

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Melvin Neufeld at 9:00 a.m. on February 25, 2004 in Room 514-S of the Capitol.

All members were present.

Committee staff present:

J. G. Scott, Legislative Research
Amy VanHouse, Legislative Research
Michele Alishahi, Legislative Research
Audrey Dunkel, Legislative Research
Jim Wilson, Revisor of Statutes
Mike Corrigan, Revisor of Statutes
Nikki Feuerborn, Administrative Analyst
Shirley Jepson, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Joyce Cussimano, Children's Cabinet
Angela Ware, COSMOS Corporation, Bethesda, MD, Smart Start Kansas Evaluator

Others attending:

See Attached List.

- Attachment 1 State Evaluation Progress Report on Smart Start, presented by Angela Ware, COSMOS Corporation

Chairman Neufeld recognized Joyce Cussimano, Children's Cabinet, who explained that the Smart Start Kansas Initiative is a comprehensive early childhood initiative that addresses multi-domain and multi-level needs as identified by local communities. Ms. Cussimano introduced Angela Ware, COSMOS Corporation, Smart Start Kansas Evaluator, Bethesda, Maryland, who presented a State Evaluation Progress Report on the Smart Start Kansas Initiative (Attachment 1). Ms. Ware indicated that an evaluation of the program to identify its strengths and areas that may be problematic, will be completed by the end of the summer.

The Committee voiced concern that the Smart Start Initiative is a duplication of services already available to communities through Head Start and other early childhood programs. Ms. Cussimano noted that the Smart Start program works in partnership with other programs and felt that the Smart Start Initiative fills a gap in community services for early childhood participants. In response to a question from the Committee, Ms. Cussimano stated that forty hours of instruction are required to obtain a Child Development Associate (CDA) degree and the participants are usually required to work a full-time job.

Responding to another question, Ms. Ware indicated that the Smart Start Initiative is collaborating with other entities, including communities, public school, public libraries, Head Start and other childhood programs. The Committee noted that they felt there should be research toward merging the administration of the early childhood programs into one coordinating council to better serve the children. The Committee voiced concern that the early childhood programs are not addressing the needs of the total population of the State, particularly in the rural areas of the State.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 a.m. The next meeting will be on the call of the Chair or at 9:00 a.m. on March 3, 2004 .