way of contacting parents of truant students. (Attachment 2)

The last conferee, Robin Nichols from Wichita Public Schools, was also a proponent of the bill but offered an amendment to further assist in the truancy policies. (Attachment 3).

Rep. Bowden closed the hearing for HB 2162. He asked the committee to look over the minutes for February 21, 1991 with action to be taken on them at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:55 p.m. with the next meeting scheduled for Monday February 28, 1991 at 3:30 p.m. in Room 519-S.

KANSAS
ASSOCIATION



OF
SCHOOL
BOARDS



5401 S. W. 7th Avenue Topeka, Kansas 66606
913-273-3600

Testimony on H.B. 2162
before the
House Committee on Education

by

Mark Tallman
Coordinator of Governmental Relations
Kansas Association of School Boards

February 27, 1991

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today on behalf of the Kansas Association of School Boards. KASB supports the provisions of H.B. 2162, which would allow school districts to notify parents when their children are inexcusably absent from school by written notice mailed first class or delivered in person, instead of by restricted mail.

We see no compelling reason to require notice by restricted mail. This bill would provide more flexibility to schools, which we believe is a positive. Our primary concern in this area is simply to keep children attending school. Thank you.

HOUSE EDUCATION
Attachment 1
February 27, 1991

February 27, 1991

Legislative Testimony - House Bill No. 2162
Phyllis A. Chase, Ed.D.
General Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Topeka Public Schools

As the designated truancy officer of USD 501 Topeka Public Schools I am here today to encourage your support of House Bill No. 2162 as proposed.

As you are aware, this bill would allow notification to parents of student absences and potential truancy filings via personal delivery or by first class mail instead of by restricted mail. We support this change for the following reasons.

- Cost- a letter sent restricted mail cost \$4.79. In a district that files over 500 truancy notices a year this is a substantial financial burden.
- Does not insure intent -
The intent of a certified letter in the truancy process is to insure the parent is aware of a possible truancy filing. However, if the parent is not at home at the time of delivery, he/she has 15 days in which to contact the Postal Office and pick up the letter. This, in effect, gives the student an additional 15 days in which to be absent before the school official could file a notice. The school official could file the truancy notice sooner but risk not meeting the standard of "return of the restricted mail receipt." In most cases, however, the parent has been repeatedly notified by telephone, in person, or by written notice that their student is absent without excuse and is in danger of being filed truant, making the restricted mail clause an ineffectual and unnecessary step in the truancy procedure.

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HOUSE EDUCATION
Attachment 2
February 27, 1991



Public Affairs

**Testimony Before The House Education Committee
In Support of House Bill 2162
With Request For Amendment
By Robin Nichols, Wichita Public Schools
February 27, 1991**

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee:

I am Robin Nichols of the Wichita Public Schools and I thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of House Bill 2162.

The changes in this law to alleviate mailing restrictions will save us thousands of dollars each semester: new mailing rates have raised our cost to \$4.75 per truancy letter, and we send hundreds of letters each semester.

We do, however, ask for your consideration of an amendment to House Bill 2162. Section 1, subsection (c) (1) counts a student's unexcused absences per semester. Because the law requires the counting of days to start over each semester, we not only wipe the slate clean, but also use resources to duplicate paperwork. We would rather expend these resources to serve children in need of intervention. Wiping the slate clean each semester allows students to fall through the cracks of yet another system. Every semester children are lost from our view. Annual counting would alert us to children we need to track in order to work with them to solve their problems.

The number of days, at 5, 7, 10 or more, is a policy decision which we leave to your discretion. We want you to know, however, that the paperwork required from and between our offices, the District Attorney's offices, and our area SRS offices is overwhelming. We request that you change "in any semester" on page 1 line 40, to "in any school year" so that a child who is inexcusably absent 4 and 1/2 days during the first school semester and 1/2 day the beginning of the second semester would be brought to our attention as being in danger of educational neglect, rather than being lost to us as a new semester and a new set of paperwork are begun.

HOUSE EDUCATION
Attachment 3
February 27, 1991