

Approved: March 21, 1996
Date

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Barbara Lawrence at 1:30 p.m. on February 19, 1996 in Room 526-s of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Senator Doug Walker

Committee staff present: Ben Barrett, Legislative Research Department
Avis Swartzman, Revisor of Statutes
Jennifer Bishop, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Guest Speaker - Alex Medler, ECS

Others attending: See attached list

Senator Lawrence spoke to the committee about the seminar she attended this last summer in Milwaukee regarding charter schools.

Alex Medler is from the Education Commission of the States and spoke on behalf of charter schools. ECS is a non-partisan, national organization that serves the state level policy makers. Mr. Medler's main focus is on charter schools. He stated that charter schools create an alternative form of public schooling. The goal of charter schools is to lift restraints from public schools so they can pursue innovative teaching methods that will improve student performance. They are designed to give significant autonomy to individual schools and, in turn, to hold those schools accountable for results. A charter is essentially a contract, negotiated between those people starting the school and the official body authorized to approve the charter. The charter spells out how the school will be run, what will be taught, how success will be measured and what students will achieve. As long as the school meets the terms of its charter, it is free from many of the rules and regulations that apply to other public schools. And unlike other schools, if a charter school fails to meet these terms, the charter can be revoked and the school closed. A charter proposal is written by a team of individuals interested in establishing a new school. The parties eligible to start a charter school vary from state to state. Nationally, charters have been granted to parents, teachers, community groups and other organizations. State law also determines the entity or entities that can approve a charter. In some states, it is the state superintendent. In most states, local school boards have the power to approve or deny charter applications. Some states, such as Michigan, allow institutions of higher education to approve charters. There is a provision in each state's charter school law that describes what applicant can do if a request is denied. Some states allow alternative sponsoring organizations to step in and/or provide for an appeals process to different governing bodies. Other states allow applicants only one chance for approval.

The committee held further discussion regarding the positive and negative aspects.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 20, 1996.

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE GUEST LIST

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NAME	REPRESENTING
Bene Chase	KNEA
Mark Callman	KASB
ONAN BURNETT	USD 501#
Helen Stephens	BV USD 229
Jim Youally	USD #512
Jan Potoff	Home
Harold Plener	Wichita, KPERS Improvement
Charlotte Foster	USD 259, KPERS Improvement Comm.
Chava McKeel	Senator Downey
Bill Medley	SCR Educ Service Center
Diane Gjerstad	USD 259 - Wichita
Kainie Sparks	DOB
Jacquie DeLoe	SQE
Karen Lowery	KASB
Ann E Harrison	KSBCE
Serabl Henderson	USA of KS
Denise Gpt	USA