

## MINUTES

### 2010 COMMISSION

September 11-12, 2008  
Room 143-N—Statehouse

#### Members Present

Rochelle Chronister, Chairperson  
Representative Clay Aurand - Thursday only  
Representative Sue Storm  
Meghen Barnds - Thursday only for Lee Urban  
Carolyn Campbell  
Barb Hinton - Thursday only  
Emile McGill  
Lee Urban - Friday only

#### Members Absent

Senator Jean Schodorf  
Dr. Ray Daniels  
Stephen Iliff  
Dennis Jones

#### Staff Present

Sharon Wenger, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Martha Dorsey, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Theresa Kiernan, Office of the Revisor of Statutes  
Dale Dennis, Kansas State Department of Education  
Janet Henning, Legislative Educational Planning Committee Assistant

#### Others Present

Thursday, September 11, 2008  
Scott Frank, Legislative Division of Post Audit  
Shannon Bell, Little Government Relations  
Mike Bodenstena, Greenbush  
Val DeFever, Schools for Quality Education  
Dave DeMoss, Greenbush  
Mark Desetti, Kansas National Education Association  
Jim Edwards, Kansas Association of School Boards  
Terry Forsyth, Kansas National Education Association  
Diane Gjerstad, Wichita Public Schools

Brenda Koops, Hein Law Firm  
Tom Krebs, Kansas Association of School Boards  
Mike Pomarico, Kansas Association of School Boards  
Bill Reardon, Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools  
Gayle Shaw, Kansas Association of Community College Trustees  
Mark Tallman, Kansas Association of School Boards  
Bob Vancrum, Blue Valley USD 229  
Dodie Wellshear, United School Administrators/Kansas  
Blake West, Kansas National Education Association and Kansas Learning First Alliance  
Jeff Zehnder, 580 WIBW-AM

Friday, September 12, 2008

Val DeFever, Schools for Quality Education  
Diane Gjerstad, Wichita Public Schools  
Mary Alice Jacobs  
Mike Reecht, K-12 Inc.  
Mark Tallman, Kansas Association of School Boards

### **Thursday, September 11, 2008 Morning Session**

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Chronister, who welcomed Commission members and guests.

#### **TOPIC: LEADERSHIP**

#### **Creating a Coherent Vision for Transforming Public Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

Dr. Blake West, President, Kansas National Education Association and Chairperson of Kansas Learning First Alliance, spoke to Commission members on 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills needed for Kansas education. Dr. West asked the question, "Why are 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills so important?" He stated our students need to become effective 21<sup>st</sup> Century citizens to compete in a new global economy. Dr. West stated the United States currently is falling behind in the areas of science, reading, math, and problem solving.

Dr. West also stated the nature of work is changing and that young people today between the ages of 18 - 38 will have an average of 10.2 jobs in their lifetimes. The demands of the workforce are changing and skills which are most important for job success when hiring a high school graduate include: work ethic, collaboration skills, good communication, social responsibility, critical thinking, and problem solving. High school students recently hired had deficiencies in: written communication skills, leadership, work ethic, critical thinking, problem solving, and self-direction. Dr. West stated the skills and content areas of importance in the next five years will be critical thinking, information technology, health and wellness, collaboration, innovation, and personal financial responsibility (Attachments 1, 2, and 3).

A question and answer session followed the presentation.

## Leadership for Tomorrow

Jim Edwards, Assistant Executive Director, Board Services, and Mike Pomarico, Assistant Executive Director, Administrator Services of the Kansas Association of School Boards (KASB), spoke to Commission members on leadership initiatives. Mr. Edwards told Commission members of the leadership training program entitled "Leadership for Tomorrow" sponsored by KASB. He stated there are five sessions conducted at different locations across the state and include 20 individuals in each session. He stated the session allows participants to meet and informally visit with leaders in the state and other class participants. The benefits of the Leadership for Tomorrow program are two fold:

- The benefit the State of Kansas will receive as a result of the effort to stimulate and develop future Kansas education leaders is first and foremost.
- There will be many benefits for the participants themselves. The added knowledge of current educational issues and how different districts are affected by current issues will be beneficial to all class members in their current positions.

This statewide program's emphasis is to:

- Identify exemplary school superintendents, assistant superintendents, and board of education members;
- Inform administrators and board members of key education issues;
- Provide avenues through which participants better understand how issues impact districts differently; and
- Foster legislative advocacy.

