

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Senator Dwayne Umbarger at 1:35 p.m. on February 20, 2001 in Room 123-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
 Judy Steinlicht, Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Senator Dave Kerr
 Craig Grant, KNEA
 Diane Lindeman, KBOR
 Senator Christine Downey
 Diane Gjerstad, Wichita Public Schools
 Mark Desetti, KNEA

Others attending: See Attached List

SB220—At-risk pupil weighting and mastery of basic reading skills

Senator Dave Kerr, gave testimony in support of **SB220**. (Attachment 1) The goal of this bill is to further our efforts to have our children reading by the time they finish third grade or at least by the time they start fourth grade. If a child is not reading by this time, they are at-risk. If they cannot read, they cannot do any of their school work, including math. Reading is at the heart of it all. The bill has a reporting requirement. The number of children not reading at the end of the second grade level is reported with a strategy to have those children reading by the end of third grade and then the school must report how many of those children are still not reading after third grade.

Supportive comments were made by Committee members but there was concern of what would be done for a child who still could not read by the end of third grade. Literature is not conclusive of whether it is beneficial to hold a child back. The system will identify schools with children who do not read by the end of third grade and it is hoped that these schools can learn the strategies of the schools that have been successful.

Craig Grant, KNEA, spoke to the Committee in favor of **SB220**. (Attachment 2) Craig agreed that there are problems for children that have not learned to read by third grade. The goal of the bill is that all students master reading skills by third grade.

Diane Gjerstad, Wichita Public Schools, gave her testimony in favor of **SB220**. (Attachment 3) She agreed with statements made by Senator Kerr and Craig Grant. Her testimony showed facts and figures in her district. She stated that she totally supports the bill, but the dollars available are not adequate.

Hearings on **SB220** were closed. Senator Vratil made a motion to pass **SB220** favorably. Senator Oleen seconded the motion. Motion carried.

SB200—Teacher service scholarships, qualified student definition to include certificated teachers

Diane Lindeman, Associate Director of Fiscal Affairs/Student Financial Aid, Kansas Board of Regents, gave testimony in support of **SB200**. This bill is not new, but makes changes to an

CONTINUATION SHEET

February 20, 2001

existing one, the Kansas Teacher Scholarship Program. Changes are outlined in (Attachment 4.) To make the program truly effective, it would be necessary to increase the funding.

Senator Downey offered testimony in favor of **SB200**. (Attachment 5) These bills, **SB220** and **SB219** are very small pieces of a very complex solution of teacher shortages. This bill addresses the issues of recruitment.

Senator Oleen stated that there is another bill, **HB2014**, dealing with these same issues. If one of the Senate bills could be blessed, she would get the house bill and work on putting the components of the bills together and make a presentation. Senator Downey agreed that this would be a good idea.

SB219–School districts, grow your own teachers program

Senator Downey offered testimony in favor of **SB219**. (Attachment 6) This bill would encourage schools to look within their own schools for qualified employees that could be encouraged to pursue a teaching degree with forgivable loans as a part of the incentive package. Districts would receive a 50% match for the amount invested in certification attainment by an employee.

Diane Gjerstad offered testimony in favor of **SB219**. (Attachment 7) The Wichita School District has used two versions of the “grow your own teacher” program successfully.

Mark Desetti, KNEA, also gave testimony supporting **SB219**. (Attachment 8) He supports the bill for three reasons, first, it maintains high standards for entry in teaching profession. It recognizes the forgivable loans, and finally for the support program that is put in place by the school district is critical.

Hearings were closed on **SB219** and **SB220**. Chairman Umbarger will ask that these two bills be blessed.

Meeting was adjourned. The next meeting is scheduled February 27, 2001 at 1:30 p.m.

