

MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jean Schodorf at 1:35 p.m. on February 28, 2006, in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

Committee members absent: Barbara Allen- excused
Greta Goodwin- excused
Janis Lee- excused
John Vratil- excused

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

Conferees appearing before the committee: Senator Phillip B. Journey
Mark Tallman, Kansas Association of School Boards
Dr. Jill Shackelford, Superintendent of Schools for USD 500,
Kansas City, Kansas
Mark Desetti, Kansas National Education Association
Val DeFever, Schools for Quality Education

SB 514—School districts; attendance and transportation of pupils residing outside district

Senator Phillip Journey testified in support of **SB 514**. He explained that basically the bill would provide that on or before July 15 parents could make application to a nonresident district for the transfer of their child to that district. The allocation of state funds for the child would follow the child to the receiving school district. He noted that perhaps the bill should include a provision that the receiving district must respond to the application by August 1 to allow the parents time to look at other school options if the request for transfer is not approved. He explained that the Division of Budget indicated that the bill also provided for transportation of students to the receiving school district, and the parents would be required to apply to the sending district to seek authority for the student to be furnished transportation to and from school. He explained that, in drafting the bill, it was not his intent that the resident district incur any costs for transportation. In his opinion, transportation of the student should be up to the parents unless the receiving district voluntarily accepts that obligation. He noted that parents would not be required to make an economic decision except with regard to the cost of transportation, and thus, would be motivated to choose the school district that offered the most comprehensive education tailored to the individual child's needs and courses of desired study. He contended that offering parents a broad array of education options for their children would foster competition for students among public school districts and allow students to attend the school that they believe offers them the greatest opportunity for improving their education. He pointed out that the bill did not involve vouchers or tax credits but was simply a transfer of state aid between taxing entities. (Attachment 1)

In response to a question concerning the possibility that the receiving school district would only accept the "brightest of the bright," Senator Journey stated, "While that is certainly a possibility under the current drafting of the bill, I expect that school districts will be far more generous with their resources. The kids that I think this would help, besides the ones that are looking for an improvement in the quality of their education, are also ones that may have personal problems in their resident district. For example, if they are perceived to be in a group or social class where they picked on all the time, this might give the parents an option the following school year to get them out of there and help get that kid get a fresh start so they concentrate on learning rather than trying to figure out ways to keep from being beat up after school or on the bus or whatever."

Senator Teichman asked that Senator Journey provide statistics on the number of students that are transferring to other districts and the number that are being denied. Senator Schodorf noted that Dale Dennis, Deputy Commissioner for the Department of Education, would be able to supply those statistics.

Mark Tallman, Kansas Association of School Boards (KASB), testified in opposition to **SB 514**. At the outset, he commented that it was his understanding that currently a child can go to another district if the district accepts the child, and the district of residence cannot block the transfer. Therefore, it that was the

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MINUTES OF THE Senate Education Committee at 1:35 p.m. on February 28, 2006, in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

issue, a change in the statute would not be required. In addition, he noted that the money currently does follow the child if a transfer is accepted. He went on to say that, as he understood the bill, it would remove any limits of the authority of a school district to send a bus into another district to transport a child who wishes to attend a school in the non-resident district. He urged the Committee to consider the impact of this change. Furthermore, he pointed out that district expenses do not exactly reflect small changes in enrollment, and the loss of revenue would have a negative impact on the remaining children in the district. In conclusion, he expressed his concern that the change proposed in the bill would make it harder for school districts to consider school or district consolidation. ([Attachment 2](#))

There being no others wishing to testify, the hearing on **SB 514** was closed.

