

MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE, Room 123-S, Statehouse at 9:00 a.m. on January 11, 2000

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Senator Barbara Lawrence at 9:00 a.m. on January 11, 2000 in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Senators Hensley, Kerr and Lee - Excused

Committee staff present: Avis Swartzman - Revisor of Statutes
Ben Barrett - Legislative Research Department
Carolyn Rampey - Legislative Research Department
Jackie Breymeyer - Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Senator Emert
Mark Tallman, KASB
Brilla Scott, USA

Others attending: See attached list

SB 368 **requiring adoption of dress code policies by boards of education**

Chairperson Lawrence called the meeting to order and stated that the committee would entertain bill introductions, if any, the next two days and ongoing until the deadline. She called on Senator Emert, bill sponsor, to speak on his bill.

Senator Emert's testimony ([Attachment 1](#)) and a brochure were distributed. He read the first paragraph of the testimony and stated that this was the essence of the bill. He mentioned several positive benefits to be derived from the bill, such as achievement, better attitude and a better working atmosphere for the students. He then quoted from a book authored by William J. Bennett who worked in the cabinets of Presidents Regan and Bush which stated that the trend is growing across the nation for uniforms.

Senator Emert stated that since the bill was introduced, a number of surveys have taken place. The Kansas trend reflects the national view of support for the concept of uniform dress codes. He cited several Kansas schools that have enacted uniform dress codes and referred to the attached newspaper articles attached to the testimony. He also mentioned the study done by a group of graduate nurses and the data driven results it produced.

After several further comments, Senator Emert ended his testimony by stating that this bill sends the signal of what the kids are there for and that is school.

The Chairperson thanked Senator Emert and stated that she has been a supporter of dress codes because of the way the kids are dressing now. She thinks teachers should be included because of the dress of some who claim to be career professionals, but who do not dress appropriately. If schools adopt uniform dress codes, she thinks teachers would want to identify with this also. She asked the Senator if he had considered rather than a mandate, to make it a Resolution.

The Senator responded that he had the Revisor draft an amendment that will still be a mandate for school districts to provide a fair hearing to the issue. The ideal way to do this would be at the local level. He thinks it will be supported at every level.

Several Senators gave their input, citing support for the concept.

Mark Tallman, Kansas Association of School Boards appeared next on the bill. He spoke of the uniform that he had worn many years ago, describing it in detail. He also mentioned a dress code situation where a teacher in Dodge City filed a grievance and won. The professional negotiation act would have to be taken into consideration. He stated that although KASB has not adopted a specific policy on school uniforms, it does have problems with the unfunded mandate that would be created by passage of the bill. It would impact districts with a higher proportion of low income students. ([Attachment 3](#))

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Brilla Scott, United School Administrators of Kansas, appeared on the bill, stating that USA is the umbrella association for several organizations across the state and represents approximately 1400 school administrators. (Attachment 4) The membership feels that this policy should be made at the local level and not state mandated.

The Chairperson thanked the committee and adjourned the meeting.