Mike Pomarico, Assistant Executive Director, Administrator Services, Kansas Association of School Boards, told Commission members about an organization, the Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning ( McREL). Mr. Pomarico stated this is a nonprofit organization created to help educators bridge the gap between research and practice. It is based in Denver, Colorado and was incorporated in 1966.

McREL serves as the Regional Education Laboratory for the Central Region which serves Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming. The laboratory will conduct and disseminate research related to the needs of schools in the Central Region and the results of this work are expected to help these schools meet the challenges of the No Child Left Behind Act.

Drawing from 35 years of studies, McREL has developed a training model that identifies:

- 21 principal responsibilities that have significant effect on student achievement;
- How to choose the right work upon which to focus;
- The advantages of comprehensive school reform models;
- 11 factors and 39 actions that help take a site specific approach to improving student achievement; and
- A five-step plan for effective school leadership that includes a strong team, distributed responsibilities, and 31 team action steps ([Attachment 4](#)).

A question and answer session followed the presentation.

Chairperson Chronister introduced Meghen Barnds, Kansas Attorney General's Office, who was substituting for Lee Urban.

## **Leadership Activities at the Kansas Department of Education**

Jim Lentz, Superintendent, Augusta USD 402, spoke to Commission members on leadership in education. Mr. Lentz stated the research is clear that better leadership equals better student outcomes.

Mr. Lentz stated key leadership competencies can be learned with professional development and preparation programs which must focus on student learning.

Mr. Lentz told Commission members the state has a role in leadership development and to abdicate that role would be irresponsible. He believes the State of Kansas needs to step forward and work to create one of the best educational leadership development programs through colleges and universities, service centers, KASB, or a mixture of those groups. It is imperative that we truly want to train people how to be instructional leaders.

Mr. Lentz asked the question "How do we improve student achievement?" Any leadership model must address these issues if schools are going to make a difference:

- Build and maintain positive productive relationships;
- Recruit, select, and develop quality people;
- Create and communicate vision, mission, values, and beliefs;
- Develop measurable goals and monitor progress;
- Make learning the constant; and
- Celebrate success.

Mr. Lentz stated State officials must be able to see the future in the present tense. Learning is not just about kids. Adults need to learn, too ([Attachment 5](#)).

A question and answer session followed the presentation.

## **Afternoon Session**

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Chronister.

Chairperson Chronister directed members' attention to three handouts which had been distributed to them. A news release from Kansas State Department of Education entitled "*Five Kansas Schools Recognized as 2008 NCLB-Blue Ribbon Schools*"; a newspaper article from the *Topeka Capital-Journal* entitled "*More Schools Make Grade*," and an article from the *Christian Science Monitor* entitled "*Who wants to be a teacher? A whole lot of people, a new survey finds.*" ([Attachments 6, 7, and 8](#)).

## **Presentation of the Revised Report on K-12 Education: *An Overview of School Districts' Use of Additional State Funding***

Laurel Murdie, Senior Auditor, Legislative Division of Post Audit (LPA), addressed members' concerns regarding how school districts have used the new funding they have received as a result of the Legislature's changes to the school finance formula.

It was concluded that since the Legislature began making changes to the school finance formula in 2005, school districts have received, cumulatively, \$2.3 billion in new funding over the last three years. Because student performance is the result of years of accumulated instructions, LPA determined it is too early to tell how the new funding has affected students' performance. Its review of recent expenditures showed that most of school districts' increased spending was in the area thought to have the most direct impact on performance—student instruction—although there also were notable increases in spending for administration, maintenance, and transportation (on file—Legislative Post Audit).

## **Report of the Confidence in Kansas Public Education Task Force**

Tom Krebs, Governmental Relations Specialist, Kansas Association of School Boards, spoke to Commission members of the Confidence in Kansas Public Education Task Force which was created in 1981. He stated the task force's purpose is to promote cooperation among state education agencies, bring recognition to volunteers serving public education in Kansas, and to heighten awareness of the important role of public education in our society.

Mr. Krebs spoke of the current task force projects which include:

- Friends of Education Awards Program
  - Honors people and organizations who have made outstanding contributions to public education.
- Challenge Awards Program
  - Recognizes Kansas schools that are making a notable difference in student achievement despite facing significant challenges in their school population.
- Governor's Scholars Program
  - Recognizes the top one percent of graduating high school seniors in Kansas.

Mr. Krebs stated Kansas public schools have made tremendous progress and continue to show improvement in spite of increasing standards, higher levels of poverty, language barriers, and expansion of school responsibilities ([Attachments 9 and 10](#)).

