

MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jean Schodorf at 1:30 p.m. on February 16, 2009, in Room 545-N of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Senator Anthony Hensley- excused

Committee staff present:

Theresa Kiernan, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Matt Sterling, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Martha Dorsey, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Sharon Wenger, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Dorothy Gerhardt, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Dennis McKinney, State Treasurer
April Holman, Kansas Action for Children
Jackie Freed, Kansas Partners in Asset Development
Don Jordan, Secretary, Department of Social & Rehabilitation Services (written only)
Senator Richard Kelsey
Mark Desetti, KNEA

Others attending:

See attached list.

SB 84 - School districts; personal financial literacy; statewide assessments

Theresa Kiernan, Office of the Revisor of Statutes, presented the revised bill which included recommendations made by Senator Abrams. These recommendations included striking all of lines 19 through 38 which included the listing of components to be covered in the program. Also included was striking "objectives" in section 8 and inserting "state curriculum". School districts would also be encouraged to include family and consumer science, accounting or other appropriate courses when selecting textbooks. The section relating to including questions relating to personal financial literacy in the statewide assessments would remain.

Committee discussion included concern regarding adding additional requirements and expense to the school districts when selecting textbooks in this economic climate. Senator Owens expressed concern with adding testing on financial literacy to the state assessment testing. Senator Abrams stated that this was already being taught on the state assessment tests but this was an attempt to get the law up to what is already occurring; an attempt to create state curriculum standards as are set out for math, science, etc. Discussion was also held regarding the time frame for implementation.

Senator Steineger moved to add the balloon amendments, along with the suggestion that implementation be delayed a year or two, to SB 84. The motion was seconded by Senator Abrams. Motion carried on a voice vote.

Senator Abrams moved to recommend SB 84 favorable for passage as amended. The motion was seconded by Senator Steineger. Motion failed with Senators Abrams, Schodorf and Steineger voting yes; Senators Marshall, Huelskamp, Umbarger, and Owens voting no; Senator Teichman abstaining.

Hearing on SB 225 - Low-income family postsecondary savings accounts incentive program

Theresa Kiernan, Office of the Revisor of Statutes, presented a summary of **SB 225**. The bill amends law concerning the low-income family postsecondary savings accounts incentive program. A dollar-for-dollar match for moneys put in by qualifying low-income taxpayers, not to exceed \$600 per year, is provided. To qualify, income cannot exceed more than 200% of the federal poverty level for the tax year prior to the year in which the application is submitted. Number of approved qualifications may not exceed 300 per congressional district. If all applications are not filled, there is a provision for additional applicants not to exceed a program total of 1,200 per year. The program is administered by the State Treasurer's office.

CONTINUATION SHEET

Minutes of the Senate Education Committee at 1:30 p.m. on February 16, 2009, in Room 545-N of the Capitol.

Dennis McKinney, State Treasurer ([Attachment 1](#)), provided testimony in favor of continuing the Kansas Investments Developing Scholars Matching Grant Program created in 2006 as a three-year pilot program, on a permanent basis. April Holman, Kansas Action for Children ([Attachment 2](#)), Jackie Freed, Kansas Partners in Asset Development ([Attachment 3](#)), Don Jordan, Secretary, Department of Social & Rehabilitation Services ([Attachment 4](#)) (written only), and Reginald L. Robinson, President and CEO, Kansas Board of Regents, ([Attachment 5](#)) (written only) all provided support for continuation of the program.

There were no other conferees to appear before the Committee.

The hearing on **SB 225** was closed.

Hearing on **SB 209 - Teachers; nontraditional licensure**

Senator Richard Kelsey, ([Attachment 6](#)), provided testimony regarding **SB 209**. This legislation would provide for the "Nontraditional teacher licensure program". His testimony included the story of his daughter who now lives in Arkansas. Although she already had a college degree she did not hold a teaching certificate. Under a program available in that state she was able to obtain one without attending school full time for a year or more. Discussion included that of Senator Steineger and others on the committee who pointed out that similar programs were already available in the state; specifically mentioned were the "You Can Teach" program through the University of Kansas, programs through Ft. Hays, Pittsburg State, Wichita State as well as on-line programs through Emporia State University.

Mark Desetti, KNEA ([Attachment 7](#)), provided testimony in opposition to the proposed legislation. His argument was the legislation is completely unnecessary as it allows the state board of education to do what they already have authority to do, and are doing. He also took exception to lines 23-27 as it appeared to give grants to institutions rather than to the candidates who he felt should be awarded available grants.