SB 563–School districts; relating to kindergarten pupils

Senator Steineger, who requested the introduction of **SB 563**, introduced Dr. Jill Shackelford, Superintendent of schools for USD 500, Kansas City, Kansas, who followed with testimony in support of the bill. Dr. Shackelford rationalized the need for early childhood intervention, highlighted the need for full-day kindergarten in Kansas, and described the dire need for the funding of full-day kindergarten for Kansas City, Kansas, students. She presented statistics regarding the achievement gap before minority youth reach kindergarten, the school readiness assessments for entering kindergarten students in 2004, and the percentage of minority students, English language learners, and free lunch students in the 30 Kansas City, Kansas, schools. In conclusion, she emphasized that full-day kindergarten would give the USD 500 schools additional instruction time needed to stimulate language, boost cognitive skills, push literacy and math concepts, and improve social/behavioral skills. She pointed out that **SB 563** would bring the district's budget priorities closer to reality and would allow support for the priority to provide staff with competitive salaries and enhanced professional development. ([Attachment 3](#))

Mark Desetti, Kansas National Education Association, testified in strong support of **SB 563**. He observed that all-day kindergarten just makes sense. He went on to point out that all-day kindergarten makes economic sense for single parent families and families where both parents work, that it makes sense for at-risk students and students who are not at-risk, that it makes a difference in student learning, and that is good for school districts. He noted that the all-day kindergarten proposed in the bill was not mandatory; therefore, parents who do not want to put their children in any kindergarten would not be forced to do so. ([Attachment 4](#))

Mark Tallman, KASB, testified in support of **SB 563**. He explained that the bill would phase in support for all-day kindergarten over four years. He noted that KASB believes the program should be voluntary on the part of local districts as well as parents. In addition, KASB believes that all-day kindergarten is an effective way to strengthen education. He stressed that the Legislature would never have a better opportunity to implement this change and that funding for all-day kindergarten should be included in any plan responding to the direction of the Kansas Supreme Court. ([Attachment 5](#))

Val DeFever, Schools for Quality Education, testified in support of **SB 563**. She noted that many rural school districts still may not have any form of pre-school, and children have fewer opportunities to socialize with children because many families live far away from their small communities. Therefore, kindergarten is more important than ever for these children because it allows them to gain social and readiness skills. In her opinion, the need for more early education opportunities had not diminished over the past several years but has become more urgent. ([Attachment 6](#))

Written testimony in support of **SB 563** was submitted by Stuart Little, Little Government Relations, on behalf of the Shawnee Mission school district, USD 512. He suggested that the bill be amended to eliminate the at-risk population requirements and that all-day kindergarten be implemented and state funded for all Kansas kids. ([Attachment 7](#))

There being no others wishing to testify, the hearing on **SB 563** was closed.

Senator Schodorf called attention to the minutes of the February 13, 14, and 15 meetings.

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE Senate Education Committee at 1:35 p.m. on February 28, 2006, in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

Senator Ostmeyer moved to approve the minutes of the February 13, 14, and 15 meetings, seconded by Senator Teichman. The motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 2, 2006.

**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
GUEST LIST**

DATE: Feb, 28, 2006

NAME	REPRESENTING
BILL REARDON	KCK USD 500
Dr. Jim Shackelford	KCK USD 500
Mark Tallman	KASB
Val DeFever	SQE
Rob Murphy	LGR
BILL Brady	SFF
MARK DEBETH	KNEA
Kathy Cook	KFUPE
Diane Eierstad	Wichita Schools
Bill Smith	USA
SCOTT FRANK	LPA
Beth Jones	Huttles Government Relations
LUKE BELL	Kearney and Associates
Derck Hein	Hein Law Firm
Kyle Fitz	Washburn University
TERRY FOLSYTH	KNEA
Doug Bowman	CCECD
Ali Bamworn	Sen. Derck Schmidt
Glaine Frisbie	Division of the Budget

SENATOR PHILLIP B. JOURNEY

STATE SENATOR, 26TH DISTRICT
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TOPEKA

SENATE CHAMBER

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

MEMBER: SPECIAL CLAIMS AGAINST THE STATE
(JOINT), CHAIR
HEALTH CARE STRATEGIES
JUDICIARY
PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELFARE
TRANSPORTATIONCORRECTIONS AND JUVENILE JUSTICE
OVERSIGHT (JOINT)

SOUTH CENTRAL DELEGATION, CHAIR

**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill #514
Before the Senate Education Committee on February 28th, 2006**

Madam Chair, members of the committee it is a privilege to be before your committee supporting Senate Bill #514. I want to thank the committee for its time and consideration involving this important matter.