A question and answer session followed the presentation.

## **United School Administrators Leadership Initiatives**

Cheryl Semmel, Executive Director, United School Administrators, addressed Commission members and stated the mission of United School Administrators of Kansas (USA/Kansas), through collaboration of member associations, is to serve, support, and develop educational leaders, and to establish USA/Kansas as a significant force to improve education.

She stated the current single greatest challenge is recruitment and retention of highly qualified professionals—teachers and administrators—for classrooms and schools. Quality instruction and leadership is critical to the success of Kansas students. Ms. Semmel further stated that new challenges confront school leaders, including technology, diversity, stakeholder participation, and relevance of the curriculum. Leaders must build capacity in others and form strong teams; leadership must be a culture of shared responsibility throughout the educational organization.

Ms. Semmel stated that earlier this year, the Kansas State Board of Education commissioned the 2008 Kansas Teaching, Learning and Leadership Survey (KanTELL) as a follow up to the 2006 Teacher Working Conditions Survey. The 2008 survey was a collaborative project between the Kansas State Board of Education, United School Administrators of Kansas, and the Kansas National Education Association (KNEA). These organizations worked together to modify the survey and focus attention on leadership, not as an individual position, but as a characteristic. The intent was, in part, to solicit feedback from teachers about empowerment and to evaluate the impact that mentoring and professional development funds had on teacher recruitment and retention.

The results of that survey were based on the individual perceptions of the nearly 15,000 teachers and 475 principals who participated in the survey. Some of the information that relates specifically to leadership included:

- Perceptions appear to be more positive than in 2006. More specifically, there is a strong belief that school leadership is effective and makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns;
- School leadership was the most highly ranked factor in determining teacher retention by respondents;
- Eighty-nine percent of the teachers surveyed indicated a desire to remain in their current school;
- Seventy-eight percent of the teachers surveyed agreed their school was a good place to work and learn; and
- Eighty-six percent of the beginning teachers (0-3 years) surveyed attributed at least some of their success to the additional support they received.

Ms. Semmel advised that in July 2007, the Kansas State Board of Education endorsed the Kansas Educational Leadership Commission (KELC), a partnership between government, public education, and private industry. The purpose of the KELC was the improvement of student performance. The final report included an agreed-upon definition of educational leadership and 12 recommendations to support leadership systemically. Those 12 recommendations focused on five areas: teacher leadership, (leadership) preparation programs, leader evaluation, professional development, administrator induction, and conditions of work.

Ms. Semmel stated the professional associations under the USA/Kansas umbrella offer varying opportunities for administrators to engage in professional development. The superintendent and principal organizations currently have informal mentoring programs and are exploring opportunities to make those programs more structured and formal. Mentoring and coaching activities, both formal and informal, are valuable for administrators at all levels.

Ms. Semmel stated that as the Commission considers the importance of leadership development in education and prepares its recommendations to the Legislature, USA/Kansas encourages that the 2010 Commission recommend expanding mentoring programs to include school and district level administrators, and that these programs be delivered in partnership with USA/Kansas and its member associations (Attachments 11, 12, and 13).

A question and answer session followed the presentation.

## **School Tax Credits - How They are Used Across the United States**

Sharon Wenger, Kansas Legislative Research Department, spoke to Commission members on tax credits for educational choice. Ms. Wenger told Commission members one of the topics suggested for review during the 2008 Interim was education vouchers or tax credits designed to encourage school choice. Currently, legislatures seem to be designing tax credit programs that encourage individuals and companies to donate to privately-run voucher programs. According to recent research information, there are six states offering tax credits for donations to private organizations that give vouchers to students for private school tuition (Attachment 14).

Ms. Wenger provided Commission members with handout material regarding strong leader legislation across the United States (Attachment 15).

A question and answer session followed the presentation

The meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for September 12, 2008.

### **Friday, September 12 Morning Session**

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Chronister.

## **TOPIC: RESTRUCTURING PUBLIC EDUCATION**

### **Brief Overview of Legislative Post Audit performance audit: *K-12 Education: Alternative Models for Organizing Middle Schools and High Schools***

Heidi Zimmerman, Auditor, Legislative Post Audit (LPA), addressed Commission members who had expressed concern that because the traditional high school model has not changed much over the last century, modern high schools may not be using a model that is effective for today's students.

In response to the question of "What are the advantages and disadvantages of various alternative models for middle schools and high schools used in Kansas school districts or in other states?", the following was determined.

