

MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Senator Barbara Lawrence at 9:00 a.m. on January 13 in Room 313-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Committee staff present:     Avis Swartzman, Revisor of Statutes  
                                  Ben Barrett, Legislative Research Department  
                                  Carolyn Rampey, Legislative Research Department  
                                  Jackie Breymeyer, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Senate President Dick Bond

Others attending:     See Attached List

**Senator Bond's Education Proposal**

The joint meeting of the House and Senate Education committees was called to order by Representative Tanner, House Education Chairman. He made a few brief remarks and called on Senator Bond to present his education proposal.

Senator Bond thanked the committees for meeting jointly to hear his proposal. He submitted an attachment entitled, "First in Class: Kansas Public School Reforms for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" (Attachment 1)

Senator Bond told of the input from various members of staff and others who had helped make up the proposal he offered today. He mentioned Dale Dennis, Deputy Commissioner and Avis Swartzman, Revisor. He also mentioned the unexpected media attention the proposal has received, although the electronic media has tended to focus exclusively on uniforms. There have been surprising reactions from people at meetings, parties and on the street. Many think that it is the right track to take and it would be a good thing. It will be a challenge to see if people can accept change.

Senator Bond stated that Kansas does not have mountains or seashores, but Kansas could have the best educational system in the nation. He believes that with this proposal issues such as the voucher issue and the charter school issue would disappear, as well as other problems related to education.

Beginning with the attachment, Senator Bond went through the 10-point plan, highlighting certain areas. He believes the first point, all day kindergarten, may be one of the most important. Children who attend all day kindergarten seem to have higher abilities than children who do not attend all day kindergarten. A bill will be introduced that will implement a five-year phase-in of state support for full-time kindergarten. This will enable schools to come on board gradually.

With regard to mandatory dress, Senator Bond stated that no new bill would be introduced by him. He is certain a bill could be passed in the legislature similar to Senator Emert's bill, **SB368**. Clothes are being worn by both students that are not conducive to a learning environment.

Senator Bond stated that he would like to have the committee hear John Rios, Argentine School District, an inner city district with gangs and other social problems. There is great racial diversity in the district. Since a dress code was put into place, there has been 95% compliance and it has made a very positive difference in the children's academic performance.

The fiscal note, the Senator noted, cannot be correct as it is very high. After the initial purchase of clothing, there are clothing exchanges where clothes can be purchased at less cost.

The third point of the proposal dealt with lengthening the school year. This nation has one of the shortest school terms of any industrialized nation. Kansas, being a major agricultural state, has fewer than 10% of the state's children living on farms. If this nation wants to compete globally, it will have to be done. He emphasized that he did not mean one world, but to compete globally. This would entail curriculum planning and staff development along with other actions, including a pilot grant program.

## CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE, Room 313-S Statehouse, at 9:00 a.m. on January 13, 2000.

In addressing point four, competency testing for all graduating seniors, Senator Bond stated that many students cannot read, write, articulate or do simple math. Businesses have to train graduates to do the work required of them. In speaking with Dale Dennis, Education Commissioner, the Senator learned there are minimum competency tests available at a minimal cost. All Kansas students should be required to meet a minimum competency test for high school graduation. Testing would begin in the tenth grade.

The fifth point entailed merit pay for teachers. Senator Kerr's bill, **SB 328**, endorses this proposal. Two of the greatest problems in Kansas education deal with the need for more money and teacher tenure. It is very difficult to remove incompetent teachers. Few private sector employees have such rights. In many cases of teacher longevity, the district is paying for mediocrity.

Point six, dealing with the speaking of Spanish, faces opposition, in Senator Bond's opinion, because of prejudice and other factors. Spanish is the most spoken language in the western hemisphere, with approximately 400 million Spanish speaking people. A great opportunity exists for economic growth for our nation with our Spanish speaking neighbors in the southern hemisphere. The Senator would like to see a bill introduced to set standards for Spanish language proficiency by 2002.

Addressing community service as being vital to education, the seventh point of Senator Bond's plan would have students participating in community service. A bill would be introduced in the Senate similar to **HB 2304** by Representative Benlon. Interaction of students and adults would benefit the community in positive ways. A program of community service could be established by 2002.

