

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Dwayne Umbarger at 1:35 p.m. on February 4, 2002 in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Senator Hensley (excused)
Senator Teichman (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: Dr. Andy Tompkins, Commissioner of Education

Others attending:

Senator Vratil moved that the Committee introduce a bill which would allow school district capital outlay funds to be used for the payment of expenses for utility services including gas, electricity, water, telephone, sewage and solid waste disposal. Seconded by Senator Schodorf. Motion carried.

Today's meeting was designated as "Take the Test Day." Andy Tompkins, Commissioner of Education, explained that the purpose of the Kansas Take the Test Day is to demonstrate to the public that state assessments are rigorous, that the Kansas public education system has high expectations for all children, and that community partnerships are desirable in helping all students achieve. Elected officials, business representatives and community members from all over the state have been invited to participate in taking the test. Individuals interested in taking the sample assessment and did not have the opportunity can visit the web site, www.ksde.org beginning February 5, 2002.

Dr. Tompkins advised that the Kansas State Board of Education has developed booklets entitled, *Just for Parents, A Guide to the Kansas Curricular Standards* for different grade levels which are available to parents. Dr. Tompkins provided a History of the Kansas State Assessment Program ([Attachment 1](#)), How Test Questions are Developed for the Kansas State Assessments ([Attachment 2](#)), Frequently Asked Questions about the Kansas State Assessment Program ([Attachment 3](#)), Frequently Asked Questions about the ESEA and the Kansas Assessment Program ([Attachment 4](#)).

The test was followed by questions from the Committee.

The meeting was adjourned 2:20 p.m.



History of the Kansas State Assessment Program

For the past decade, Kansas has used a statewide assessment program to gauge improvement in student achievement. Development of the State Assessment Program is tied directly to the adoption of Quality Performance Accreditation (QPA) by the State Board of Education in 1991. Following is a timeline that outlines highlights in the history of the Kansas State Assessment Program.

1991 - The State Board of Education adopts QPA as its new, results-based accreditation system for elementary and secondary schools. Specific reference is made to performance on state assessments in mathematics, reading, science, social studies and writing.

The new state mathematics assessment, based on state standards and involving both multiple choice and performance items, is piloted.

1992 - The new state assessments in reading and writing are piloted. The mathematics assessment is piloted for a second year.

The School District Finance and Quality Performance Act is enacted into Kansas law. The law requires development by 1993 of curriculum standards in mathematics, science, communications and social studies, and the assessment of students at a minimum of three benchmark grade levels. Standards are to be reviewed every three years.

1993 - State assessments in mathematics, reading and writing are administered and a science assessment is piloted.

1994 - The State Board of Education and the legislature agree on a schedule of testing in mathematics and reading annually and alternating testing of writing with testing of science and social studies.

1995 - The science assessment is piloted for the second year and the social studies assessment is piloted for the first year. Baseline data are established for mathematics.

The building standards of excellence are established by the State Board of Education for the subscales of the mathematics test and for the total score for that test.

The State Board of Education is directed to establish a standard of performance for students as well as buildings.

1996 - Building standards of excellence are applied to the writing results for the first time.

1997 - Baseline results for the science assessment are recorded and the social studies test is piloted for the second year. Building standards of excellence are applied to the science results for the first

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time and student standards of excellence are applied to results in mathematics, reading and science for the first time.

The State Board of Education takes action to improve and implement a revised State Assessment Program. Changes include:

- Identifying the purposes of the assessment program as improvement of instruction and provision of information for student accountability.
- Halting performance assessment at the state level except in writing and requiring local schools to have a performance assessment to be used as one of the local measures in the accreditation process.
- Establishing two additional performance levels for student scores.
- Directing that committees of stakeholders be convened for each of the subject areas to revise the curriculum standards. The committees were charged to bring greater clarity and specificity to what teachers should teach and students should learn at the various grade levels.
- Determining that contracts should be established with two external independent review committees, one for curricular standards and one for assessments.

1998 - Reported assessment results include breakout of student results by performance level.

Revised reading, writing and mathematics standards are adopted.

1999 - New curricular standards in science and social studies are adopted.

2000 - Baseline results for the new reading, writing and mathematics assessments are recorded.

2001 - Modified and alternate assessments in reading and mathematics, designed to include students with disabilities in the assessment tests in greater numbers than ever before, are implemented. Participation rates for those subject areas increase significantly.

Baseline results for new science and social studies assessments are recorded.