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE GUEST LIST

DATE - 2-20-01

<u>NAME</u>	<u>REPRESENTING</u>
Craig Grant	HNEA
MARK DBETTI	KNEA
Mark Tallman	KASB
Diane Gjerstad	Wichita Public Schools
Bill Truck	Shawnee Mission Public Schools
Bill Brady	Schools for Fair Funding
Deborah Simmons	NEO A&M College
April Simmons	NEO A&M College
Elaine Frisbie	Div. of the Budget
Diane Lindeman	KBOB
CORRIE KANGAS	SEN. BROWNLEE
Betsy Schmelzle	MSW student
Tiffany Smith	MSW student
Jacquelin D Ford	MSW student KNASW
Dorinda Knowles	USA
BRAD LICKTEIG	—
George Petersen	Kansas Taxpayers Network
Rick Carter	Alchidias NonAnongous

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PRESIDENT

Reading at Grade Level

For every child, reading is truly the gateway to knowledge. In fact, teaching children to read is probably the single most important task of our elementary schools. By addressing the needs of a child early on, we can prevent reading failure. Only intrinsic factors such as proper reading instruction will unlock the door to a literate workforce in the 21st Century (EducationNews.org, 2000). If children do not master these skills in their first three years of school, they are certain to encounter difficulties throughout their schooling. Because the stakes are so high, it is impossible to overstate the importance of appropriate reading instruction. Those who learn to read in the early grades have a foundation on which to build new knowledge. Those who do not are doomed to repeated cycles of frustration and failure.

References

National Center to Improve the Tools of Educators. "Reading to Learn / Learning to Read Initiative." Washington, D.C., 1996.

What our Children Need to do Well by the End of Third Grade

Importance of Reading

Our schools emphasize reading during the first three grades. By the fourth grade, we expect children to be good readers so they can then learn the rest of the core curriculum. Too often, the children who struggle with reading early on fall further behind in school, are placed in special education classes, or lose interest, give up, and drop out.

The belief is that a strong and early focus on reading, coupled with greater parental involvement, can reduce special education and remedial education costs, decrease truancy rates, and reduce the number of young people dropping out of school.

References

White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning, 1996.

Senate Education
 2-20-01
 Attachment 1

LAB Education Notes

Volume 1, No. 2

November 1999

The Challenge of Improving Reading

"I can think of no higher purpose than passing on literacy and the love of reading to the next generation of Americans."

— US Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley

Reading and literacy are more than just skills. They represent a means of participating in the exchange of the ideas, feelings, and information that define a thriving society. But too many children in America's schools—38% at the fourth-grade level, according to the 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress—score below the "basic" level of reading (NAEP, 1999). (See related charts, page 3 and 4.) Their struggle with reading blocks them from making the most of their education and they often emerge from school poorly prepared for their roles as citizens and employees. Without question, literacy in general and reading in particular are the most complex and important challenges American schools face.

What are the sources of the problem?

It might seem a simple matter for schools and families to raise student performance in reading, and there are certainly many actions that can influence student literacy for the better. But difficulties with reading often have complex causes.

Environment plays a crucial role in a child's early years as brain cells are formed, and sensory environmental stimulation affects the structure and organization of neural pathways (Cole & Cole, 1989; Myers, 1992). Parents need to be their children's first teachers if their children are to start school successfully. Preschool programs with parental involvement—like Head Start—appear to be more successful generally than those without parental involvement (Myers, 1992). (See also "Library cards for infants," page 6.) The window for developing reading competence is smaller than previously thought—so small that first-grade reading performance is now a predictor of reading proficiency for the rest of life. New research indicates that pre-natal health and experiences soon after birth, particularly in the first three years of life, dramatically influence brain development.

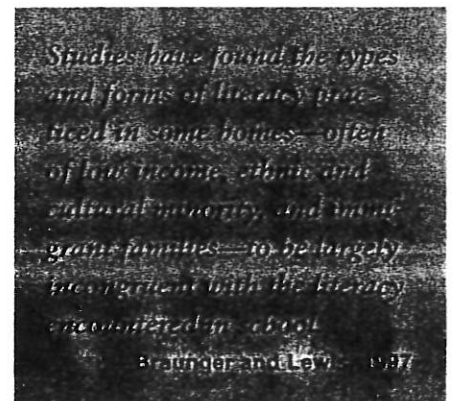
continued on page 2

The Longest War: How Best To Teach Reading

Without question, teaching the beginning reader to acquire phonemic awareness and competence is the key first step, without which other reading abilities cannot develop. Learning the sound-letter correspondences and connecting them to words already known in speech is the most effective way to "crack the code" in any language. Current research, aided by advances in technology that facilitate precise measurement of eye movements and brain activity, confirms that the gateway to normal and competent reading acquisition is phonemic awareness, an ability that is best developed through direct instruction (Spector, 1995; Pugh, 1999). There is also no doubt that the so-called "balanced approach" of also teaching children to read for meaning and using high-quality children's literature leads to reading competency.

