

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Dwayne Umbarger at 1:40 p.m. on January 24, 2002 in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Senator Downey (excused)
Senator Teichman (excused)
Senator Corbin (excused)
Senator Hensley (excused)

Committee staff present: Ben Barrett, Legislative Research
Carolyn Rampey, Legislative Research
Theresa Kiernan, Revisor of Statutes
Dale Dennis, Deputy Commissioner of Education
Judy Steinlicht, Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Dale Dennis, Deputy Commissioner of Education
Mark Desetti, KNEA
Bob Vancrum, USD229, Blue Valley
Amy Brunner, KASB

Others attending: See attached list

SB79 – At risk pupil weighting - expansion of definition

Dale Dennis was called upon to brief the Committee on **SB79**. **SB79** amends the definition of at-risk pupils in the school finance law as pupils who are enrolled in a district which maintains an approved at-risk pupil assistance plan and who are characterized by any one or more of the following: (1) eligibility for free meals under the National School Lunch Act; (2) a high rate of absenteeism from school attendance; (3) not making satisfactory progress toward completion of the course requirements of the State Board of Education necessary for graduation from high school. **SB79** would increase at-risk funding by approximately \$4,000,000. (Attachment 1)

Chairman Umbarger said there had been questions about which districts would be hurt by the funding formula for Special Ed, LOB and other provisions passed last session. Dale Dennis compiled information on districts that would be hurt. They would be the sponsoring districts of a coop unless they are not using the full LOB authority. These findings are listed in (Attachment 2). Chairman Umbarger said that this information was based on LEPC meetings and it may be new to some members of the Committee, but the Committee will be reviewing the information at a future meeting.

Mark Desetti, KNEA, testified as a proponent of **SB79**. He stated that socio-economic status is not the only indication of difficulty in school. This bill would add two additional indicators of at-risk status: a high rate of absenteeism and unsatisfactory performance toward completion of graduation course requirements. The current system of funding at-risk programs is based on the number of students eligible for free lunch, but fails to recognize that poverty is not the only indicator. (Attachment 3) Committee members discussed how a high rate of absenteeism would be defined.

Bob Vancrum, Blue Valley School District, speaking as a proponent of **SB79** stated that he believes the present at-risk definition is deficient and needs to be changed. He believes many students qualifying for free lunch are average students and are not at-risk for not graduating from school. He believes there are other categories where students are at-risk and these need to be added to the definition. (Attachment 4) Mr. Vancrum's testimony was followed by Committee discussion on definition of satisfactory progress. It is believed there was a previous House bill with a comprehensive definition. Chairman Umbarger asked the staff to find this House bill and any others that could help the Committee define satisfactory progress.

Amy Brunner, KASB, spoke as an opponent to **SB79**, not because they disagree with the content of the bill, but because of the funding. It is clear from the state budget situation that there can be no increase in

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION at on January 24, 2002 in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

school funding, including an increase to fund an expanded definition of at-risk pupils under **SB79**. Without additional revenue, funding for **SB79** can only come by taking money away from districts who have fewer at-risk pupils, or deeper cuts from other parts of the state budget. KASB believes the state must work on a plan that meets the needs of all school districts, that addresses the critical problems of teacher recruitment and retention and supports our new national goal to leave no child behind. (Attachment 5)

Senator Vratil made a motion to introduce a bill to add school districts and community colleges to the statute that allows cities, counties and townships to levy a property tax to provide health insurance for their employees. The LEPC studied this situation at length this summer and the Committee felt that this was a critical fringe benefit that teachers consider when deciding where to take a job. Seconded by Senator Schodorf. Motion carried with 6 yeas and 1 nay.

Meeting adjourned at 2:17 p.m.