Point eight, dealing with a current events curriculum, would help students to better understand the world they live in and would encourage development in critical thinking. A Resolution will be introduced in the Senate directing local school boards to incorporate a weekly study of current events into the curriculum.

The ninth point made by Senator Bond, early childhood education, would add 1 million in funding to the four-year-old at risk program. This would be done by bill introduction. In the long term, this would save the taxpayers the cost of remedial education, welfare and crime.

The last point in Senator Bond's proposal, technology infrastructure, would provide a pipeline of knowledge to the front door of every school in the state and leave no one behind, whether in the smaller school districts or the larger districts. Every school would be connected to a statewide computer network. A savings would be realized by the state purchasing in bulk and a bill requiring the state to contract for a statewide infrastructure technology system for school districts would be introduced.

Senator Bond, listened to comments dealing with concerns and answered questions on the ten point proposal.

Chairperson Lawrence stated the cost will make it difficult, knowing this is a tough year for new programs to be implemented. There are a number of things it would be easy to dismiss because the legislature cannot afford them.

Chairperson Lawrence asked for bill introduction for bills dealing with all day kindergarten, Spanish language proficiency and community service. She called for a motion.

Senator Oleen moved the bill introductions, seconded by Senator Langworthy.  
The motion carried.

The Senate portion of the meeting was adjourned.

# SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE GUEST LIST

DATE: January 13, 2000

NAME	REPRESENTING
Mark Talbot	KACR
Denise Ayt	254
Sen Marshall Lewis	LWVK
Janis McMillan	LWVK
Diane Gjerstad	Wichita Public Schools

# **First in Class:** **Kansas Public School Reforms for the 21st Century**

## **Senate President Dick Bond's 10-Point Plan**

**September 28, 1999**

### **1. All Day Kindergarten**

**Children benefit academically and socially during the primary years from participation in full-day, compared to half-day, kindergarten programs (Cryan et al., 1992)**

- ✦ Full-day kindergarten allows children and teachers time to explore topics in depth and provides for greater continuity of day-to-day activities.
- ✦ Children in child-centered kindergarten programs have abilities significantly higher, have higher expectations for success on academic tasks, and are better independent thinkers.
- ✦ All day kindergarten helps improve student behavior.

**Action:**

**Introduce a bill** implementing a five-year phase-in of state support for full-time kindergarten enabling schools to gradually come aboard based upon the availability of facilities and the implementation schedule as determined by each local board of education.

### **2. Mandatory Uniform Dress for K-12**

**A safe, disciplined learning environment is the first requirement of a good school.**

- ✦ Uniform dress fosters a disciplined learning environment and helps students concentrate on school work.
- ✦ Uniform dress helps parents and students resist peer pressure.
- ✦ Uniform dress helps school officials recognize intruders who come to the school.
- ✦ Uniform dress decreases violence and theft - even life-threatening situations - among students and prevents gang members from wearing gang colors and insignia at school.

**Action:**

**Support Senate Bill 368** prefiled for the 2000 Session by Senator Tim Emert.

### 3. **Lengthen School Year to Meet 21<sup>st</sup> Century Challenge**

Essentially the current school year is a holdover from an era where the majority of students in Kansas were involved in farming and harvest.

- ✪ Our ultimate goal is to extend the length of the entire school year as funding becomes available.
- ✪ Provide additional teaching programs, morning, evening and summer, to accomodate students who are not meeting academic standards.
- ✪ Providing grants to school districts for teacher curriculum planning and other staff development during the summer months will have a positive impact on services to students and teacher effectiveness.

**Action:**

**Introduce 2 bills**

- 1) to establish a pilot **grant** program for **students not meeting the academic standards** as determined by the school district;
- 2) to establish a **grant** program for payment of **salaries to provide curriculum planning** for teachers.

### 4. **Competency Testing for Graduation**

All Kansas students should be required to meet a minimum competency for high school graduation.

- ✪ Establish clear criteria for what is the minimum level of mastery for graduation purposes.
- ✪ Provide greater student accountability for achievement of standards.
- ✪ The public/taxpayer should be appalled when graduates cannot read, articulate or do simple math.