Chair Schodorf stated a review of alternative teacher certification programs would be held after "turn around".

The next meeting is scheduled for February 17, 2009.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:25 p.m.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE GUEST LIST

DATE: February 16, 2009

NAME	REPRESENTING
SCOTT FRANK	LPA
Bob Vancrum	Blue Valley USD 229
Gary George	Olathe School District
Julie Hein	Hein Law Firm
Mike Reecht	Goels Brader
ROB MENLY	KENNEDY & Assoc.
KELLY DiROCCO	LBR
Jayne Shaw	KACCT
Dodie Wellshear	USA/Kansas
Jackie Fried	HCCF / KPAD
Bob Totton	Kansas Contractors Assoc.
BILL REARDON	KCKs. PUBLIC SCHLS.
Dennis McKinney	Treasurer's Office
SCOTT GATES	Treasurer's Office
April Holman	Kansas Action for Children
MARK DESETTI	KNEA
Mark Tallman	KASB
Pamela Coleman	KSSDE
Diane Gjerstad	Wichita Public Schools
SUE PETERSON	KSHPE



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STATE OF KANSAS
Dennis McKinney
TREASURER

PHONE: 785-296-3171
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Senate Bill 225

Kansas Investments Developing Scholars Matching Grant Program

Senate Education Committee

February 16, 2009

The Kansas Investments Developing Scholars Matching Grant Program was created as a three-year pilot program in 2006. It was assigned to the Treasurer's Office as part of the Learning Quest Education Saving Program. Senate Bill 225 is based on my recommendation to continue the program on a permanent basis providing a \$600 matching grant to up to 1200 participants each year. I have attached my report to the Legislature outlining the participation in the program during the three-year pilot period, and I would be glad to answer any questions you have about the data. The average income of the program's participants was \$26,550.

I am proud that Kansas is one of only 11 states with a matching grant for their 529 education savings program. Matching grant programs like K.I.D.S. ensure that participants at all income levels receive an incentive from the state when they save for their child's future. The tax deduction provided to all Kansas taxpayers who contribute to their Learning Quest account is of less value to lower income Kansans who are taxed at a lower rate. Matching grant programs also help break the cycle of poverty by encouraging Kansas families to work hard and invest in education for themselves or their children. Preparing Kansans of all income levels to face the costs of education beyond high school at universities, technical colleges and community colleges also helps create the more educated work force that is necessary in today's economy.

The bill includes a few changes to how we would administer the program.

- Because the matching grant is paid based on the amount that participants contribute each calendar year, we should set the number of participants to be approved by calendar year. The state's matching grant payment will still be made once per fiscal year each January.
- Currently, a participant is considered the adult account owner allowing each account owner to receive one \$600 matching grant regardless of the number of children in the household. The \$600 can be divided into multiple accounts if the account owner chooses. We have found this feature to be confusing to applicants as well as

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cumbersome to administer. Most parents with multiple children want to treat them evenly. If this bill passes, we plan to amend the regulations for the program to change definition of "participant" from the account owner to the beneficiary whose higher education expenses can be paid from the account. This change would also carry with it the restriction that account owners would not be allowed to change the beneficiary for the account. The effect is that the state would be contributing for the education of a particular student instead of to an account owner who can change the beneficiary to any family member as defined by Section 529 of the Internal Revenue Code.

- My office is willing to administer and promote this program within its existing resources without an appropriation from the State General Fund. We can also work with private sector partners to help market the program.

Now is not the time to give up on the notion that the state's taxpayers benefit when we enhance the quality of our workforce. By placing higher education within reach of Kansans who are willing to work hard and invest for their children's future we help them in a way that is consistent with our traditional Kansas values. Given the ever increasing cost of higher education, we must help those who can least afford tuition increases to prepare for the future by saving today.

My office is ready to work with any suggestions that you might have for improving this program.

We want to be clear that we will deliver two important messages: First, an education savings program is just as relevant to technical education as it is to college education. Second, if despite your family's financial challenges you are willing to work hard, save, and invest, then we want to help you improve your family and our economy.



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Kansas Investments Developing Scholars Matching Grant Program

Pilot Period Report

January 15, 2009

Program Objectives:

The Kansas Investments Developing Scholars Matching Grant Program is designed to promote workforce development with traditional Kansas values by providing an incentive for families to work hard, save, and invest in education. Preparing families for the cost of postsecondary education helps create the more educated work force that is necessary in today's economy. Incentives that help motivate families who are willing to work and invest in education will also assist many in breaking the cycle of poverty.