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE GUEST LIST

DATE - 1-24-02

<u>NAME</u>	<u>REPRESENTING</u>
Brad Stauffer	TPS, USD 501
Travis Sawyer	Rep. Bill McCreary
Diane Gierstad	Wichita Public Schools
Mark Tallman	KASB
Mark Dosetti	KNEA
Bernie Koch	Wichita Area Chamber
Jol Smalwell	Learning Disabilities Assoc. Kansas
Marsha Stralme	CWA of Mo.
Bill Hougill	Governor's office
Megan Skinner	Intern
Amy Brunner	KASB
Bob Vance	Blue Puddle USD 229

LDK



Kansas State Department of Education

120 S.E. 10th Avenue
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1182

January 24, 2002

TO: Senate Education Committee

FROM: Dale M. Dennis, Deputy
Commissioner of Education

SUBJECT: 2002 Senate Bill 79

Senate Bill 79 amends the definition of at-risk pupil in the school finance law as pupils who are enrolled in a district which maintains an approved at-risk pupil assistance plan and who are characterized by any one or more of the following: (1) eligibility for free meals under the National School Lunch Act; (2) a high rate of absenteeism from school attendance; (3) not making satisfactory progress toward completion of the course requirements of the State Board of Education necessary for graduation from high school.

Current law only includes those students eligible for free meals under the National School Lunch Act to determine the amount of money each district would receive for this purpose. The funds maybe spent on any students that qualify as at-risk.

Although free lunch eligibility is the method for identifying students for accessing funds, a district must develop a program which serves students identified as at-risk using the following definition.

At-risk student means any student who is not completing the requirements necessary for promotion to grade level, grade-to-grade promotion or graduation from high school. An at-risk student's educational attainment is below the level that is appropriate for students of his or her age and/or grade level. An at-risk student is a potential dropout.

The definition of at-risk student does not include any student determined to be an exceptional child under the provisions of the Special Education for Exceptional Children Act.

At-risk student might be characterized by any of the following indicators:

- Failure to achieve grade-level standards
- Failure in two or more subjects or courses of study
- Two or more credits behind in the number of graduation credits attained
- Retention at grade level one or more times
- Significantly behind in meeting Quality Performance Accreditation (QPA) outcomes.

Senate Bill 79 would increase at-risk funding by approximately \$4,000,000.

Senate Education
1-24-02
Attachment 1

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
DISTRICT NUMBER	DISTRICT NAME	Special Ed. State Aid (Col. 14a Legal Max)	% of Coop Local Contrib. Pd. By Spons. Dist.	Revised Special Ed. State Aid	Computed Gen. Fund (Col. 16 Legal Max)	General Fund Exc. Sp. Ed.	Gen. Fund Exc. Sp. Ed. + Rev. St. Aid	Legal LOB (Col. 22 Legal Max)	Revised LOB %	LOB % Authorized	LOB % Used
244	Burlington	695,520	50.00%	347,760	5,717,151	5,021,631	5,369,391	1,394,492	25.97%	25.00%	24.39%
489	Hays	2,470,576	75.88%	1,874,673	17,047,350	14,576,774	16,451,447	4,236,102	25.75%	25.00%	24.85%
500	Kansas City	12,766,062	86.53%	11,046,473	103,370,796	90,604,734	101,651,207	25,842,699	25.42%	25.00%	25.00%
418	McPherson	2,487,462	52.82%	1,313,877	13,799,259	11,311,797	12,625,674	3,156,106	25.00%	22.88%	22.87%
305	Salina	6,750,000	48.97%	3,305,475	39,297,915	32,547,915	35,853,390	9,816,642	27.38%	25.00%	24.98%
465	Winfield	3,030,254	40.70%	1,233,313	14,859,639	11,829,385	13,062,698	3,208,889	24.57%	21.60%	21.59%

*Senate Education
1-24-02
Attachment 2*



Mark Desetti Testimony Before
Senate Education Committee
Thursday, January 24, 2002

Thank you Mister Chairman and members of the Committee. I am Mark Desetti and I represent Kansas NEA. I appreciate this chance to visit with the committee about Senate Bill 79, a bill revising the definition of "at-risk students."