Despite these findings, the "reading wars" rage on between "meaning-first" (whole language) and phonics-first beginning reading methodologies. The wars date back

continued on page 2



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“The Challenge of Improving Reading”, continued

In fact, many factors influence how well children learn to read. Most significant is the instruction they receive. When it is inadequate, a child's reading skills development (and perhaps his or her motivation) can suffer. In the early grades, one year of poor reading instruction can set a student back significantly, initiating problems that can last for several years if not addressed.

By grade three, most of the “learning to read” phase is over and the remainder of the years in school is “reading to learn.” A recent study by the University of Chicago showed that if children were behind in reading at the end of the third grade, there is an 87% chance they would never make up the deficiency. Children who do not experience early reading success often feel discouraged in school and may be prone to “acting out” behaviors. Only through informed educational practice can these negative outcomes be averted.

Students can also encounter barriers to reading success because of the complex relationship between their own cultural or language background and the predominant culture or language in their school. Students for whom the dialect of English spoken in their school is unfamiliar, for example, can struggle to develop links between sounds and symbols because of their experiences with a greater variety of represented sounds. Furthermore, different cultural groups value literacy in a variety of ways, sometimes emphasizing different uses of literacy or having different roles for parents and teachers to play in its acquisition. While adults from minority communities often place a positive value on literacy, variations in how cultural groups view reading can influence how students participate in school literacy activities.

In some schools, literacy expectations and resources differ from one group of students to the next. When these factors are combined with differences in instructional practices, a school sets in motion a snowball effect that makes it very difficult for some groups of students to gain needed reading skills once they have fallen behind. School climate can further undermine the importance of literacy, leading to poor performance not just in reading but also in other subjects that depend on reading as a primary means of gaining information and participating in the exchange of ideas.

Given the complex causes of student reading difficulties, a study by the National Research Council states, “Excellent instruction is the best intervention for children who demonstrate problems learning to read” (NRC, 1998). The challenge, of course, is making excellent instruction a reality for all students.

“The Longest War: How Best To Teach Reading”, continued

at least 30 years to the *First-Grade Studies* and *Learning to Read: The Great Debate*. Marilyn Jager Adams, a leading phonics advocate, writes that how best to teach reading “may be the most politicized topic in the field of education” (Lemann, 1997). Nicholas Lemann further comments that “phonics is also a long-standing cause of the political right; in a number of communities it is one of the main organizing issues for the Christian Coalition. Whole-language is generally a cause of the left.” (Lemann, 1997). Gerald Coles, writing in *Education Week*, suggests that the ongoing quality of the wars reflects the “deep, divergent, and irreconcilable conflicts about people, social purposes, resources, and power that run through the entire society.” (Coles, 1998) In response to the ongoing battles, legislators are saying, “If it isn't fixed yet, we are going to do something to fix it ourselves.” And so conservative state lawmakers have introduced legislation mandating—in increasingly prescriptive terms and with funding strings attached—phonics-first instruction. California, with its student population of more than five million, is one of the states moving in this direction after falling to the next-to-last position nationally in NAEP scores.

The State of the Art: NAEP Scores Show Some Improvement

In 1998, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the nation's only ongoing assessment of what students know and can do in various subject areas, conducted a national reading assessment for grades 4, 8, and 12, and a state-by-state reading assessment of students in grades 4 and 8. Students' performances are described in terms of average scores on a 0 to 500 scale, and in terms of the percentage of students attaining Basic, Proficient, and Advanced achievement levels. The summary at right, taken from the *Reading Report Card for the Nation*, highlights the major findings.