**Action:**

Introduce a **Resolution** directing the Commissioner of Education to **set the standards** for this **competency test**. Tests to measure minimum competency are available; teachers could begin administering them three times a year, starting in the 10th grade. Tests should include only core subjects.

### 5. **Merit Pay for Teachers/Eliminate Teacher Tenure**

Teacher pay should include a merit system that rewards excellence and ability rather than simply promoting longevity. Removal of teachers who lack competency is very expensive and borders on the impossible.

- ✪ There should be financial reward for exceptional teaching, for spending additional time beyond the “duty day” or for developing innovative programs or practices.

## 5. Merit Pay for Teachers/Eliminate Teacher Tenure -- (con't)

- ✦ Merit pay should consider district or state outcomes, or another measure of school improvement determined by local boards in consultation with teacher organizations.
- ✦ The difficulty and high cost of removing or not renewing teachers is a major impediment to local district management. Current law leaves decision-making authority on terminations or non-renewals in the hands of a hearing officer rather than the local school board.
- ✦ No other school employees (administrators, classified employees) have such extensive due process rights and few private sector employees have these rights.

**Action:**

Support **1999 Senate Bill 328** in the Senate Education Committee establishing the "career teacher salary plan."

## 6. Speaking Spanish: Competing in Our Hemisphere

**Every student should be required to have a speaking knowledge of Spanish through instruction provided during the K-12 years.**

- ✦ Spanish is spoken by over 400 million people worldwide and is the most spoken language in our hemisphere. Spanish is the official language of 21 nations.
- ✦ Successful early experience in study of Spanish develops self-confidence and useful skills transferable to the study of other languages and could instill a desire for further study of foreign languages in upper school levels.
- ✦ The reality in the United States is that we have an increasing number of Spanish speaking residents and our greatest opportunity for economic growth is probably with Spanish speaking nations to our South.

**Action:**

Introduce a **bill** directing the Commissioner of Education to **set standards for Spanish language proficiency by 2002.**

## 7. Community Service Vital to Education

**Grades and student performance are enhanced in all other classes through involvement in a community service program. (Bogle, 1994 dissertation)**

- ✦ Student participation in community service provides dividends for school and community partnerships.
- ✦ Self-motivation and leadership qualities emerge as students develop projects and learn firsthand about community needs.

**Action:**

Introduce a **bill** requiring local school boards to establish a program of **community service by 2002.** Programs should be reviewed by the Commissioner of Education.

## 8. Current Events Curriculum

To develop a broad awareness in our students, the study of current events must be part of the American History and/or Government classes required for high school graduation.

- ✦ The study of current events and issues provides an understanding of the world in which we live.
- ✦ The study of current events and issues encourages development of abilities in critical thinking.

**Action:**

Introduce a **Resolution** directing local school boards to incorporate into the curriculum the **weekly study of current events**. This could be included in the American History or Government classes required for high school graduation.

## 9. Early Childhood Education

Kansas educators indicate early childhood programs can produce significant benefits for children's readiness to learn and long-term impact on school achievement.

- ✦ Research has shown early childhood education intervention pays big dividends in a child's educational career, as well as in life.
- ✦ Studies show quality learning experiences during the preschool years influence the reading and math achievement of children at ages five and six.
- ✦ Early childhood at-risk programs save taxpayer dollars by reducing the cost of remedial education, welfare, and crime.

**Action:**

Introduce a **bill** adding \$1M in funding to the four-year-old preschool at-risk program. This would expand the program by approximately 400 students.

## 10. Technology Infrastructure

Students in both rural and urban districts should be assured access to current computer technology.

- ✦ The state should provide for the infrastructure to connect every school to a statewide computer network.
- ✦ Studies have concluded, when properly used, computers improve student proficiency in mathematics, as well as the overall learning environment of the school.
- ✦ Data indicates computer education programs help all children learn and help the neediest children the most.

**Action:**

Introduce a **bill** requiring the state to **contract for a statewide infrastructure technology system** for school districts. A major savings in overall cost is achieved with state purchase as opposed to districts purchasing individually.