

MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jean Schodorf at 1:35 p.m. on March 9, 2005, in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

Committee members absent:

Committee staff present: Carolyn Rampey, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Kathie Sparks, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Theresa Kiernan, Revisor of Statutes
Shirley Higgins, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Gary Brunk, Kansas Action for Children
Jim Edwards, Kansas Association of School Boards
Mark Desetti, Kansas National Education Association
Senator Jim Barnett

SB 277—School districts; number of preschool-aged-at-risk pupils increased to 6,000

Carolyn Rampey, Legislative Research Department, explained that the bill pertains to the section of the School Finance Act concerning definitions of who will be counted for purposes of school district budgets. The change is on line 31, page 2 of the bill. It has to do with preschool-aged-at-risk pupils, who are four-year-old children who are at-risk and are eligible for school district programs. Under the School Finance Act, these children get counted as half a student. The language on line 31 deals with a cap on the number of children who can be counted for purposes of reimbursement. The bill would raise the cap from 5,500 to 6,000 students. In order to be eligible for the program, the same guidelines are used as for the Head Start program. The purpose of raising the cap to 6,000, is to insure that all the four-year-old children who meet the Head Start guidelines would be served either in Head Start or in school district programs. Ms. Rampey noted that the fiscal note was \$1.0 million, and the current program is between \$11.5 million and \$12.0 million. She explained that the bill was initiated because the Governor recommended the increase and included in her budget \$1,004,045 from the Children's Initiatives Fund to expand this program. The Senate subcommittee on the Department of Education budget concurred with the Governor's recommendation and recommended the bill.

Senator Vratil asked what would happen if the cap was reached. Dale Dennis, Deputy Commissioner, State Department of Education, said that the process is on a first come, first serve basis. He noted, "It has not been a big problem to date. A program like this does not grow rapidly overnight. It grows slowly over time. It's a very effective program. Kindergarten teachers will tell you it's the greatest thing since sliced bread because it's helping children to prepare. In most cases, we've been able to cover the requests. It's just in the last year we've really reached our peak. We believe there are another 500 across the state that could utilize this service, and it would be immensely helpful in the long run."

Gary Brunk, Kansas Action for Children, testified in support of **SB 277**. He noted that, in order to close the achievement gap, the pre-school preparation gap needs to be closed. By increasing the current cap on enrollment in the four-year-old-at-risk program, the bill would make a small but important step towards that end. He reported that national studies show that over 40% of children enter kindergarten not fully prepared for school. Unfortunately, this gap carries on to higher grades. However, two decades of research show important positive outcomes for children who attend good quality pre-kindergarten programs. He noted that good quality pre-kindergarten results in proven savings to school districts because of reductions in the need for special and remedial education and grade retention. In conclusion, he emphasized the need to make a greater effort to increase the quality of the four-year-old-at-risk program through more ongoing training for teachers and a formal evaluation of the program. (Attachment 1)

Jim Edwards, Kansas Association of School Boards, testified in support of **SB 277** because it recognizes the need for early education opportunities for pre-school-at-risk students. However, he suggested that the cap be eliminated by striking lines 31 and 32 on page one. He noted that it would be disturbing if there were children not served due to an arbitrary number. (Attachment 2)

Mark Desetti, Kansas National Education Association (KNEA), testified in support of **SB 277**. He noted that

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE Senate Education Committee at 1:35 p.m. on March 9, 2005, in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

this intervention program is intended to address the achievement gap as early as possible, and KNEA fully supports efforts to fund this very valuable program . (Attachment 3)

There being no others wishing to testify, the hearing on **SB 277** was closed.

Senator Vratil moved to recommend **SB 277** favorably for passage, seconded by Senator Lee. The motion carried.

Senator Schodorf opened committee discussion on a previously heard bill, **SB 44** concerning the teacher service scholarship program. Theresa Kiernan, Revisor of Statutes Office, distributed copies of a balloon of the bill and discussed the amendments shown. (Attachment 4) She pointed out that a new amendment beginning on line 9, page 2, strikes the preference given to math and science teachers. With regard to the amendment on page 2, line 27, changing "certification" to "licensure," Senator Vratil noted that the change would also be necessary in other locations such as on line 7, page 2, and on line 20, page 1.

Senator Barnett explained that the language on lines 9 through 12 on page 2 was stricken to address a concern expressed at the hearing that the bill would exclude other teachers. Senator Schodorf pointed out that "hard-to-fill teaching discipline" is defined on page one as a teaching discipline in which there is a critical shortage of teachers as determined and specified by the State Board of Education and the teaching disciplines of math and science for any of the grades five through twelve.

Senator Teichman moved to amend **SB 44** as suggested, seconded by Senator Apple. The motion carried.

Senator Teichman moved to recommend **SB 44** favorably for passage as amended, seconded by Senator Vratil. The motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 10, 2005.