Senate Bill #514 amends KSA 72-1046, 72-1046a, and 72-1046b. Section 1 of the legislation deletes and modifies KSA 72-1046, Subsection B by modifying that paragraph with the end result that any child with the agreement of the receiving school district may attend that school district regardless of whether the child is a resident of that school district or not. The child's family may not be charged tuition from the accepting district. The allocation of state funds for that child follow the child to that school district in which they attend school.

Of the several pieces of legislation I initiated during the 2005-2006 Session, this was the very last one filed and so I hope the committee agrees with my interpretation of the legislation and the intent I had in drafting it. Should the committee's collective opinion discern that my intent is appropriate and that the bill does not meet that intent, reasonable modifications to fulfill the original desires expressed in this testimony would not be opposed. In reviewing the Director of the Budget's letter dated February 17th, 2006, he states, "The bill also provides for transportation of students to the receiving school district. The bill would require the parent or legal guardian to apply to the sending district before July 15 of the current school year to seek authority for the student to be furnished transportation to and from school and the student's residence. If the sending district determines that the receiving district is willing to furnish transportation for the student, the sending district must issue an order authorizing transportation." While I see no reason to object to the voluntary provision of transportation by the receiving district, it is not my intent in the drafting of Senate Bill #514 that the resident district incur any costs for transportation and should the receiving district refuse to voluntarily agree to transport the child to and from the school that it would solely be the responsibility of the parents of the child to provide such transportation.

The requirement that the application for acceptance of a nonresident student into a unified school district being required to be filed with that school district before July 15th, should give school districts sufficient time to determine if it is in their best interests and that of the student to accept that child for a particular school year. Parents should be given notice by August 1st each year of the intent of the receiving district so the parent will have time to deal with the consequences of rejection of the application. Budget Director Goossen also believes that this legislation would

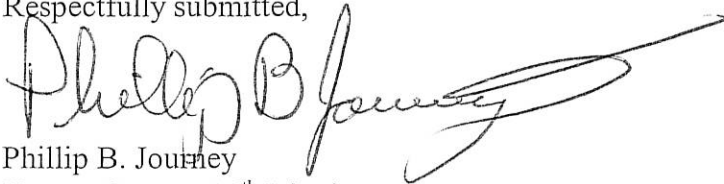
*Senate Education Committee
2-28-06
Attachment 1*

not affect the state budget regarding the cost of education. That would assume that the cost of educating an individual child does not vary between districts. My intent in drafting this legislation would be that the cost could change depending which district the child is transferred into. I would expect that statistically it is likely the transfers could end up counterbalancing each other, expensive district to a less expensive district and vice versa. I believe parents in this situation would not be required to make an economic decision except regarding the cost of transportation, and thus would be motivated to choose the school district which offers the most comprehensive education tailored to the individual child's needs and courses of desired study.

Such public school choice would offer parents a broad array of education options for their children. It would foster competition for students among the various public school districts and allow students to attend the school that they believe offers them the greatest opportunity for improving their education. It's important to note that this is not vouchers or tax credits, but simply a transfer between taxing entities of state aid. This is not a controversial school choice program resisted by so many involved in the education of our children, but simply a means of fostering competition between various public school districts that are financed by taxpayer funds. After all since tax payers are paying for it, shouldn't they have the opportunity to make the best choice they possibly can within the resources available in the state of Kansas.

I urge the committee to support Senate Bill #514.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phillip B. Journey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Phillip B. Journey
Kansas Senator 26th District

KANSAS
ASSOCIATION



OF
SCHOOL
BOARDS

1420 SW Arrowhead Road • Topeka, Kansas 66604-4024
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Testimony on **SB 514**
before the
Senate Education Committee

by

Mark Tallman, Assistant Executive Director/Advocacy
Kansas Association of School Boards

February 28, 2006

Madam Chair, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on **SB 514**. As we understand this bill, it would remove any limits on the authority of a district to send a bus into another district to transport a child who wishes to attend a school in the non-resident district. Under current law, districts may accept students who are not residents of that district, and many do. Only in certain circumstances are districts allowed to send a bus into another district to pick up a child to attend a school in that non-resident district. The child must live at least 10 miles from the school in his or her district of residence. This law, sometimes called the 10-mile rule, does not apply to any district in the state's four largest counties. Prior to this law, the school district where the child lived had to give permission for another district to pick up and transport a child.

