

## MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Dwayne Umbarger at 1:34 p.m. on January 21, 2004 in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

All members were present:

Committee staff present:

Carolyn Rampey, Legislative Research  
Kathie Sparks, Legislative Research  
Debra Hollon, Legislative Research  
Theresa Kiernan, Office of the Revisor of Statutes  
Judy Steinlicht, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Colonel Hester, JROTC Wichita Public Schools  
Sierra Travis, JROTC, Hamilton Middle School, Wichita  
Dr. Sylvia Robinson, Director of Education Policy, Office of the Governor

Others attending: No list

Colonel Hester and a large group of JROTC students visited the Committee. Colonel Hester told the Committee that the program started in the Wichita Public Schools nine years ago with involvement of 3 schools and 250 cadets. Now 17 schools are involved with 2600 cadets which he feels is significant growth. Colonel Hester introduced Sierra Travis, a student from Hamilton Middle School in Wichita. Sierra spoke to the Committee about the leadership program and academic performance. Sierra advised the Committee that the program has provided a strong foundation and skills for success in their future. Wichita JROTC Leadership Corps program attached. ([Attachment 1](#))

Senator Schodorf complemented Colonel Hester and the success of the JROTC program.

### **Overview of Governor's Task Force Recommendations**

Dr. Sylvia Robinson, Director of Education Policy, Office of the Governor gave an overview of the Governor's Task Force Recommendations. Dr. Robinson introduced Adam, who assisted her on the team. The Education Policy Team was made up of a very diverse group of 27 that were not currently working in education, and the team had a resource team to gather data for them. Two people chosen for the resource team had communication backgrounds because they wanted to be able to condense the information collected in a way that could be understood by a lay person.

Dr. Robinson told the Committee that the team was given a charge to examine the current system of education related to early learning, K-12 and Postsecondary education (P-16); focus initial discussions on student performance, cost and efficiencies, and leadership development; engage constituent groups such as parents, educators, students and business leaders in discussion related to the P-16 education system in Kansas; and identify and recommend priorities to keep the state of Kansas a national leader in the education of its students.

The policy team held meetings, divided into groups, studied data provided by the resource team, identified and prioritized recommendations and sought public input across the state.

The Governor's vision included high performance for all students; all children enter kindergarten prepared to succeed; high school graduates prepared for post-secondary education and a career; qualified and caring teachers to teach every student; and strong family, business and community commitment to education excellence.

Once the data was studied and priorities set, the team held forums in eight locations, touched ten communities and involved over 2000 people. They had 40-50 people in the focus groups by invitation and 100 to 450 at the open town hall meetings. At the town hall meetings an open microphone was available and the people were given input sheets to grade each recommendation as a must do, should do or nice to do. The top five town hall priorities were incentives and training for teachers; close the

## CONTINUATION SHEET

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achievement gap; recruit and retain teachers; state fund the school finance formula; and expand access to early childhood programs.

The focus groups helped identify what was missing and things they felt were top priorities. Things identified as missing were, health insurance for teachers; all day kindergarten; plan to engage parents; community/environment within schools; and state limits on class size. Three top priorities identified were, develop a comprehensive plan to recruit and retain teachers to Kansas by offering increased compensation and professional development; state fund the existing school finance formula and add an annual cost of living adjustment; and expand access to high quality early learning programs, particularly for high risk students. (Attachment 2)

The team held a final meeting in October to consider all the information gathered and prepare final recommendations to the Governor. These recommendations were broken down in four areas, sufficient resources; quality instruction; performance standards; and stakeholder involvement. (Attachment 3)

Dr. Robinson listened to comments from the Committee and answered questions.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.