Background:

The Kansas Investments Developing Scholars Matching Grant Program was created as a three year pilot program in 2006 with the passage of K.S.A 75-650 and assigned to the Treasurer's Office as part of the Learning Quest Education Saving Program. The first applications were accepted in August of 2006 after spending two months to implement regulations found in K.A.R. 3-4-1 to K.A.R. 3-4-7 and creating procedures for administering the accounts with our program manager, American Century Investments. The program was designed to focus on the account owner as the participant because account owners are the individuals who have control over education savings accounts established under Section 529 of the Internal Revenue Code.

- Participants must be a Kansas resident, but they may select any beneficiary for the account. The designated beneficiary is the person whose higher education expenses can be paid from the account.
- Just like all 529 account owners, K.I.D.S. participants were given the right to choose their investment portfolio and can change the beneficiary to another family member at any time.
- The program looks to the household income in the participant's home and not the beneficiary's if they are different.
- Restrictions were placed on the accounts to ensure that only contributions by the participant qualify for the state's match of up to \$600.

- Participants are also required to show that they have incurred qualified higher education expenses before they are allowed to withdraw the state's matching contribution. A non-qualified withdrawal of the participant's contribution results in a forfeiture of the state's matching contribution.
- Each participant can only receive one \$600 matching grant, but they can choose to divide it into multiple accounts for multiple beneficiaries. Joint account owners can receive one \$600 matching grant for each joint account owner.

Participation:

- **Totals:** Over the first three years of the program, 1111 participants have received a total of \$582,239.75 in matching grants for their contributions. 397 participants were approved for one year, 321 for two years and 34 for all three years. Matching contributions have been made to accounts for 862 beneficiaries.
- **FY07 Match:** In February of 2007, the state contributed \$43,278.15 to accounts for 93 beneficiaries based on the contributions by 84 participants from August 1 to December 31, 2006. Their average contribution was \$515. Their average household federal adjusted gross income was \$20,966 or \$24,795 if the participants with negative incomes are excluded with a mean of \$28,101.
- **FY08 Match:** In January of 2008, the state contributed \$274,715.84 to accounts for 611 beneficiaries based on contributions by 528 participants in calendar year 2007. Their average contribution was \$516. Their average household federal adjusted gross income was \$24,623 or \$27,287 if the participants with negative incomes are excluded with a mean of \$36,112.
- **FY09 Match:** In January of 2009, we will be contributing \$264,245.76 to accounts for 576 beneficiaries based on contributions by 499 participants in calendar year 2008. Their average contribution was \$531.86. Their average household federal adjusted gross income was \$25,474 or \$27,869 if the participants with negative incomes are excluded with a mean of \$34,582.

Effectiveness of the K.I.D.S. Program:

Because 65% of the 862 of the accounts for K.I.D.S. beneficiaries were opened after the account owner applied for the K.I.D.S. program, we consider the account owners' participation in the program their as primary motivation to begin saving for postsecondary education expenses. Only 35% of the K.I.D.S. participants already had Learning Quest Education Savings Program accounts for their beneficiaries when they applied for the matching grant.

Adding the state's match to the participants' contributions allowed a total of \$1,160,451.50 to be set aside for the education of these students after high school.

35 beneficiaries have already withdrawn \$30,834.50 from the program to attend junior colleges, technical colleges and universities. One half of that amount or \$15,417.25 is the state's matching funds and the earnings in the state's match account. The other one half is the participants' contributions and their earnings. Even though the program is just in its third year, it has already made an impact by helping these families of limited means afford the costs of postsecondary education.

K.I.D.S. participants have also made significant contributions in addition to the amount that is eligible for the state's match. In 2006, 60% of the accounts for K.I.D.S. beneficiaries had contributions greater than their \$600 matching grant for total of \$51,114. In 2007, 42% of the accounts for K.I.D.S beneficiaries received contributions of \$200,146 more than their match, and in 2008 34% of the accounts for K.I.D.S. beneficiaries received excess contributions of \$169,215. The three year total of \$420,475 shows that this program has been a powerful incentive to encourage working families to save for their children's future beyond the level of the matching contribution provided by the state. Creating this type of positive investing and asset development behavior is precisely why this program was created.