KASB has not adopted a specific position on the issue of transporting students to schools outside their resident district. However, we believe the committee needs to carefully consider the impact of this change, not only on the child in question but on other children in the district. For better or worse, under our school finance formula, the number of students in a district determines the budget. When a child attends another district, the "money follows the child." However, district expenses do not exactly reflect small changes in enrollment. It may seem "selfish" for a district to oppose the transfer of a student to another district. But in fact, that loss of revenue will have an impact on the remaining children in the district.

KASB's particular concern is whether the change proposed in this bill will make it harder for school districts to consider school or district consolidation. School closing, in particular, is always an emotional, divisive issue. Some districts may be considering action to close a school building in order to operate more efficiently or offer a more comprehensive educational program. However, if they lose a significant number of students through such an action, those benefits may be lost.

Because of these concerns, KASB cannot support **SB 514**. We urge the committee to consider all ramifications of this change before acting on the bill. Thank you for your consideration.

*Senate Education Committee
2-28-06
Attachment 2*



Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools

Unified School District No. 500

**Testimony by USD 500
Before the Senate Education Committee on SB 563
February 28, 2006**

Madame Chair:

I am Dr. Jill Shackelford, Superintendent of Schools for USD #500, Kansas City, Kansas. This is my 37th year in education with 18 years in primary classrooms and as a reading specialist. Consequently, I speak to you in support of Senate Bill 563 as a Superintendent grounded in the classroom with experience teaching students to read.

I would like to provide you with three points of view to justify the states' investment in full day kindergarten phased in over four years. First, research to rationalize the need for early childhood intervention will be presented. The second point will highlight the need for full day kindergarten in Kansas and the third aspect will describe the dire need for the funding of full day kindergarten for KCK students.

Early Childhood Intervention: Justification

- Because a sizeable achievement gap appears before minority youth reach kindergarten; any holistic approach to closing the gap must include high quality early childhood and parent education programs.

Highest Attainment for every 100 Kindergartens

24 Years Olds	Blacks	Asian	Latino	White
Graduated from high school	87	94	62	91
Completed at least some college	54	80	29	62
Obtained at least bachelors degree	16	29	6	30

- Eighty-eight percent of children who have reading problems in 1st grade still have problems reading in 4th grade; and 74% with problems reading at 3rd grade will have problems at 9th grade.

- By the time poor and minority youth reach 8th grade they are about three grade levels behind other students.
- Early childhood education is the key to preventing retention. Full day kindergarten has been shown to reduce the risk of students being retained in later grades. This is important in light of research that links retention to high school dropout rate.
- Full day kindergarten programs are more effective than half day programs (See et al American Journal of Education, February 2006). The researchers discovered that full day programs are roughly equivalent to an additional month of schooling each year when compared to half day programs. Children who experience full day kindergarten are advantaged in levels of their cognitive learning. This new study confirms existing research that states all children – not just low income or urban children - learn more and achieve higher levels of academic, cognitive, and social learning when they attend full day kindergarten.
- Research clearly shows that many children enter kindergarten with challenges from health and nutritional problems to inadequate preschooling that deeply undercut their ability to perform academically.
 - At age 4 children of professionals have vocabularies twice as large as those of welfare children and 50% as large as working class peers (Hart Riesely 2003).

Full Day Kindergarten in Kansas: Justification

In the KSDE study School Readiness Fall 2004 kindergarten teachers were asked to assess 1,997 entering kindergarten students regarding the identifiable skills and ability to indicate preparedness for kindergarten.

