

## MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Senator Dwayne Umbarger at 1:35 p.m. on February 8, 2001 in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Committee staff present: Ben Barrett, Legislative Research  
Avis Swartzman, Revisor of Statutes  
Judy Steinlicht, Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Josie Torrez, Kansas Council on Developmental Disabilities  
Duane Goossen, Director of Budget, Governor's Office

Others attending: See Attached List

### **Continued School Finance Hearings**

Josie Torrez, Kansas Council on Developmental Disability gave testimony in (Attachment 1). She stated that they feel the funding for special education services needs to be separated out to reassure parents that their needs will continue to be supported. Their mission is to see that individuals with developmental disabilities have choices in life about where they wish to live, work, and in what leisure activities they wish to participate.

During discussion, Ms. Torrez was asked about a 4 tier system. She stated that they had not looked into a four-tier system, but feel that the whole school finance formula needs more study especially when it comes to special education. In Ms. Torrez's testimony, she suggested the Legislature look into programs in Massachusetts and North Dakota. Ms. Torrez has a report from these states and was asked go through the report and give the committee a summary. Chairman Umbarger invited her to come back to the committee with a report.

A question was asked if anyone has ever looked into paying the actual cost of special education instead of paying the average cost. It could be about the same amount of money. The answer was that the state would need a uniform system of reporting special education costs which the state does not have now. If the State would pay 85% of actual costs incurred by every school district, there would be no incentive to hold down costs.

### **Briefing on SB202**

Chairman Umbarger introduced Duane Goossen, Director of the Budget, Governor Grave's office, to give the Committee a briefing on **SB202**, the Governor's education plan. (Attachment 2) In the State of the State Address, the Governor outlined his education plan contained in the budget and suggested that a lot more discussion needed to occur surrounding education and what could be done within existing resources. The content of **SB202** is being driven by the amount of resources available. On page three of the attachment, Mr. Goossen provided an eight year history of expenditures from the State General Fund leading up to the Governor's recommendation for the Fiscal year 2002. Summarized, it breaks spending out by cabinet agencies, Department of Education and Regents and all others. The Governor's plan spent all available resources on the education plan. Page one of the attachment shows the K-12 Education Package that the Governor presented and is included in **SB202**.

Mr. Goossen suggested that special education funding needs more discussion. Currently there are about 77,000 special education students in Kansas. Mr. Goossen gave three reasons why serious consideration

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should be given to changing the special education reimbursement system. The most important one is fairness, to send aid where special education students are located. The second, to give more flexibility for school districts. Currently they have to calculate very carefully how their special education teachers serve students and they need to make sure their special education teachers are only serving special education students. This plan would reimburse on the basis of number of students and would give schools more flexibility on how to set up their system to serve special education children. Thirdly, a reimbursement formula like this would put in place a more legitimate system for actually moving toward 100 percent funding. Under the present system, we reimburse for the number of teachers that the school district hires.

Mr. Goossen stated that he wants everyone to understand that the context of this bill is a tight budget with limited resources. With that amount, they tried to propose a package that would hit the priority items. Mr Goossen answered questions for the Committee.

The minutes for January 31, February 1 and February 2, 2001 were approved. Motion was made by Senator Teichman. Second by Senator Vratil. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned. The next meeting is scheduled for February 12, 2001 at 1:30 p.m. in Room 123-S.