

MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jean Schodorf at 1:35 p.m. on January 12, 2006, in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

Committee members absent: Senator Janis Lee- excused
Senator Ruth Teichman- excused

Committee staff present: Carolyn Rampey, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Kathie Sparks, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Theresa Kiernan, Revisor of Statutes
Shirley Higgins, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Dale Dennis, Deputy Commissioner, State Department of
Education
Barbara Hinton, Legislative Post Auditor

On behalf of the State Board of Education, Dale Dennis, Deputy Commissioner, State Department of Education, requested the introduction of a bill concerning governmental ethics and a bill concerning campaign finance. He explained that both bills would treat Board members in the same manner as legislators instead of treating them as state employees.

Senator Steineger moved to introduce the bills as requested, seconded by Senator Vratil. The motion carried.

Senator Vratil moved to introduce a bill which would clarify the language in the statutes which apply to local option budgets, seconded by Senator Apple. The motion carried.

Senator Schodorf called upon Barbara Hinton, Legislative Post Auditor, to continue the review of the Legislative Post Audit K-12 cost study analysis which was carried over from the January 11 meeting.

Before continuing with her review, Ms Hinton addressed a question which had been raised at the January 11 meeting regarding weighting for urban poverty. She explained that the urban poverty weight is not on top of the regular at-risk weight. She stated, "Regular at-risk is .484. Urban poverty is .726. So that's not cumulative. I realize it's confusing in our report. If you look back on page 196 of the complete post audit report, you can look at District 202 – Turner, Kansas City. What you see is there is money there for both at-risk and urban. What my staff had done is, everybody got the .484 under at-risk, and then what you see over in the urban poverty is an additional .242, so together, .484 and .242 make the .726. I realize that's confusing. We didn't intend to confuse people, but it was just the way it got laid out. But they are not both on top of each other. Four urban districts get .726 all together. "

Senator Schodorf asked Ms. Hinton to review the study's findings with regard to urban poverty, noting that there is poverty elsewhere, not just in the urban setting. Ms. Hinton replied, "The at-risk in general, when you have 300 school districts and five years worth of data and it's looking at the relationships in all this data, and it basically said that statistics looked at for any given level performance for kids without special needs (no low income kids), what would it take to educate these at-risk kids to come up to the same level, whatever that given level is, whether it's 20 percent, 40 percent, or whatever. When we ran those statistics, what we found for the majority of districts was it showed that it was between 65 and 75 percent more than the base. For a handful of districts, it showed that it was about 90 percent to 120 percent. And those were the districts that were primarily the poor inner-city urban districts. So what the statistics were saying was, yes, for almost all districts, they are in the 65 to 75 percent higher. We backed out federal dollars from that so that's why it dropped down from that down to .484. That's why it's low. So then for the four urban, inner-city high poverty districts (Kansas City, Kansas City-Turner, Topeka, and Wichita), those were 1.05 something average, and then we backed out the federal dollars out of those so it came to the .726 for them. But a lot of research says that rural poverty and the you issues that you face in trying to educate students and the costs are very different from high poverty inner-city areas in terms of what it takes to get people to that level. And what we did to see if that was true is, in our statistics, we put in a variable that basically looked at the number of free

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lunch children per square mile. Because if there had been no relationship, if it had been no more expensive for those children than for other children, there would have been no statistical significance. It showed statistically significant every time we ran it. We ran it lots of different ways for lots of different reasons. Every time we ran it, when you had that number of students who were free lunch students times the square mile, it always showed that for those districts it was statistically significant, that it was a higher cost in those districts.”

With regard to questions which had been raised concerning differences between urban poverty and rural poverty, Ms. Hinton called the Committee’s attention to a chart which her staff compiled entitled, “Comparisons of Student Proficiency in Urban and Rural Districts with High Levels of Free-Lunch Students.” (Attachment 1) She noted that, across the board, reading and math proficiency scores for urban, inner-city districts were lower than the scores for rural, non-suburban districts.

Ms. Hinton responded to questions from the Committee as she discussed the data on the following pages of the Executive Summary of the Post Audit Cost Study Analysis:

- Pages 11 and 12 – Additional costs for serving bilingual students (bilingual weight) and additional costs for serving special education students (A table on page 50 of the complete cost study analysis summarizes how Kansas and four other states divided responsibility for the costs of non-federally funded special education expenditures.);
- Page 13 – Additional costs for serving vocational education students (The Post Audit estimate was adjusted downward to remove federal funding and better reflect the costs the state might fund.);
- Page 14 – Additional costs for transporting students 2.5 or more miles (Students who are transported more than 2.5 miles from school are twice as expensive as students who are transported less than 2.5 miles.) and regional variations in teacher salaries (relationship between teacher salaries and differences in teacher characteristics, cost of living, working conditions, community amenities, and district efficiency);
- Page 15 – Results of cost studies compared with state and local funding levels (percent of foundation-level costs paid by the state and other increases that would result from increasing the foundation-level funding);
- Page 16 – Tables regarding the effect of the cost study results on state funding and local option budgets;
- Page 17 – A table comparing the current KPERs contributions the state makes on behalf of school districts with the cost study results using the input-based approach and the outcomes-based approach; and
- Page 18 – Other possible issues for the Legislature’s consideration (hold harmless funding for districts that would receive less than their current level of state funding under either the input-based or outcomes-based approaches, different “what if” scenarios, and other factors that could impact the amount of state funding for school districts and the student performance results achieved).

Senator Vratil asked if the percentage of the state’s school districts which would benefit from hold harmless funding had been calculated in the cost analysis study. Ms. Hinton noted that data on hold harmless funding was currently being compiled by Post Audit staff.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:25 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 17, 2006.

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