The Legislative Post Audit found 41 middle and high schools nationwide using alternative models experts had identified as being successful. From this research, LPA was able to identify five major approaches to middle and high school reform:

- Alternative scheduling
  - 14 schools were identified as having adopted alternative schedules to increase the time students spend in school, or to use that time more effectively;
- Theme-based programs

- 28 schools were identified that have implemented theme-based programs to keep students engaged in learning, and to connect their education to their after high school plans;
- Small learning communities
  - 17 schools were identified as having created small learning communities to foster the relationship between teachers and students, and among students;
- Alternative instructional formats
  - 10 schools were identified that have developed alternative instructional formats in order to accommodate the different pace and ways in which students learn; and
- Comprehensive school reform
  - Many models of comprehensive school reform have been developed that change all aspects of a school.

It was the conclusion of the Legislative Post Audit report that concerns regarding the performance of high school students—and the fact that the basic structure of public high schools has not changed much over the last century—have prompted the development of a number of models for high school reform. Some models address individual aspects of a school while other models are more comprehensive and try to address all aspects of a school. While supporters of each reform model can point to individual examples of schools that have been successful, only a handful of the models have been rigorously evaluated and shown to be effective in improving student performance. These are the models policymakers should look at when considering school reform (on file—Legislative Post Audit).

A question and answer session followed the presentation.

### **Kansas Examples of Alternative or Innovative High Schools**

Bill Bagshaw, General Director of School Leadership, and Dale Noll, Principal, Hope Street Academy, spoke to Commission members on Hope Street Academy which is an alternative education format for high school students who have not succeeded in more traditional high school settings. The Academy has an average enrollment of 185-210 students in grades 9-12, ages 14-19.

Both stated that Internet technology has become a two-way interactivity of communications. This has become very important since the inception of Hope Street Academy and this is what has to happen for quality education. There must be an active engagement where kids have ownership, where they are active participants, and where they are involved in the design of lessons, tests, and assignments. It must be relevant and invigorating to them.

Some of the objectives include:

- Reflect on what we do;
- Consider how we might use other resources;
- Challenge our own thinking;
- Develop core values or belief statements;
- Consider prior knowledge and experience of students; and
- Develop student ownership of learning.



Technology is extremely significant because of what students use outside of school. It is important to shift the responsibility of learning decisions from the teacher to the student. Students should be allowed to access a world of information through technology. By utilizing authentic audiences, students become the source of instruction and the teacher facilitates the student's creativity.

In order for this to be achieved, there must be effective staff development where the curriculum is defined clearly. Teachers should be provided with tools and knowledge to implement engaging and challenging learning opportunities for students. In addition, there must be assessment and feedback ([Attachment 16](#)).

Dr. Kevin Singer, Superintendent, USD 501, spoke to Commission members on the commitment of students and faculty to Hope Street Academy and Highland Park High School.

Dale Cushinberry, Principal, and Nancy Hutzell, teacher, both of Highland Park High School, spoke to Commission members and stated there are 890 students in the school with a minority rate of 72 percent, and 25 percent special needs students. There is 85 percent participation in the free or reduced price lunch.

Both speakers attributed success to a variety of tools and techniques, including:

- Use of the Talent Development high school model and Career Pathways program;
- Have Saturday school, night school, and a variety of other similar programs; and
- Use of the Scantron Performance Assessment program which provides data on students to assist teachers in development of differentiated instruction for individual students ([Attachment 17](#)).

A question and answer session followed the presentations.

Ron Walker, Superintendent of Geary County USD 475, and Dr. Larry Dixon, Innovation in Schools and Community Liaison, Junction City High School, spoke to Commission members and stated that over the next few weeks, their community will face lots of deployment taking place where over 3,500 soldiers will be leaving and others coming back. Therefore, their district is in constant "change" ([Attachment 18](#)).

Mr. Walker stated that in addition to offering alternative programs, their school district has adopted the Multiple-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)–Social Competencies Model which is designed to improve the social skills of students who are having a difficult time demonstrating the expected behaviors required in the district schools.

Dr. Dixon stated the MTSS program has placed a lot of emphasis on academics, however, there must also be a focus on behavior. If a student is showing signs of needing extra support for behavior, there is a focus on involvement of the parents, student advisor, and the student ([Attachment 19](#)).

A question and answer session followed the presentations.