Parents of children not in the dominant cultural group must be supported to become partners with the school in their children's literacy development. It is not lack of interest in their children's school success that keeps these parents at a remove from the school. Rather it may be that the school lacks the appropriate strategies and mechanisms to involve them. Beyond giving generic advice to “read to your children,” schools can share resources, demonstrate strategies, and otherwise invite parents into the literacy process.

— Braunger and Lewis, 1997



KANSAS NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION / 715 SW 10TH AVENUE / TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612-1686

Craig Grant Testimony
Senate Education Committee
Tuesday, February 20, 2001

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am Craig Grant and I represent Kansas NEA. I appreciate this opportunity to speak in favor of SB 220 today.

Mastery of reading skills by the third grade is one of those goals that all interested people and groups can agree is important. We know that there are a number of problems ahead for those students who have not mastered those skills by the third grade. We have also learned that the second-grade diagnostic test is a good indicator of whether or not a student is progressing in a manner that will allow that student to attain mastery by grade three. Certainly a student who does not do well on the second-grade test should be considered an "at-risk" student.

We like this approach to the problem. By directing a portion of the at-risk funding to mastery of third-grade reading skills, the Legislature is setting a statewide priority that all children should be able to read by third grade. This bill does not prescribe how to get the jobs done in individual districts. What it does is trusts that the professionals in the district can and will develop a program to assist children not meeting standards.

This bill recognizes that to succeed will take some learners more time-on-task than others. It sets aside some funds to assist a district in this endeavor. We are not sure that the funds are sufficient to do the entire job; however, we think that this will greatly assist our districts in dealing with a universal goal – all students mastering reading skills by the third grade.

Kansas NEA applauds this bill and hopes that the Senate and the Legislature will take this approach. Thank you for listening to our concerns.

*Senate Education
2-20-01
Attachment 2*



Senate Education Committee
S.B. 220
Targeting At-risk funding

February 20, 2001
Diane Gjerstad
Wichita Public Schools

Facts About Wichita Public Schools:

- **Population:**
 - 49,000 students
 - 1642 Pre kindergarten
 - 3965 Kindergarten
 - 4101 1st grade
 - 3923 2nd grade
 - 3963 3rd grade

- **District Ethnic Break Down**
 - 5.40 Asian
 - 23.63 African American
 - 15.67 Hispanic (fastest growing population)
 - 2.45 American Indian
 - 52.83 Caucasian/other

- **Free and Reduced Lunch**
 - District average is 54%
 - Title I funds 28 schools that are 66 to 92% free and reduced.
 - There are 18 additional schools that are above the district average that do not receive Title 1 funding. (The money runs out too soon.)

- **Pre Kindergarten**
 - Offered for 1642 students at 20 schools.
 - 648 of these students are funded by state PreK funds.
 - Either Title I or Special Education or State At Risk Funds funds most of the rest of the students.

- **All Day Kindergarten**
 - Programs are available at 46 schools that leaves 13 schools with only half day programs.
 - All day kindergarten programs are funded by using 2 million dollars of State At Risk Funds and through Title I support.

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Attachment 3

Structure to Promote Academic Achievement for All:

▪ **District Aligned Standards PreK – 12**

These guide instruction across the district so if a child moves from one building to another there is consistency in what is taught and expected. These are aligned with state and national standards.

▪ **Monitoring Achievement**

Entry diagnostic assessments are given in the fall.

Pre Kindergarten (Dial R)

Kindergarten (Dial 3)

Students identified with potential delay:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Free/Reduced Lunch</u>
Concept	19.8%	27.4%
Language	28.4%	37.4%
2 nd grade (Basic Reading Inventory)		
Pre Test given in the fall		
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Free/Reduced Lunch</u>
Emergent Readers	20.4%	27.4%
Below Grade 2 level	34.3%	39.0%
At Grade 2 level	18.9%	16.3%
Above Grade 2 level	26.5%	17.3%

Not on grade level

48% of K or 1900 students

66% of 2nd grade or 2600

assume 50% of 1st grade or 2000 students

Totals 6500 not at grade level

Increasing at risk weighing to .1% generates \$703,000 or \$108 per student

▪ **Formative Assessments at all grade levels**

Formative Assessments are the frequently given assessments that classroom teachers embed into their instruction. This is what is used to change instruction to pinpoint instruction to address individual student needs.