Marketing:

The program was allotted \$50,000 in FY2007 and FY2008 for administration and marketing. The Treasurer's Office has absorbed the soft administrative costs such as salaries and has spent all the funds on marketing and supplies. In the first year we promoted the program on the internet, and through flyers sent to schools and local SRS offices. Posters with detachable flyers were sent to all school counselors and principals, local SRS offices, health departments and local housing authorities in FY 2008. In September of 2007, we sent 193,000 postcards to Kansas families with dependents and with incomes close to the program's guidelines. This mailing could not have been accomplished without the assistance of the Department of Revenue, and it was largely responsible for the increased participation in 2007. The \$50,000 appropriation was eliminated in FY09. With the over 600% increase in participation between year one and year two, we believe the program would have reached the 1200 participant cap in its third year with appropriate marketing resources.

Recommendations:

The Treasurer's Office recommends continuing the program with a few minor changes. We suggest changing the matching grant from one per participant/account owner to one per beneficiary. This would allow families with more than one child who are capable of investing more to receive additional matching funds. This would also spread available funds to more students if the program becomes full by preventing multiple account owners from receiving matching grant funds for the same beneficiary. We would prohibit the participant from changing the beneficiary to prevent multiple matching grants from being transferred to one beneficiary. These changes can be accomplished through rules and regulations.

The bill proposed by the Treasurer's office cleans up language in the current statute by limiting the number of participants by calendar year rather than by fiscal year to align it with the requirement to match their contributions from the previous calendar year each January.

FISCAL FOCUS

Budget and Tax Policy in  Perspective

April Holman, Director of Economic Policy
Kansas Action for Children
Legislative Testimony – SB 225
Senate Education Committee
February 16, 2009

Good afternoon, Madam Chair and members of the Committee. On behalf of Kansas Action for Children (KAC) I would like to thank you for this opportunity to testify in favor of SB 225.

Kansas Action for Children is a not-for-profit child advocacy organization founded in 1979. For more than 30 years, KAC has worked with lawmakers on policy solutions that improve the lives of Kansas children and their families.

The KIDS Program

The KIDS Program is a three-year pilot project designed to strengthen our future workforce and the availability of skilled workers in our state by helping more Kansas children obtain a degree or job training.

The KIDS program is a division of the state's Learning Quest program. As a public-private partnership, KIDS gives low-income Kansas families the opportunity to establish a 529 College Savings Plan, and encourages these families to save for their children's education by matching the first \$600 the families contribute to the 529 account in a year.

Children whose families earn 200% of poverty or less are eligible to save through the KIDS program. To ensure equal opportunity across the state and to encourage workforce development in rural areas, slots are reserved on a first-come, first-served basis in each of the state's four Congressional Districts. The KIDS program is currently capped at 1,200 children. Right now, 515 children participate in the KIDS program.

Why should we renew the KIDS Program?

- **Strengthens our workforce** - Right now, more than 250,000 Kansas children are growing up in low-income homes. Statistically, these children are less likely to achieve financial independence as adults, which creates a burden on our system. The KIDS Program is a low-cost way to ensure many of these children develop the skills they need to succeed in the workforce and become self-sufficient as adults.
- **Helps Kansas compete with overseas workforce** - As more and more employers require a skilled workforce, and we compete for jobs with workers in other countries, we simply cannot afford the likelihood that those children growing up in low-income homes - roughly one-third of our next generation - to be unprepared for the workforce.

- **Attracts new jobs to Kansas** - Employers cite a readily-available skilled workforce as a key factor in determining where to locate a business. With the KIDS program, we can grow the kind of skilled workforce we need to attract new employers to Kansas and provide the resources our existing employers need to remain competitive in a global economy.
- **Bolsters rural and smaller communities** – The geographic guidelines in place for the KIDS program provide an opportunity for small- and medium-sized communities to develop a highly-skilled local workforce. By encouraging these program participants, legislators can provide a long-term solution for attracting jobs and growing the local economies in these communities.
- **Fosters financial responsibility** – By providing incentive for low-income families to save, the KIDS program encourages healthy financial decisions that will ultimately help improve the economic conditions for Kansas families seeking to break the cycle of poverty.

What needs to happen to maintain the KIDS Program?