52.6% were prepared at average or below level
19.0% were not prepared
27.4% were prepared at above average level
65.0% exhibit physical readiness
53.0% exhibit mathematical knowledge and skills
47.0% exhibit learning to learn skills
47.0% exhibit symbolic development skills
43.0% exhibit communication & literacy skills
42.0% exhibit social skills

When Governor Sebelius announced the \$2 million dollar preschool pilot for Wyandotte, Johnson and five other counties in Kansas, she quoted the study by stating "Kindergarten teachers tell us over and over again that about half of their children are not ready to learn when they start school." The Governor went on to say "One of the most depressing observations is to ask a kindergarten teacher at the end of the first week of school 'Can you evaluate these children?' and they can look around the room and say who knows colors, who know numbers, who is beginning to read, who shows attention . . . and that child is most likely to get into trouble, that child is most likely to get pregnant early, that child is most likely to drop out of school, that child is most likely to go to jail. What we need to do is go backwards and invest in these little children who come from disadvantaged backgrounds who don't have anybody reading to them, who don't have anybody talking to them."

- Kansas Board of Education supports full day kindergarten. (Legislative Goal)
- Kansas Association of School Boards supports full day kindergarten. (Legislative Goal)

Full Day Kindergarten in KCK: Justification

- 1,555 kindergarten students
 - ✓ 30 schools
 - ✓ 82% minority (African American and Hispanic)
 - ✓ 20% English Language Learners
 - ✓ 77% free or reduced lunch
 - 4 schools 90%+ poverty
 - 10 schools 80%+ poverty
 - 9 schools 75%+ poverty
 - 2 schools 60%+ poverty
 - 4 schools 50%+ poverty
 - 1 school 49.5 poverty
 - Sumner Academy 43% poverty
- All elementary schools in KCK are eligible for full day kindergarten funding in 2006-07 (36% free and reduced)
- Currently 5 out of 30 schools have full day kindergarten via Title I funds at site.

- Need – Current reading performance
 - Fall 2005 – all kindergarten – sentence completion test
 - 52% met standard
 - 66% paid lunch met standard
 - 48% free reduced met standard
 - Fall 2005 – all first grade – Bruns Roe Informal Reading Inventory
 - 30 % met standard
 - 49% paid lunch met standard
 - 26% free reduced met standard
 - 2005 – all second grade – Bruns Roe Informal Reading Inventory
 - 38.9% met standard
 - 36% free and reduced
 - 43% White
 - 41% African American
 - 33% Hispanic
- Elementary Schools on Improvement – 2 (one has full day kindergarten)
- Schools not making AYP – Year 1 – 6 (one has full day kindergarten)
- District is on Improvement – Year 2
 - ✓ 2002-2005 elementary improved from 26% to 63% proficient

Conclusion

The district's vision is to Zap the Gap – Increase achievement for all students while making the achievement gap between sub groups (White – African American and Hispanic) disappear. Since the achievement gap takes root in early childhood, early intervention, expanded preschool and full day kindergarten are all pivotal and “our only hope” to Zap the Gap in Kansas City, Kansas. We must level the playing field between KCK students and their counterparts before they enter first grade. KCK students enter school two grade levels below and yet sit with other Kansas 3rd grade students in Johnson County and across Kansas to take KS assessments. KCK is expected and committed to perform at the same level and leave no child behind. Full day kindergarten will give us additional instructional time – at least one month of time - needed to stimulate language, boost cognitive skills, push literacy and math concepts, and improve social/behavioral skills.

Testimony by USD 500
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My Cabinet has made priorities for 2006-07. Funding full day kindergarten is one of the priorities – beginning with Priority Schools (the eight elementary schools) in 2006-07 and adding the remaining schools in years to come. We estimate full day kindergarten for 8 schools requires 15-20 teachers with a cost of \$1 million. The estimate for creating space for additional elementary classrooms, complete with furniture, instructional materials and books, is \$1 million.

It is easy to see Senate Bill 563 would bring our budget priorities closer to reality and would allow support for the priority to provide staff with competitive salaries and enhanced professional development. I trust this testimony has convinced the members of the Senate Education Committee to approve Senate Bill 563 and has provided talking points for you to convince others.

Testimony by Dr. Jill Shackelford
Superintendent of Schools
913 279-2235
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**Mark Desetti, Testimony
Senate Education Committee
February 28, 2006**

Senate Bill 563

Madame Chair, members of the committee, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to share our strong support for **Senate Bill 563**.