- Elementary look alike Benchmark Assessments have been developed at every grade level K-5 for reading and math.
- Building designated formative assessments used for QPA reporting.
- Wichita is currently working to develop a standardized formative assessment reporting form so this data can be shared with the Board to help target assistance.

▪ **Interventions**

- Once it is determined what skill and concept deficiencies a student has, interventions to address that deficiency must be in place.

- All schools follow Intervention Guidelines.
 - School Intervention Plans
 - Each school makes a plan to address students who are not being successful.
 - State intervention funds are used to provide resources.
- Intervention Watch Schools
 - If students in a school do not make sufficient progress on benchmark assessments the school is identified for interventions watch. The school submits a Watch Plan to address the identified areas of concerns. They then receive extra funds and personnel resources to help raise student achievement.
- Summer School
 - Summer school is available free to any student who does not pass district benchmarks.
 - Interventions classes for reading, writing and math have been developed.
 - Every teacher who teaches an intervention class must attend 15 hours of training.
 - The Wichita Teaching Model must be used for the summer session.
- Class Size Reduction Grant
 - This federal grant money is used in Wichita at 28 schools to reduce class size to 18 or below for at least 1 ½ hours per day. This leaves 21 elementary schools without this extra help.
 - This is the second year for the grant.
 - The data from last school year shows the student gains were significantly greater than their peers in the control schools.
 - This program also includes teacher training bi-weekly on strategies and the Wichita Teaching Model.
- English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Program
 - Wichita currently has 4,300 ESOL students
 - This is an increase of 600% in the last 12 years or about 12% a year.
 - ESOL students are tested yearly with the LAS Oral or LAS Test.
 - Classes are provided for newcomers (they speak extremely limited English) and for ESOL students at all other levels of the language, reading and writing continuum.
 - Summer School is provided free for all ESOL students.
 - These students have to climb a might hurdle to e reading on grade level by the end of third grade.
 - 75% of Wichita's ESOL population is Hispanic. 95% of the Hispanic population is from Mexico. Vietnamese students are the second largest ESOL population.
 - ESOL students are included in benchmark and state assessments and an exception is closely monitored.

Statement to the Senate Committee on Education

SB 200

Diane Lindeman
Associate Director of Fiscal Affairs/Student Financial Aid
Kansas Board of Regents

February 20, 2001

Good afternoon Chairman Umbarger and members of the Committee. My name is Diane Lindeman and I am the Associate Director of Fiscal Affairs/Student Financial Aid, with the Kansas Board of Regents. I am pleased to be able to provide information regarding SB 200. This bill is not an introduction of a new program but makes changes to an existing one – the Kansas Teacher Scholarship Program.

The Kansas Teacher Scholarship Program was first implemented in academic year 1990-91. It provides an annual \$5,000 scholarship to students who enroll in programs of education leading to teacher certification in hard-to-fill discipline areas. These areas are annually defined by the Kansas Department of Education. Currently, for the 2000-2002 academic year these areas are: special education, foreign language, and vocational/practical arts. In the past, math and science have also been included. Scholarship recipients must provide one year of teaching service in Kansas for each year that they receive funding.

SB 200 revises the current scholarship program to include the following changes:

- The term “service” is added to the name of the scholarship (i.e. Kansas Teacher Service Scholarship) thereby emphasizing that service is an obligation.
- Underserved areas (i.e. geographic areas where a critical shortage of teachers exists in the state) are added to hard-to-fill disciplines for eligibility criteria.
- Amount of award increases to 70% of costs of attendance (est. \$7,000 annually).