How test questions are developed for the Kansas State Assessments

Test questions for the Kansas State Assessments are developed through a lengthy and thoughtful process. It all begins with the development of curricular standards. It is vitally important that the standards upon which assessments are based are strong. Any deficiencies in the standards will show up in the assessments. That's why the State Board of Education spends a great deal of time reviewing standards and getting input from as many different audiences as possible before adopting new curricular standards. Once standards are adopted, the following process is used to develop assessment items:

- Advisory committees are appointed by the State Board of Education to assist in the process of item development.
- Separate committees made up of individuals nominated by principals and superintendents are formed to actually write the assessment questions. These committees include teachers from the elementary, middle school and high school levels, as well as individuals from higher education institutions and members of the advisory committees.
- Individuals selected to write assessment items receive some informal training in item development from the Center for Education Testing and Evaluation (CETE) at the University of Kansas. Members also study the curricular standards carefully to become familiar with all aspects of the standards.
- The committee members develop a first draft of assessment items. They are reviewed and any items that do not match the standards are removed.
- The remaining items are reviewed individually by groups of educators. The items are edited based on this review and then reviewed again.
- The items undergo a bias review to make sure cultural bias has been removed from the questions and that any potentially offensive items are removed.
- The remaining items are reviewed by a group of educators from higher education institutions to ensure they are correct.

Throughout the entire process of item development, individuals from CETE are reviewing the items to be sure there is adherence to psychometric principles.

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Frequently Asked Questions about the Kansas State Assessment Program

Q. What grade levels and subject areas are tested as part of the Kansas Assessment Program?

A. Students in grades 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10 and 11 are tested.

The reading test is administered annually to students in grades 5, 8 and 11.

The mathematics test is administered annually to students in grades 4, 7 and 10.

The writing test is administered every-other-year to students in grades 5, 8 and 11.

The science test is administered every-other-year to students in grades 4, 7 and 10.

The social studies test is administered every-other-year to students in grades 6, 8 and 11.

Q. Are the tests timed?

A. Yes and no. Testing times are provided to each teacher as a guide, however students may have as much time as needed to take the assessment.

Q. Are students with special needs tested?

A. Yes, we now have modified and alternate assessments for students with disabilities significant enough that they could not participate in the assessment program without modifications. An Independent Education Plan (IEP) team determines the appropriate assessment for each student, depending on his or her special needs.

Q. Are students who have limited English proficiency (LEP) tested?

A. Yes and no. LEP students who have been in the district less than one full academic year and who score below a certain criteria outlined by the State Department of Education may be excluded. All other LEP students must be tested.

Q. Can any student be excluded from the state assessments?

A. Other than the exceptions made for some LEP students, no. School districts are responsible for testing **all** students. Exclusion from testing is limited. For example, a student who is chronically ill may be unavailable for testing.

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Q. What impact does testing all students have on scores?

A. At the state level, very small differences were seen in scores when modified and alternate assessments were added and students were tested in greater numbers than ever before. Also, results are reported by student population, so that scores are available for general education and gifted students, for students with disabilities and for the total population. This allows districts and the state to see the big picture.

Q. What are the different ways scores can be reported?

A. Scores are reported by student population, by ethnic background, by gender, by socioeconomic status and by length of time in the district. They are also reported as a mean score and by the percent of students scoring within each of five performance levels (advanced, proficient, satisfactory, basic, and unsatisfactory). This allows each district to determine where gaps in performance may exist.



Frequently asked questions about ESEA and the Kansas Assessment Program

Q. How will the Kansas Assessment Program change as a result of the new ESEA legislation?

A. The most noticeable change to the Kansas Assessment Program as a result of the new ESEA legislation will be the annual testing of all students in grades three through eight in reading and mathematics. Currently, Kansas tests students in reading and mathematics yearly, however the state tests just one grade at the elementary level, one grade at the middle school level and one grade at the high school level.

Another change that will take place in Kansas is testing in science on a yearly basis. Currently, students are tested in science every-other year. The state will be able to continue testing just one grade at the elementary level, one grade at the middle school level and one grade at the high school level, however the testing will have to be done annually.

Q. When will these changes need to be made?

A. Annual testing of students in grades three through eight in reading and mathematics must be in place by the 2005-2006 school year. Annual testing in science is not required to begin until the 2007-2008 school year, however the state intends to implement this practice at the same time it makes the changes in testing for reading and mathematics.

Q. Will the format of the state assessments change as a result of this legislation?

A. The standards to which Kansas students are held will not change as a result of the new federal legislation. However, there will be some changes to the reading and mathematics tests given to students. Currently, students are tested in reading at grades five, eight and 11 and in mathematics at grades four, seven and 10. The tests cover subject matter that is included in instruction in the grades up to and including the grade at which students are assessed. When testing is done in each of the grades three through eight, the tests will be changed to reflect subject matter specific to that grade level.

Q. Will Kansas students be required to participate in additional testing at the national level?

A. The new legislation requires all states to participate in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). NAEP conducts assessments periodically in reading, mathematics, science, writing, history, geography and other fields. States will be required to participate in the fourth and eighth grade NAEP reading and mathematics assessments. Kansas participated in the 1998 NAEP reading assessment and the 2000 NAEP mathematics assessment. The state is also participating in the 2001 NAEP science assessment. NAEP assessments are done using a random sampling of students from each participating state.

Q. Will the additional testing require a greater investment of funds?

A. Testing more students more often will require a greater financial investment for test development, administration and evaluation. Federal funds are being provided to assist states through the development stage. It is not yet known if funding will be available once states are past the development stage.

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