Kent Otto, Superintendent, Phillipsburg High School, spoke to Commission members and stated that although both Phillipsburg elementary and middle schools made the Standard of Excellence in both reading and math every year since the state began giving the designation, the high school did not make the standard in both reading and math until last year.

He stated this improvement was accomplished by:

- Increased professional development;
- Accelerated and improved math and reading programs;
- Increase in after-school and during school at-risk programs;
- Implementation of an incentive program, *i.e.*, a day off school when adequate yearly progress (AYP) is met;
- Increasing the “buy-in” of parents; and
- Stability of teaching and administrative staff who became a “team” with a common goal (Attachment 20).

A question and answer session followed the presentation.

Mike Folks, Superintendent, Clay Center USD #379, spoke to Commission members and introduced the following Wakefield faculty members who also spoke:

Cliff Williams, Assistant Superintendent.  
Dan Wagner, Principal  
Vicki Sherbert, Junior High Language Arts and Reading  
Jaclyn Pfizenmaier, Junior High Mathematics  
Chris Freeman, High School/College Mathematics  
Laura Keim, High School Language Arts

Mr. Chris Freeman gave the following data comparisons:

- This year’s Senior class as 8<sup>th</sup> graders had 77 percent of the class at proficient or above on the state reading test and as juniors, they had 90 percent at proficient or above;
- This year’s Senior class as 7<sup>th</sup> graders had 64 percent of the class at proficient or above on the state math test and as juniors, they had 95 percent at proficient or above;
- This year’s Freshman class as 6<sup>th</sup> graders had 79 percent of the class at proficient or above on the state reading test and as 8<sup>th</sup> graders, they had 84 percent at proficient or above;
- This year’s Freshman class as 6<sup>th</sup> graders had 75 percent of the class at proficient or above on the state math test and as 8<sup>th</sup> graders, they had 97 percent at proficient or above.

Vicki Sherbert stated the strategies and interventions at the junior high level included:

- Students were enrolled in two math classes;
- Students were enrolled in two language arts/reading classes;
- Seminar time was devoted to reading and math;
- Incentives and rewards were given to students; and
- Formative testing, test builders, Blended Assessment with Instruction Program (BAIP), and use of technology was used in the classroom.

Laura Keim stated the strategies and interventions at the high school level included:

- Students taking the state math test are enrolled in a state preparatory course in addition to their normal math course;
- Board policy has increased graduation requirements to three math credits;
- Students who are struggling are placed in a structured language arts course the year of their high school reading testing;
- Language Arts electives;
- College course offerings in math and language arts;
- Students have the opportunity to take advantage of Virtual Prescriptive Learning (VPL) technology; and
- Formative testing, test builders, BAIP, and use of technology in the classroom.

Cliff Williams, Assistant Superintendent, told Commission members that once the logistics, technology, and instructional strategies are in place, the biggest component still remains - relationships with the students. He also stated that when a teacher builds relationships with the students, this motivates the students and makes the state test their goal versus an obstacle. The result is the students win and show achievements beyond expectations.

Jaclyn Pfizenmaier told Commission members that they are a K-12 building with solid elementary instruction and continuing performance on state assessments at the elementary level. By having a positive mental attitude toward meeting standards, the result is celebratory rather than punitive on the part of principal, teachers, and staff who have a willingness to work hard and give best efforts on the part of the student.

Dan Wagner stated there is strong support from district level administration and they have utilized at-risk funds toward hiring of additional staff needed to support student growth. This additional staff has included instructional aids, two reading support teachers, one elementary math support teacher, and additional teachers in math and reading in grades 7-12 (Attachment 21).

A question and answer session followed the presentations.

### **Update from the Kansas Advisory Commission for Career and Technical Education**

Robin Harris, Assistant Director, Academic and Technical Education, Kansas State Department of Education, spoke to Commission members and stated education is economic development and promotes economic growth. According to statistics, for every 100 ninth graders, 68 will graduate. And for those 68 graduates, 18 will go on to college. Statistics also show that students starting college through their sophomore year, 31 percent of those sophomore students will leave with "0" credits. Ms. Harris stated that U.S. Department of Labor has stated the average worker has approximately ten jobs by the time he/she is 40 years old. Because of changes in the economy and working society, every high school student should prepare for college and careers (Attachments 22, 23, 24, and 25).

A question and answer session followed the presentation.

The next meeting is scheduled for October 9 and 10, 2008. The meeting was adjourned at 12:35 p.m.

Prepared by Janet Henning  
Edited by Sharon Wenger

Approved by Commission on:

October 9, 2008  
(Date)