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Attachment 4

- Allows current holders of teaching certificates who want to return to school for additional training to be eligible – currently students who are already certified to teach are ineligible for the scholarship.
- Part-time teaching acceptable for fulfillment of obligation in pro-rated manner.
- Change in interest rate. Currently at 15%, this change would be the equivalent of the PLUS loan program at the time the person first entered into agreement plus 5% points. (PLUS program currently approx. 8%).
- KBOR can turn over program to a loan servicer.
- KBOR would have discretion over special circumstances.
- More provisions added for postponement of obligation/payment (i.e. VISTA volunteer; service commitment to U.S. public health service; during job-protected leave under the federal family and medical leave act of 1993; special circumstances determines by KBOR)

For FY 2001, the total for the Kansas Teachers Scholarship was \$486,777 , which provided 97 scholarships at \$5,000. If the proposed change were effective for 2001-2002, 69 scholarships could be awarded at \$7,000. The Board of Regents FY 2002 budget does not include additional funding to compensate for the proposed change in the maximum award. In order to truly be effective, it would be necessary to increase funding to this program.

I thank you for your time and would be pleased to answer any questions that you may have.

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SENATE CHAMBER

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

RANKING MINORITY MEMBER: EDUCATION
RANKING MINORITY MEMBER: AGRICULTURE
MEMBER: WAYS AND MEANS
NATURAL RESOURCES
LEGISLATIVE EDUCATIONAL PLANNING
COMMITTEE
JOINT COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN'S ISSUES

Thank you Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee.

The two bills before you are small pieces to the complex solution needed to lessen teacher shortages across the State. They were developed as part of the larger 3 R's plan and by themselves won't eliminate shortages.

However, they are important parts of solving the shortage because they address the issues of recruitment. Unless we can get more students into our teacher preparation programs, we will obviously not increase our graduates. Scholarships have been used in other shortage areas in the past and are currently being proposed to help the shortage of dentists in the state.

SB 200 revises the definition of a qualified student to include persons holding a teaching certificate. This bill is really a companion to HB 2014. HB 2014 expands teaching scholarship eligibility. Currently, the scholarship is for hard-to-fill teaching disciplines and 2014 adds "underserved" areas where teacher shortages are particularly severe. SB 200 adds those teachers who hold current teaching certificates to the eligibility list. The purpose is to create incentives for teachers who might be willing to certify in areas which are experiencing the biggest shortages, such as special education, math, and science.

It is not a big change; it is not the answer to shortages, but it does have the potential to encourage teachers to add certifications for hard-to-fill positions.

Thank you for your attention.

Senate Education
2-30-01
Attachment 5

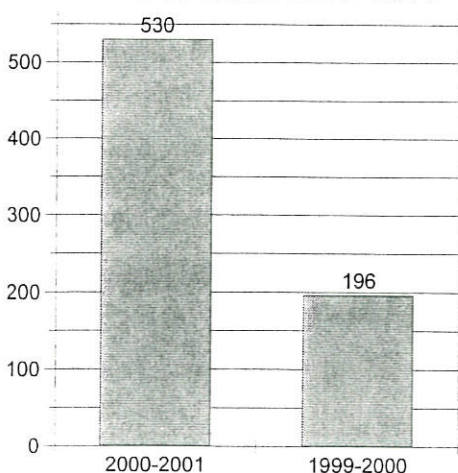


The “3 R’s” to Eliminate Teacher Shortages

Kansas must meet its recruiting goals based on geographic needs, subject area needs, and ethnic diversity.



Number of August 1st teaching vacancies since 1999-2000



- **Encourage secondary students to choose education careers**
 - Fund Future Teacher Academy at The Jones Institute, a one week seminar for high school students interested in teaching
 - Grants for “Future Educator Clubs”
- **Pre-Service Incentives**
 - Full funding for “Teacher Scholarship Program,” providing forgivable loans to students who become teachers in high-need subject areas; support for HB 2014, which would add students who become teachers in high-need geographic locations
 - Provide scholarships to college juniors and seniors who transfer to education majors in high-need subject areas, such as foreign language, math, and science
- **Grow Your Own Teacher**
 - Recruit ethnic minority candidates
 - Funding for programs such as those in Wichita, Garden City, and others which encourage classified school personnel to enter the teaching profession



The “3 R’s” to Eliminate Teacher Shortages

Low salaries, poor benefits, and lack of support are the top reasons given by teachers who leave the profession.