To prevent expiration of the program, the Legislature would need to approve SB 225, a bill that authorizes continuation of the KIDS program and allows low-income Kansas families to continue saving for their children's education. The fiscal note for the KIDS program currently stands at \$720,000 SGF. However, given the magnitude of the state's budget situation, there is a cost-effective option to continue the KIDS program that would cut in half the fiscal note and not impact the effectiveness of the program. By capping the number of participants at 600 children, the fiscal note for continuing the program would be \$360,000 SGF and would not cut access to the program for any Kansas families.

We urge you to pass SB 225 in order to maintain the KIDS Program and the important role it plays in preparing future generations for the workforce and fostering financial responsibility in Kansas.

Jackie Freed
Kansas Partners for Asset Development
Senate Bill 225

I appreciate the opportunity to speak in support of Senate Bill 225. I am Jackie Freed and am representing the members of Kansas Partners for Asset Development. This coalition is comprised of 32 organizations representing social service agencies, disability advocates, educators, and private sector organizations, all of whom believe that in order for our state to thrive we must work to encourage financial stability and asset expansion for Kansas families. Kansas Partners for Asset Development firmly believes in the strength of Kansas families to achieve their financial goals, however we also acknowledge that at times families need a helping hand.

Kansas Partners for Asset Development encourages the passing of Senate Bill 225, to stabilize and increase earning potential for Kansas workers. Individuals who do not receive higher or technical education are quickly sliding in comparison to their counterparts. The Pew Research Foundation a non partisan think tank reported in 2008 that individuals without training beyond high school have seen a 16% drop in income status since 1970 whereas those who receive additional training have remained relatively consistent. Additionally, according to the same research those who have training beyond a high school diploma are less likely to experience financial difficulties. The KIDS program and its ability to encourage training beyond the halls of high schools will stabilize the financial situation of Kansas household and increase earning potential while decreasing severe financial hardships, when fewer Kansas families are forced to rely on programs such as food stamps, LIHEAP, SCHIP, and others all Kansans benefit.

Finally, during a difficult economic time families often feel discouraged by the market conditions and reduce investments or remove them entirely. The match provided by the KIDS program will incentivize higher education savings and encourage families to continue thinking about higher education goals even through our nation's economic recession. As we all well know the earlier savings begins the better the outcome, any time lost not thinking about long term financial goals can undermine the potential impact of the saving. Thus, now more than ever encouraging families to save for technical and higher education should be a priority for this body.

Kansas Partners for Asset Development and its organizations are enthused that this committee is considering Senate Bill 225 and urge the passage of this piece of legislation. The opportunity for higher education and the incentive that this bill provides represents a valuable opportunity to invest in the future of the Kansas economy and the citizens of this great state. By stabilizing income for families and increasing earning potential, the coffers of Kansas will reap the rewards of this investment in the future employees of this state.

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Attachment 3

The Honorable Jean Schodorf
Chairwoman, Senate Education Committee
241-E
300 SW 10th St
Topeka, KS 66612

Re: SB 225

Dear Chairwoman Schodorf:

I would like to provide comments in support of Senate Bill 225, which continues the KIDS College Match Savings Program for post-secondary school expenses for low-income individuals and families. This saving program helps low-income individuals and families achieve greater economic security and stability. Lack of access to post-secondary education is a critical barrier preventing low-income individuals from building the personal and financial resources needed to achieve and maintain self-sufficiency. Higher education results in increased personal income, greater earning potential, and contributes to continued economic growth in Kansas. Asset development programs like this savings plan help move families on a path of self-sufficiency. The KIDS College Match Savings Program enables individuals and families to save for education and training, creating opportunities for them and for future generations.

Sincerely,



Don Jordan

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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Senate Education
2-16-09
Attachment 4



KANSAS BOARD OF REGENTS

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February 16, 2009

Senator Jean Schodorf, Chair
Senate Education Committee
Statehouse, Room 241-E
Topeka, KS 66612

Senator Anthony Hensley, Ranking Member
Senate Education Committee
Statehouse, Room 347-N
Topeka, KS 66612

Dear Chairwoman Schodorf and Ranking Member Hensley:

On behalf of the Kansas Board of Regents, I write to you to express the Board's support for Senate Bill 225, legislation that would extend the Kansas Postsecondary Education Savings Program.

The Board has long-supported the state's Learning Quest Program. As an advocate for higher education in Kansas, the Board is pleased to support programs, such as Learning Quest, and legislation, such as Senate Bill 225, that help Kansans to prepare for and pursue their higher education goals and dreams.

Thank you for the opportunity to share the Board's support for Senate Bill 225.