For many years now the State of Kansas has recognized the need to provide for the special needs of "at-risk" children. "At risk" has been defined as "eligible for free meals under the national school lunch act." Senate Bill 79 recognizes that socio-economic status is not the only indicator of difficulty in school. This bill would add two additional indicators of at-risk status: a high rate of absenteeism and unsatisfactory performance toward completion of graduation course requirements.

While the current system of funding at-risk programs based on the number of students eligible for free lunch is convenient, it fails to recognize that, while poverty is a strong indicator of possible low achievement, it is not the only indicator. Many poor students do well in school while some students who are ineligible for free lunch may certainly be at-risk of not completing high school. These students need at-risk programs too.

The standards Kansas has set for students guide us in providing a world-class education to all students. Whenever students are unable to fully participate in classroom instruction or begin to fall behind, their ability to achieve world-class standards is jeopardized. We owe it to all Kansans to identify those students at risk of not graduating and to provide the resources to put them back on track.

We would urge that you pass Senate Bill 79 favorably for passage.

Blue Valley Recreation Commission (BVRC)

BLUE VALLEY USD #229 supports changes in the legal status of BVRC to create an identical legal status with all other recreation commissions in the state.

Parents as Teachers (PAT)

BLUE VALLEY USD #229 supports legislation that would bring PAT students into the weighted School Finance Formula as per the legislative position of the State Board of Education or that would allow local districts to charge a fee for participation in the PAT program.

Proposed Improvements to the Kansas School Finance System

At-Risk weighting definition should be modified to include other student categories beyond free lunch-based economic considerations and the weighting applied should be on a rational basis of program and student costs.

Support basing the pupil-weighting factor for transportation on one mile distance between home and school. Other extenuating or hazardous conditions or circumstances should be defined and recognized for state reimbursement.

Support regulation of property abatement practices.

Support funding for "model" students attending pre-school handicapped programs, or allow fee to be charged for role model students.

Support a budget appeal process for special circumstances, such as an increase in health insurance, workman's compensation, utility costs, federal and/or state mandates, liability insurance, social security and ADA.

Support program approval as a substitute for actual audited physical attendance in a classroom, both for alternate and traditional students, and in recognition of technology advances now available (e.g., complete Internet high school curriculum). We also support generally removing any actual daily schedule requirement for students in state-approved alternate high school programs, so they would count as 1.0 full-time equivalent (FTE). This would support innovation and encourage lower high school dropout rate.

KANSAS
ASSOCIATION



OF
SCHOOL
BOARDS



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Testimony on
SB 79 – At-Risk Pupil Weighting
Before the
Senate 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 on SB 79. KASB strongly agrees with the intent of this bill: to assist school districts by expanding the definition of an at-risk pupil for weighting purposes. However, we do not support passage of a bill to address this issue in isolation.

All school districts in Kansas are facing a crisis in funding because revenues have not kept up with rising costs and expectations. KASB believes that we must have a comprehensive plan to deal with school finance. Along with the other members of the School Finance Coalition, KASB has endorsed the proposals of the Kansas State Board of Education, because we agree with the Kansas State Board's goals and because the State Board has provided the *only* comprehensive proposal to meet the needs of schools and students in Kansas.

It is clear from the state budget situation that no increase in school funding, including an increase to fund an expanded definition of at-risk pupils under SB 79, can be funded without a tax increase. Without additional revenue, the only choice for the Legislature will be how much to cut. Therefore, without additional revenue, funding for SB 79 can only come by taking money away from districts who have fewer at-risk pupils, or deeper cuts from other parts of the state budget.

KASB believes the state must raise taxes to address critical school funding needs, including assistance for districts with at-risk pupils. We urge the Committee to work on a plan that meets the needs of all school districts; that addresses our critical problems of teacher recruitment and retention; and that supports our new national goal to leave no child behind. We believe the Kansas State Board of Education has given you a foundation to build upon.

Thank you for your consideration.

*Senate Education
1-24-02
Attachment 5*