**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
GUEST LIST**

DATE: March 9, 2005

NAME	REPRESENTING
Elaine Frisbie	Division of the Budget
Nela Cooper	Southern Lv. Co. Leadership class
Frances Rake	Leavenworth Leaderships Class
Mike Vernon	Lv. Co. Leadership Dev.
Sharon Moreland	Southern Lv Co. Leadership class
Val DeFenu	SQE
Doug Bowman	CCECD S
Karon Johnson	City of Olathe / Leadership Olathe
Cathy McDonald	Olathe District Schools / Leadership Olathe
Alison Banikowski	" "
Penny Schou	citizen
RUSSELL MILLS	GACHES
Cindy D'Ercole	Kansas Action for Children
MARK DESETTI	KNEA
Jim Edwards	KASB
Diane Gjerstad	USD 259
Ann Marie Melokaran	LOP
Elizabeth Dodd	LOP
Dennis Patton	Leadership Overland Park

**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
GUEST LIST**

DATE: 3-9-05

NAME	REPRESENTING
Jenni Newell	Leadership Overland Park
Nancy Lindberg	Ks Childrens Campaign
Gary Bunk	Ks Action for Children
Lisa Mallow	Leadership Lenexa & Shawnee
HPK G. HORNER	LEADERSHIP LENEXA.
TERRY FORSYTH	KNEA
Pamela Collins	Overland Park SRS
Barney Herbert	KNI
Liane Bruton	SRS
Rachel Katwin	SRS
Jerry Gray	LBZ
Thyrene Cuera	KSD E

resident



March 9, 2005

To: Senate Education Committee
From: Gary Brunk
Re: In support of Senate Bill 277

Kansas Action for Children, Inc.
3360 SW Harrison | Topeka, KS 66611
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Celebrating 25 years
of child advocacy

Good afternoon Chairperson Schodorf and members of the Education Committee. I am testifying today in support of Senate Bill 277. To close the achievement gap we need to close the pre-school preparation gap, and by increasing the current cap on enrollment in the four-year-old-at-risk program this bill would make a small but important step towards that end.

National studies estimate that over forty percent of children enter kindergarten not fully prepared or "ready" for school. Based on those studies, there could be 14,000 or more children in kindergarten classes across Kansas today who are at risk of not succeeding.

Children who do not know the alphabet and numbers when they enter kindergarten are much more likely to be behind in reading and math at the end of kindergarten and of first grade. Unfortunately, this gap carries on to higher grades: if fifty first graders have problems reading, forty four of them will have reading difficulties in fourth grade; if fifty third graders have problems reading, thirty seven of them will have problems reading in ninth grade.

The good news is that we have two decades of research showing important positive outcomes for children who attend good quality pre-kindergarten programs. To give you just one recent example from a neighboring state, a study completed in November 2004 found that students who completed Oklahoma's four-year-old pre-K program had significant gains in pre-reading, pre-writing and pre-numeracy skills.

In the context of the current discussions of school financing, it is worth noting that school readiness is not only good for kids, it is also good for the financial health of K-12 education. Good quality pre-K results in proven savings to school districts because of reductions in the need for special and remedial education and grade retention.

Finally, and speaking of quality, I want to emphasize the need to make a greater effort to increase the quality of our four-year-old-at-risk program through more ongoing training for teachers and evaluation. Currently the training opportunities are extremely limited and there is no formal evaluation of the program.

Nobel prize winning conservative economist James Heckman, making a productivity argument for investing in younger children, says that "America under-invests in the early years..." If we want to be a player in the world economy all children in Kansas should have the opportunity to attend voluntary pre-K. A good place to begin is to make sure that all at-risk children have that opportunity, which is why we believe this bill merits your support.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Gary Brunk

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A Member of Voices
for America's Children

*Senate Education Committee
3-9-05 Attachment 1*

KANSAS
ASSOCIATION



OF
SCHOOL
BOARDS

1420 SW Arrowhead Road • Topeka, Kansas 66604-4024
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Testimony on **SB 277**
before the
Senate Education Committee

by

Jim Edwards, Governmental Relations Specialist
Kansas Association of School Boards

March 9, 2005

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee:

I am pleased to have the opportunity to appear before you today on **SB 277**. This measure would limit the number of preschool-aged at-risk pupils that could be funded by the state in any school year.

The underlying premise of **SB 277** is good in that it recognizes the need for early education opportunities for pre-school at-risk students. However, placing an arbitrary number for the number of students that can be served seems to fly in the face of this underlying premise. There are approximately 35,000 four-year-olds in the state. Of this number, it is estimated that 10,000 children meet one or more criteria that would identify them as at risk. While many Kansas districts combine the resources from all of their programs for four-year-olds (i.e., Special Education, Head Start, Even Start, Title I, Four-Year-Old At-Risk) in order to provide better service to all of the children, it would be disturbing if there were children not served due to an arbitrary number.

With this in mind, we would recommend that **SB 277** be amended on page 2 in the following manner.

26 (d) "Preschool-aged at-risk pupil" means an at-risk pupil who has
27 attained the age of four years, is under the age of eligibility for attendance
28 at kindergarten, and has been selected by the state board in accordance
29 with guidelines consonant with guidelines governing the selection of pu-
30 pils for participation in head start programs. ~~The state board shall select~~
31 ~~not more than 5,500-6,000~~ preschool-aged at-risk pupils to be counted in
32 any school year.