The issue of all-day kindergarten is a perennial issue before the Legislature and for good reason. It just makes sense. It makes sense on many levels and for many reasons.

First, for families in today's economy it makes economic sense. More and more children come from families where both parents work or from single parent families. Half day kindergarten programs place a significant burden on these families. Parents must find care for their children for the other half of the day. They must deal with transportation from the school to the day care center and they must find the additional resources necessary to pay for extended day care. Economically, many families would benefit from all day kindergarten.

All day kindergarten makes sense for at-risk students. Students who come to school without the benefit of high quality pre-schools or a highly educated parent at home with the time and skills to provide a strong academic beginning get that strong start in kindergarten. All day kindergarten gives teachers the time to make a real difference with children.

All day kindergarten makes sense for children who are not at-risk. There are many children who are ready for the experience of a full day at school. Teachers in all day kindergarten classrooms have the benefit of time to provide children with more extensive and extended learning opportunities. The social and educational opportunities provided to children give them a solid start for the academic world of first grade and beyond.

All day kindergarten makes a difference in student learning. This Legislature and others before you have frequently tried to expand primary grade investments because you know instinctively and from research that an early investment is an investment that pays big dividends. Children who get a strong start in the early years do better throughout their schooling.

All day kindergarten is good for school districts. There is a transportation issue that all day kindergarten solves when schools no longer have to run busses mid-day. And all day kindergarten is a better use of school facilities. Of course, those school districts that do not have the physical capacity to offer all day kindergarten because their buildings are being stretched to the maximum already will not be required to offer the program.

I hope that you will not be distracted by those who believe that this investment is taking children from their mothers' arms. It is not. All day kindergarten as proposed in **SB 563** is not mandatory for the children. It is an offering. Parents who do not want their children in an all day kindergarten would not be forced to do so. In fact, parents are not forced now to put their children in any kindergarten. Kindergarten is not required but it is universally respected as the time to begin one's formal education.

Senate Education Committee

My teaching experience is as an early childhood teacher and I spent my first years of teaching as an all day kindergarten teacher. The families in my school district loved the opportunities we brought to their children. As a parent, three of my four children attended all day kindergarten programs. One of them had academic challenges and had the opportunity to be with a caring qualified teacher who could guide him in his early learning. He overcame much in the first few years of schooling and now he will be attending Kansas State University with his eye on vet school. The other two really needed all day kindergarten – not because they had difficulties but because they were ready to go. They needed more and they absorbed learning like sponges. Today my son is a member of the National Honor Society and my daughter is a 4.0 student entering high school with advanced classes.

All of their successes are not the result purely of all day kindergarten. They have the benefits of well-educated parents, a nice home, good nutrition, and my good looks but all day kindergarten was what they needed at five years old; one for the extra help and two for the extra opportunities.

SB 563 would phase in all day kindergarten based on the percentage of students in a school who are in poverty. This is a rational way to make the transition. It helps our neediest students immediately but brings the opportunity to all children later.

All day kindergarten comes before the Legislature almost every year. I would suggest you look to the proposal before you and consider little miracles. For example, The State Board of Education of 2004 and the one of 2006 are notable for their significant differences but they both endorsed all day kindergarten. It is an idea whose time has come.

We urge you to pass **Senate Bill 563**.

KANSAS
ASSOCIATION



OF
SCHOOL
BOARDS

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Testimony on **SB 563**
before the
Senate Education Committee

by

Mark Tallman, Assistant Executive Director/Advocacy
Kansas Association of School Boards

February 28, 2006

Madam Chair, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on **SB 563**. This bill would phase-in support for all-day kindergarten programs over four years, beginning with school buildings that have the highest percentage of kindergarten students eligible for free or reduced price lunch. All kindergarten students would be eligible by the 2009-10 school year.

In the resolution regarding school finance adopted this year by the KASB Delegate Assembly; our members specifically endorsed state support of all-day kindergarten. We believe this program should be voluntary on the part of local districts as well as parents. Not all districts have the physical capacity to implement these programs immediately, and in some cases the board and community may not believe such a program is warranted. However, a strong majority of our members support all-day kindergarten, and a significant number of districts have already chosen to provide this program at the expense of other budget areas.