Sincerely,

Reginald L. Robinson
President and CEO

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2-16-09
Attachment 5

DICK KELSEY
 STATE SENATOR, 26RD DISTRICT
 24047 W. MACARTHUR
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TOPEKA

SENATE CHAMBER

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS
 COMMERCE
 FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND INSURANCE
 PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELFARE

My name is Amy Zluticky and I am a second grade teacher at Mansfield Elementary School in Mansfield, Arkansas. I have had the privilege to earn my non-traditional teaching licensure through the Arkansas Department of Education. I received my Bachelor's degree in 1992 from an accredited University. After I was married I decided to stay at home and raise my children. Although I did not earn an education degree, I used my college experience directing and teaching children's programs at church and the public library. My husband and I were also Certified Family Teachers at Boys Town in Nebraska. We served as therapeutic foster parents for 6 years. I have always loved children and desired to see each child reach their full potential. When my youngest started kindergarten I knew I wanted all my experience working with children whether it was teaching, or dealing with foster children in my home to be used in the public school classroom. I called the local University to see what I needed to add an education degree to my existing degree. I was directed to the non-traditional program in where if I could pass the Praxis requirements that were required of all Education students entering the teaching field I could enroll in their program and receive my provisional teaching license good for 1 year and begin teaching. I was able to pass the Praxis tests. I participated in a intense 3 week course during the summer that would prepare me to enter a classroom. I also took two college courses designed for non traditional students that was Teaching Reading and Writing. These courses taught me Comprehensive Literacy and how to use it in the classroom. Because of my life experience of working with foster children and teaching in the church, I was hired at a private school. During my first year of teaching I was closely supervised by my Pathwise Mentor and Supervisors from the non-traditional program. We were required to meet one Saturday a month for professional development (in addition to the schools professional development) and turn in lesson plans, work samples, and portfolio's each month. The supervision and feedback I received my first year of teaching has been invaluable. After being in this program for 2 years I now have my standard 5 year license. The benefit of being in a non- traditional program is the life experience and enthusiasm you bring in to the classroom. I am constantly being taught the best and most up to date practices to use in my classroom. The best part of this program is that I was able to teach immediately after I passed the praxis tests. I am now employed at our local public school. I have been asked to present my creative, enthusiastic approach to teaching to our board of education in which the response has been overwhelming. I have principals from other schools wanting to visit my classroom to see a fresh approach. I must always thank my first principal who believed in me and the non -traditional program and gave me a chance. I was given a chance to prove that even without the title of having an 'education major' I am still highly qualified, definitely called, and totally passionate about helping each child that enters my classroom reach their full potential.

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 Attachment 6



Making public schools great for every child

KANSAS NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION / 715 SW 10TH AVENUE / TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612-1686

**Mark Desetti, Testimony
Senate Education Committee
February 16, 2009**

Senate Bill 209

Madame Chair, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to come before you today to discuss **Senate Bill 209**.

We believe that **SB 290** is unnecessary legislation.

We would point out to the committee that this legislation on lines 21 and 22 states that the "state board may offer and operate a nontraditional teacher licensure program." The state board already can and does offer nontraditional licensure. These programs are in existence now and are subject to review by the state board. Members and staff of the state board have appeared before committees in this building many times to explain how such programs operate.

We also have serious concerns with lines 23 through 27. This paragraph establishes the practice of sending state monies specifically to "entities that train individuals to obtain licensure as a teacher through the nontraditional teacher licensure program." First, at a time when our traditional and nontraditional teacher licensure programs in existence right now will see reductions in state funding, it seems inappropriate to consider sending state money to groups without any kind of track record in teacher training. We further believe a better expenditure of state money is on scholarships for candidates who may choose a traditional or nontraditional route.

Last year the House passed **House Resolution 5039** on a vote of 120-0. This resolution called upon the State Board of Education and the Regents to cooperatively improve alternative teacher licensure programs, making them more accessible and better affordable, and better aligned with the individual candidate's personal experiences. Among the directives in that resolution was the following:

"The state Board of Education is directed to monitor and evaluate the implementation of rules and regulations adopted by the State Board in August of 2007 as well as rules and regulations which will be adopted in 2008 which remove barriers to the licensure of persons as teachers and to determine if further regulatory changes are needed to enhance access to licensure of persons as teachers."

We believe the House Resolution and the work of the State Board of Education and Board of Regents is the appropriate approach to this issue.