I thank the Committee for the opportunity to present KASB's thoughts on this measure and would be happy to stand for questions.

Senate Education Committee
3-9-05
Attachment 2



Mark Desetti, Testimony
Senate Education Committee
March 9, 2005
Senate Bill 277

Madame Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to address Senate **Bill 277**.

I don't think there is anyone who will dispute the value of early intervention in later school achievement. That's why there is always such an emphasis on addressing issues of class size in the primary grades, reading specialists, and the role of kindergarten. That's also why school districts often implement all day kindergarten programs and advocate for funding of those programs.

This bill would extend funding for the at-risk preschool program so that every eligible child can participate. This program is intended to address the achievement gap as early as possible. It is a very valuable program and we fully support efforts to fund it.

We urge you to pass **SB 277** favorably.

*Senate Education Committee
3-9-05*

SENATE BILL No. 44

By Committee on Education

1-18

9 AN ACT concerning the teacher service scholarship program; amending
10 K.S.A. 74-32,101 and 74-32,102 and repealing the existing sections.

11
12 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Kansas:*

13 Section 1. K.S.A. 74-32,101 is hereby amended to read as follows:
14 74-32,101. As used in this act:

15 (a) "Executive officer" means the chief executive officer of the state
16 board of regents appointed under K.S.A. 74-3203a, and amendments
17 thereto;

18 (b) "qualified student" means a person who: (1) Is a resident of the
19 state of Kansas; (2) has been accepted for admission to or is enrolled full
20 time in a course of instruction leading to certification as a teacher; and
21 (3) has qualified for the award of a scholarship under the teacher service
22 scholarship program on the basis of having demonstrated scholastic abil-
23 ity, or who has previously so qualified and remains qualified for renewal
24 of the scholarship on the basis of remaining in good standing and making
25 satisfactory progress toward completion of the requirements of the course
26 of instruction in which enrolled;

27 (c) "hard-to-fill teaching discipline" means (1) a teaching discipline
28 in which there is a critical shortage of teachers as determined and spec-
29 ified by the state board of education; and (2) ~~the teaching disciplines of~~
30 ~~mathematics and science for any of the grades six through 12;~~

31 (d) "underserved area" means a geographic area of the state in which
32 there is a critical shortage of teachers as determined and specified by the
33 state board of education;

34 (e) "state educational institution" has the meaning ascribed thereto
35 in K.S.A. 76-711, and amendments thereto;

36 (f) "private postsecondary educational institution" has the meaning
37 ascribed thereto in K.S.A. 2004 Supp. ~~72-34,163~~, and amendments
38 thereto.

39 Sec. 2. K.S.A. 74-32,102 is hereby amended to read as follows: 74-
40 32,102. (a) There is hereby established the teacher service scholarship
41 program. A scholarship may be awarded under the teacher service schol-
42 arship program to any qualified student and may be renewed for each
43 such student who remains qualified for the scholarship. Determination

licensure

five

74-32,163

Senate Education Committee
3-9-05
Attachment 4

1 of the students qualified for such scholarships shall be made by the ex-
 2 ecutive officer. Scholastic ability shall be determined on the basis of any
 3 one or more of the following: (1) High ACT or SAT score; (2) rank in
 4 high school graduation class; (3) cumulative high school or college grade
 5 point average; or (4) any other indicator of scholastic ability which the
 6 state board of regents determines to be demonstrative of potential for
 7 successful completion of a course of instruction leading to certification as
 8 a teacher. To the extent practicable and consistent with qualification fac-
 9 tors, ~~preference shall be given to qualified students who have been ac-~~
 10 ~~cepted for admission to or are enrolled in an approved course of instruc-~~
 11 ~~tion leading to certification as a teacher in the disciplines of mathematics~~
 12 ~~or science for any of the grades six through 12. In addition,~~ consideration
 13 shall be given to *qualified* students who are members of ethnic minority
 14 groups.

licensure

15 (b) A scholarship awarded under the program shall provide for pay-
 16 ment to a qualified student of (1) an amount not to exceed 70% of the
 17 cost of attendance for an academic year at the teacher education school
 18 in which the qualified student is enrolled if such teacher education school
 19 is maintained by a state educational institution or (2) an amount not to
 20 exceed 70% of the average amount of the cost of attendance for an aca-
 21 demic year at the teacher education schools maintained by the state ed-
 22 ucational institutions if the teacher education school in which the quali-
 23 fied student is enrolled ~~is not a state educational institution in a private~~
 24 ~~postsecondary educational institution located in the state of Kansas.~~ A
 25 qualified student may be awarded a scholarship for not more than four
 26 academic years of undergraduate study, except that a qualified student
 27 who is enrolled full time in a course of instruction leading to certification
 28 in a teaching discipline for which graduate study is required may be
 29 awarded a scholarship for the duration of the course of instruction.

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licensure

30 Sec. 3. K.S.A. 74-32,101 and 74-32,102 are hereby repealed.
 31 Sec. 4. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its
 32 publication in the statute book.