- **Increased salaries**
 - Support the Governor’s Task Force recommendation of \$180 increase in BSAPP with a significant percentage devoted to raising the average teacher salary in Kansas
 - Support the Task Force recommendation on Alternative Compensation Plan for Teachers.
- **Improved benefits**
 - Financial incentives to encourage school districts to use 3 or 5-year “ramp up” provisions to join state employee health plan
 - Give local school districts the authority to allow retired teachers to return to the same classroom without the loss of benefits
- **Develop a Full Induction Program for New Teachers**
 - Support for beginning teachers that is appropriate for individual teacher needs
 - Full funding for current Teacher-Mentor program
 - Planning grants for development and implementation of comprehensive induction programs



The “3 R’s” to Eliminate Teacher Shortages

Kansas must support ongoing professional growth because students learn best from teachers who continue to learn.



- **National Board Certification**

- Funding the National Board Certification Program of Professional Support at The Jones Institute
- Full funding for \$2,300 application fee for National Board Certification
- Increase funding for annual stipends for National Board Certified teachers

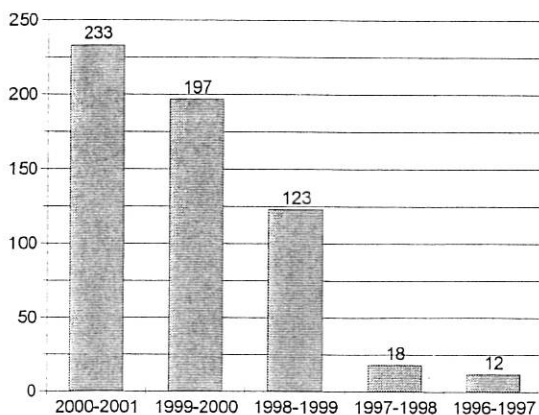
- **Licensure Options**

- Support for Alternate Route to Licensure programs that comply with State Board of Education regulations, such as those at Wichita State University and Kansas City Teaching Fellows
- Scholarships for college juniors and seniors or currently licensed teachers who add endorsements in high need subject areas

- **Teacher Inservice**

- Restore \$2 million in funding for Kansas Inservice Program and phase in full funding for teacher development

Number of “teach out of field waivers” since 1996-97



STATE OF KANSAS

CHRISTINE DOWNEY

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Thank you Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee

SB 219 was introduced to motivate districts to take active roles in developing their own teacher corps. Many current school employees serve our public schools in support roles such as paraprofessionals, teacher aids, custodians, bus drivers, food service workers, and clerical aids.

These people often have a particular interest in children and devotion to the education system. These employees are potential teacher candidates, by virtue of their commitment and focus on kids and education. With the current shortage of teachers, it makes sense to look for qualified teacher candidates among school district employees.

With proper credentials, such candidates should be encouraged to pursue a teaching degree and forgivable loans should be a part of the incentive package. Districts would receive a 50% match for the amount invested in certification attainment by an employee. The State Board of Education would approve each district's application for payment. Failure to complete the requirements for a degree in education, to receive certification or to work as a teacher for the school district would result in repayment of the loan.

Again, this measure alone won't eliminate teacher shortages but some districts are finding this to be a successful tool, and I believe it is important to expand and encourage this option.

*Senate Education
2-20-01
Attachment 6*



Senate Education Committee
S.B. 219
Grow Your Own Teachers

February 20, 2001

Mr. Chairman, and Members of the Committee:

The Wichita Public Schools rises in support of S.B. 219, a bill expanding a successful program statewide. The bill would provide loans for classified employees returning to college for an education degree.

Wichita has two versions of this program. The oldest is the more traditional "Grow Your Own Teacher" project to entice graduating high school minority students to become teachers. Since 1989, 71 participants have completed their college education, 57 are currently teaching in WPS and one in a local parochial school. GYOT graduates have collectively delivered 248 years of instruction. The program does make a difference, Currently 29 students are participating.

An adaptation of GYOT was recently developed and approved by the Wichita Public Schools Board of Education in October 1999 as a response to the special education teacher shortage.