We believe it is also significant that the State Board of Education has unanimously voted to endorse this concept. This clearly demonstrates a broad consensus throughout the education community that all-day kindergarten is an effective way to strengthen education.

KASB stresses that the Legislature will never have a better opportunity to implement this change. We are confident the Legislature will follow the direction of the Kansas Supreme Court and the recommendations from multiple studies to invest more in education to make a positive difference in student achievement. The House is proposing a plan to add \$500 million over three years and we understand a Senate plan will soon follow. We believe that funding for all-day kindergarten should be included in any plan to respond to the Court.

Thank you for your consideration.

*Senate Education Committee
2-28-06
Attachment 5*



Schools for Quality Education

Bluemont Hall Manhattan, KS 66506 (785) 532-5886

Funding All Day Kindergarten

February 28, 2006

As I visited with my rural school districts I found that many of them have not had and may still not have any form of pre-school. In addition many families live far away from their small communities thus children have fewer opportunities to socialize with children their age. For these reasons and a variety of others, kindergarten is more important than ever as it allows youngsters to gain social and readiness skills. There are a number of rural districts who have taken action and are providing all day kindergarten. If the necessary funding becomes available many of my districts are more likely to establish all day programs.

For the past ²⁶ ~~sixteen~~ years I have become increasingly aware of the importance of readiness skills. In the 1980's I found myself teaching Title I reading. Although my program didn't dip down and work with kindergarteners even then I could see that early intervention would make a big difference in a child's initial success in school. When I came on the State Board in 2000 there was a wealth of evidence supporting the importance of Parents As Teachers, quality pre-school programs and all day kindergarten. Research based studies clearly supported the benefits of all these forms of early interventions for those most likely to be at-risk. In the past ²⁶ ~~sixteen~~ years the need for more early education opportunities has not diminished. If anything it is more urgent.

What do we know about extending the kindergarteners' day?

We know that children who have attended all day kindergarten are more likely to

- Develop needed readiness skills
- Be comfortable with their teacher
- Learn to play well with others and therefore
- Have fewer behavior problems
- Learn through play
- Be reading by the end of first grade

Our goal is to help every child be a successful student.

Their student career begins in kindergarten.

All Day Kindergarten is an effect way to move closer to achieving that goal.

Val DeFever

"Rural is Quality"

Senate Education Committee
2-28-06 Attachment 6

STUART J. LITTLE, Ph.D.
Little Government Relations

February 28, 2006

Testimony on SB 563
Senate Education Committee

Chairman Schodorf,

Madame Chair and Members of the Committee, I apologize for being unable to attend the hearing on Senate Bill 563, but I wanted to submit written testimony. On behalf of the Shawnee Mission School District, #512, we urge your support of Senate Bill 563 to implement state funding for all day kindergarten. Shawnee Mission School District cannot afford to offer all day kindergarten for its students, and therefore it is one of the legislative priorities from the Shawnee Mission School Board.

State funding for all day kindergarten programs is one of the most beneficial programs to improve student performance. During the 2005 legislative interim, the 2010 Commission heard compelling testimony on the virtues of all day kindergarten and the benefits to all Kansas children. Improvement in school performance is clear when a child has been in all day kindergarten. The 2005-2006 Shawnee Mission legislative platform used the following rationale to explain their support for all day kindergarten: *"The quality of a child's early educational experience influences future personal development and academic achievement throughout a child's life. A half-day kindergarten program may have been sufficient in the past, but today parents and educators recognize the need for additional time in school for five-year-old children. Without additional funds, districts will not have the resources to offer this option."*

We suggest Senate Bill 563 be amended to eliminate the at-risk population requirements and all day kindergarten be implemented and state funded for all Kansas kids. In Shawnee Mission School District where we do not currently offer all day kindergarten, it would cost an estimated \$1.9 million in first time, start up costs, and annual costs of \$2.8 million. We encourage the Senate Education Committee to include in a Senate school finance proposal state funding for all kids to attend all day kindergarten. At the very least and even without amendment, we encourage your favorable consideration and support for Senate Bill 563.