

## MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jean Schodorf at 1:40 p.m. on March 14, 2007, in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

Committee members absent: Ralph Ostmeyer- excused

Committee staff present: Sharon Wenger, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Michele Alishahi, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Ashley Holm, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Theresa Kiernan, Revisor of Statutes  
Shirley Higgins, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: None

Possible action on bills previously heard:

**HB 2014 – Postsecondary education; establishing the technical college and technical school commission; powers and duties**

Sharon Wenger, Kansas Legislative Research Department, reviewed the provisions of the bill.

Senator Teichman moved to recommend **HB 2014** favorably for passage, seconded by Senator Pine. The motion carried.

**Sub. for HB 2310 – School districts; policies relating to bullying**

Sharon Wenger reviewed the key provisions in the bill.

Senator Vratil moved to amend **Sub. for HB 2310** by striking New Section 2 dealing with character development programs, seconded by Senator Goodwin. The motion carried.

Senator Vratil moved to amend **Sub. for HB 2310** by returning the following language in the original bill: “Each year, the Board of Education shall survey the students within the district to determine the effectiveness of the district’s plan to eliminate bullying. Information collected pursuant to the survey shall include age or grade level and the sex of the student; whether or not the student was a victim of bullying or witnessed the bullying of another student; the type of bullying which the student either was a victim or witness; the age, grade level, and sex of the student who committed the bullying; the number of times the student either was a victim or a witness to bullying; and other information requested by the State Department of Education. The information collected will be recorded at the State Department of Education in the form required by the Department. The information submitted will be recorded in a manner that does not reveal the identity of the child.”, seconded by Senator Lee. The motion carried.

Senator Schodorf requested that, if the bill passed, the State Board of Education, the Kansas Association of School Boards, the Kansas National Education Association, and other interested groups come together during the summer months for an ad hoc work group to develop suggested policies for school boards.

Senator Vratil moved to amend **Sub. for HB 2310** by changing the effective date to January 1, 2008, and to give the revisor the latitude to appropriately draft the amendment, seconded by Senator Pine. The motion carried.

Senator Lee moved to recommend **Sub. for HB 2310** favorably for passage as amended, seconded by Senator Pine. The motion carried.

**HB 2343 – Establishing the early high school graduation incentive program**

Sharon Wenger distributed a memorandum prepared as requested by the Committee at the hearing on the bill concerning information about state and local high school graduation requirements and the GI Bill education

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE Senate Education Committee at 1:40 p.m. on March 14, 2007, in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

benefits available. (Attachment 1) In addition, she provided information on the eligibility for free tuition and fees for dependents and spouses of public safety officers killed in the line of duty and prisoners of war. (Attachment 2)

The Committee's attention was turned to the minutes of the March 6, 7, and 8 meetings.

Senator Teichman moved to approve the minutes of the March 6, 7, and 8 meetings, seconded by Senator Goodwin. The motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 19, 2007.



# KANSAS LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

545N-Statehouse, 300 SW 10<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1504  
(785) 296-3181 ♦ FAX (785) 296-3824

kslegres@klrd.state.ks.us

<http://www.kslegislature.org/klrd>

March 14, 2007

**To:** Senator Pat Apple  
Senator Jean Schodorf

**From:** Sharon Wenger, Research Analyst  
Ashley Holm, Legislative Fellow

**Re:** Early Graduation Requirements; GI Bill

In response to your request for information about state and local high school graduation requirements, outlined below are the State Board of Education requirements for high school graduation and for a few school districts. Also included is information regarding the GI Bill education benefits available.

## State Requirements

The State Board requires 21 units for graduation, which includes:

- Four units of English language arts;
- Three units of history and government;
- Three units of science;
- Three units of mathematics;
- One unit of physical education;
- One unit of fine arts; and
- Six units of elective courses.

## Board of Regents Admissions Requirements

Some school districts align their graduation requirements with the Kansas Board of Regents admission standards. These include:

- Four units of English;
- Three units of mathematics;
- Three units of social science;
- Three units of natural science; and
- One unit of computer technology.

*Senate Education Committee*  
*3-14-07*  
*Attachment 1*

## Local Requirements

It is not uncommon for school districts to require 23-24 units for graduation. At most schools, students can complete 6-7 units per year. If a student wants to graduate early, he or she must take summer school, if available, or do dual enrollment with a community college where classes also are counted with the school district.

As an example, at Lawrence High School there were 19 students who graduated one semester early during the 2005-2006 school year. In order to be eligible to graduate a semester early, a student at Lawrence High must complete the Board of Regents requirements. The student must plan for this and file an application for early graduation one year prior to the expected early graduation. The student must have a conference with his/her school counselor, complete a personal letter about his/her reason for graduating early, and have a permission slip signed by the principal.

At Washburn Rural High School in Topeka, 10-12 seniors graduate at semester each year. They do not undergo a special application process, but if they have met the graduation requirements, then they are not required to return for the eighth semester of school, and graduate with their class in May. Only every few years does a student graduate an entire year early.

## GI Bill Education Benefits

Information from staff at the Kansas Commission on Veteran's Affairs explains the "GI Bill" education benefits that are available:

- For persons who have been on active duty for at least three years, they are eligible to receive \$1,075 per month while enrolled full time (12 credit hours or more) at a public or private postsecondary institution. This is available for up to 36 months.
- Monthly amounts are prorated based upon hours enrolled, for example, a person enrolled as a half-time student would receive \$537.50 per month.
- For those persons with fewer than three years of active duty, *e.g.*, a reservist called to duty after 9/11/01, serving for 90 days, would receive \$430 per month for full-time enrollment.

To: Senate Education Committee  
From: Sharon Wenger, Research Analyst  
Re: Free Tuition

- Dependents and spouses of public safety officers killed in the line of duty and prisoners of war eligible for free tuition and fees not to exceed 10 semesters of undergraduate instruction for:
  - Public Safety Officers (law enforcement officer, firefighter, emergency medical services attendant) (KSA 75-4364)
- Children of Kansas Army and Air National Guard members killed in the line of duty shall be given free tuition and fees as long as the student is in good standing and under the age of 22 years and is unmarried. (KSA 48-269)
- Dependents of prisoners of war or persons missing in action, as declared by secretary of defense after January 1, 1960, free tuition and fees not to exceed 12 semesters if person started school before July 1, 2005, or 10 semesters if starting school after July 1, 2005. (KSA 73-1217)
- Foster children up to 23 years shall have tuition waived. (Sunsets on June 30, 2008) (KSA 75-53,111)