

## MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION K-12.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Ralph Tanner at 9:00 a.m. on January 24, 2002 in Room 313-S of the Capitol.

Committee staff present: Ben Barrett, Legislative research Department  
Jill Wolters, Revisor of Statutes  
Ann Deitcher, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Dale Dennis, State Board of Education,  
Deputy Commissioner  
Diane Gjerstad, Wichita Public Schools  
Brad Stauffer, Topeka Public Schools  
Amy Brunner, Kansas Assoc. School Boards

The Chair called on Jill Wolters to talk about a bill the Chair was introducing on behalf of the State Board of Education. The bill would create a public school insurance pool and it would be run through the Kansas State Employees Commission Insurance but it could not in any way affect the state employees. It would be a separate pool that schools could join. They would have to inform the Commission if they wanted to join on August 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. Eligible employees would be those school employees who work at least 630 hours a year. The State would contribute toward a single insurance. The first year they would contribute 16.6%, the second year they'd contribute 33% and for the third and subsequent years the State would contribute 50% toward a single employee's insurance premium for those schools who decide to join.

Dale Dennis of the State Board of Education told the Committee that this was a serious area for some school districts. He said that if you have a bad year the rates can go through the roof. He cited examples where premiums have gone up 100% in a year. It doesn't work well for the small schools and he thinks there is quite a bit of money being wasted because the pools are not large enough. In larger districts they can do fairly well. He felt that what was needed a state pool that would treat it as a whole.

It was moved by Representative Morrison and seconded by Representative Horst to introduce the bill as a Committee bill. The motion carried on a voice vote.

Representative Mason spoke to the Committee in regard to building costs for schools that came out of the study on boundaries. This bill would require that costs exceeding \$1 million with formula help, be subject to approval of the State Building Committee.

The motion was made by Representative Mason and seconded by Representative Lloyd that this bill be submitted to the Committee for their acceptance. The motion carried on a voice vote.

Representative Mason told the Committee that there was no clear criteria for the State Board of Education to make decisions regarding changes made between school districts. He offers a bill that would create a criteria for different issues.

Representative Mason moved and Representative Lloyd seconded the motion to submit this bill to the Committee for study. The motion carried on a voice vote.

Representative Mason spoke of a bill that would help those districts contemplating consolidation by giving an additional year of total budget between the two school districts.

It was moved by Representative Mason and seconded by Representative Ostmeyer that this bill be accepted for possible passage by the Committee. The motion carried on a voice vote.

CONTINUATION SHEET

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Representative Mason spoke of the effect on a town when a school closes. He suggested a \$50 thousand matching grant to turn closed schools into community centers or industrial/business building or something the community could benefit from.

A motion was made by Representative Mason and seconded by Representative Heubert that this bill be submitted to the Committee. The motion carried on a voice vote.

Another issue Representative Mason spoke of was when children crossed the line from one district to another to attend school. He suggested the receiving district get the lower amount of the formula. He didn't feel money should be taken from the previous school to subsidize this move.

Representative Mason moved that this bill be accepted by the Committee. The motion was seconded by Representative Reardon and passed on a voice vote.

Having a reciprocal agreement with a neighboring state on the education of their children was a topic Representative Mason felt should be offered as a bill. He said that the cost in 1999 was \$3,500 extra per child. He suggested an effort be made to have this in place by 2005.

The motion was made by Representative Mason to present this to the Committee for their consideration. Representative Reardon seconded the motion and it carried on a voice vote.

It was moved by Representative Benlon and seconded by Representative Horst to repeal all statutes regarding school closings that refer only to the Shawnee Mission school district. The motion passed on a voice vote.

The Chairman told the Committee they would not be meeting on Fridays as long as Fridays were being declared pro forma. He also said that meetings would begin at 9:30 on Mondays until further notice.

Diane Gjerstad, representing the Wichita Public Schools, requested the introduction of two bills.

The first bill was to establish a two-tiered weighting for special education as recommended by the Governor's task force. In addition, an advisory committee would be created to advise KSDE during the establishment of the weighting criteria and periodic review.

Representative Horst moved and Representative Flaharty seconded the motion that this bill be accepted by the Committee. The motion carried on a voice vote.

The second bill would remove the requirement for a full LOB in order for them to be eligible for the new facilities weighting.

It was moved by Representative DeCastro and seconded by Representative Loganbill that the Committee accept this bill. The motion passed on a voice vote.

CONTINUATION SHEET

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**HB 2641 - concerning school employment.**

Representative Gordon introduced Brad Stauffer of Topeka Public Schools who spoke of the problems in paying school personnel. (Attachment 1).

Also appearing as a proponent of **HB 2641** was Amy Brunner of Kansas Assoc. Of School Boards. (Attachment 2) .

It was moved by Representative Morrison and seconded by Representative Horst the **HB 2641** be passed favorably and placed on the consent calendar. The motion carried on a voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 10:04 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 29, 2002.

House Education Committee  
Testimony on HB 2641  
January 24, 2002

Brad Stauffer  
Director of Communications  
Topeka Public Schools

Chairman Tanner and members of the committee:

Thank you for your time this morning. I'm Brad Stauffer, director of communications for Topeka Public Schools, USD 501. I want to thank Rep. Gordon and the other members of the Shawnee County Coalition for sponsoring this bill and for bringing this to your attention.

At the Shawnee County Legislative Delegation meeting last month Topeka Superintendent Robert McFrazier explained that state law prohibited school districts from paying certain employees, like teachers, prior to September. Over the years, school calendars have pushed school starting times well into August, making the law inconsistent with district payroll practices.

In Topeka Public Schools, we currently pay employees every two weeks. Our teachers reported this year on Thursday, Aug. 16. Normally they would have been paid for their first two days on August 29. However, because we can't pay them in August, they did not receive that payment until Sept. 12, coupled with their next pay period.

TPS has the latest start in Shawnee County, but there has been consideration for starting the year earlier, and we anticipate that eventually it will be, causing even more of a difficulty for our employees. I suspect that some districts are either not aware of this law, or choose to ignore it and pay their employees prior to Sept. 1.

There is no additional cost to the state or school districts to approve this bill. It simply updates the statutes to reflect the reality of current school calendars and district payroll needs.

Mr. Chairman, TPS supports this legislation and we urge the committee to approve it and move it forward.

House Education Committee

Date: 1/24/02

Attachment # 1

KANSAS  
ASSOCIATION



OF  
SCHOOL  
BOARDS

1420 SW Arrowhead Road • Topeka, Kansas 66604-4024  
785-273-3600

Testimony on  
**HB 2641**  
Before the  
**House Committee on Education**

By  
Amy Brunner, Governmental Relations Specialist

January 24, 2002

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. KASB is a strong proponent of HB 2641. This bill amends the statute regarding paying school employees by deleting the statute's requirement that pay is to begin in September of each school year.

This statute was passed at a time when school districts resumed classes after Labor Day. Presently, school districts begin the school year much earlier, some as soon as the first week in August. However, under the current law, school employees cannot be paid until September regardless of when they begin work. In the case of some school employees, this could mean up to six weeks without pay. You will hear testimony today regarding the situation of one school district, the Topeka Unified School District, where payment problems specifically arose.

This bill is simply a clean up of statutory language that no longer makes sense in light of the date school districts presently resume classes. In conclusion, the Committee should favorably recommend HB 2641 so that school districts are able to pay their employees in a timely fashion.

Thank you for your consideration.

House Education Committee

Date: 1/24/02

Attachment # 2