The BOE created a program for current employees wanting to become certified special education teachers. In the 99/00 the Board allocated \$60,000 for 30 staff members continuing in special education. The appropriation was increased in the current year to \$80,000 for 40 teachers and staff.

For many employees, especially paraprofessionals the wages they make can not be stretched far enough to cover their families living expenses, plus tuition. These candidates are current employees, who know the realities of working with students. They are success in their current job and want to better themselves.

There are few ways to reward our employees who work daily with the most difficult students. But for a Board to say: *we so value your work, that we are willing to invest in your future*, is an extremely powerful statement.

Passage of this bill, with its modest fiscal note, will spread a successful program statewide. The time is right, the need is acute. I would encourage this committee's favorable action. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I would stand for questions.

Senate Committee
2-20-01
Attachment 7

DO YOU WANT TO BE A TEACHER?

CHECK OUT THE GROW YOUR OWN TEACHERS (GYOT) SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

**THE APPLICATION
DEADLINE IS
FEBRUARY 23, 2001
AT 4:45 P.M.**

(ROOM 932, 201 N. WATER ST.)

Eligibility

To be eligible for GYOT forgivable loan assistance an applicant must:

- be a graduate of a Wichita public school or state accredited high school in one of the designated Sedgwick County school districts, **or** be an employee of a Wichita public school **or** meet the eligibility requirements for admission to Friends University, Newman University or Wichita State University.
- have a GPA of 2.7 or better (FIRM).
- demonstrate acceptable scores on standardized tests (ACT and/or SAT).
- demonstrate an aptitude for entering teacher education.
- demonstrate good verbal and written communication skills.
- actively participate in all GYOT Program activities.
- be administered, by telephone, the UTP (Urban Teacher Perceiver) Structured interview.
- sign a Commitment and Statement of Intent to teach-full time in one of the Sedgwick County school districts or the Wichita Catholic Diocese, beginning with the first full semester immediately following graduation, or to repay the entire amount of the loan received from the GYOT Program if the applicant fails to complete the requirements for a degree in education, fails to receive teacher certification, or fails to work as a teacher for one of the Sedgwick County school districts. (In the event that a participant fulfills a portion of the teaching commitment, but not all of the commitment, the participant will be required to repay a pro-rated amount of the GYOT loan rather than the full amount.)
- sign an Attestation of Eligibility to meet State of Kansas requirements for teacher certification.

**GROW YOUR OWN
TEACHERS**

The Interview/Selection Committee school will work diligently to receive and process applications from prospective candidates who wish to become a program participant in the fall of 2001.

PARTICIPATING UNIVERSITIES

- ✓ **FRIENDS UNIVERSITY**
- ✓ **NEWMAN UNIVERSITY**
- ✓ **WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY**

**HELP US
SPREAD THE WORD!**

**FOR AN APPLICATION CALL 973-4763
OR VISIT**

<http://www.usd259.com/district/grow-your-own-teacher.htm>



KANSAS NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION / 715 SW 10TH AVENUE / TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612-1686

Mark Desetti testimony
Senate Education Committee
February 20, 2001

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Mark Desetti and I represent Kansas NEA.

I come before you today in support of Senate Bill 219, the "grow-your-own-teachers" bill. We believe there is a lot of good in this bill.

First and foremost, the bill maintains high standards for entry into the teaching profession. There is no watering down of requirements or standards and candidates are expected to complete a program at an accredited teacher education institution.

The bill also recognizes the need to provide these candidates with extra support throughout the program. The people served by these programs are busy working people, often raising families of their own and struggling to get by on low hourly wages. The comprehensive support programs described in the bill will assist candidates with keeping up with the demands of work, family, and education. The forgivable loans recognize their need for real financial assistance.

Finally, the bill assists districts with the expense of a support program with a 50% reimbursement of actual costs. The cost to the district will then be minimal but the benefit enormous. Districts will be able to recruit from their best paraprofessionals, provide a "leg up" to persons who might not otherwise have such an opportunity, and then staff their schools with enthusiastic and skilled new teachers.

We urge you to recommend Senate Bill 219 favorable for passage.