

MINUTES

LEGISLATIVE EDUCATIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

October 10-11, 2002
Room 514-S—Statehouse

Members Present

Representative Jo Ann Pottorff, Chair
Senator Christine Downey (October 10)
Senator Bob Lyon (October 10)
Senator Lana Oleen
Senator John Vratil
Representative Barbara Ballard (October 11)
Representative Lisa Benlon
Representative Kathe Decker
Representative Bill Reardon
Representative Ralph Tanner
Representative Jonathan Wells

Members Absent

Senator Lynn Jenkins
Senator Dwayne Umbarger, Vice Chair

Legislative Staff Present

Ben Barrett, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Carolyn Rampey, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Paul West, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Theresa Kiernan, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Jill Wolters, Office of the Revisor of Statutes

State Department of Education Staff Present

Dale Dennis, Deputy Commissioner

Conferees

Christy Levings, President, Kansas National Education-Association

Sandee Crowther, Chair of the Staff Development Work Group, Kansas Learning First Alliance

Bill Bunten, former legislator and member, USD 501 Budget Format Committee

Brad Stauffer, Director of Communications, USD 501 (Topeka)

David R. Brant, Chair, Governor's Vision 21st Century School Finance Task Force

Dr. Leo W. Pauls, Executive Director, The Jones Institute for Educational Excellence, Emporia State University

Dr. Connie Briggs, Director, Reading Recovery Program, The Jones Institute for Educational Excellence, Emporia State University

Linda Hazel, Director, National Board Certification Program, The Jones Institute for Educational Excellence, Emporia State University

Dr. Scott Waters, Director, Future Teacher Academy, The Jones Institute for Educational Excellence, Emporia State University

Thursday, October 10

Teacher Professional Development

Christy Levings and Sandee Crowther presented material relating to teacher professional development. The presenters are members of a panel of Kansans working with the National Conference of State Legislatures and the National Staff Development Council to help develop state policies and practices to ensure quality teacher professional development. An impetus for the activity is the reenacted Elementary-Secondary Education (No Child Left Behind) Act, which places an emphasis on teacher professional development and provides federal funding for professional development activities. (Materials presented by Ms. Levings and Ms. Crowther are Attachment 1, *Kansas Learning First Alliance Staff Development Position Paper*; Attachment 2, *The Kansas Staff Development Rubric for District/School Assessment*; and Attachment 3, *Revisiting What States are Doing to Improve the Quality of Teaching: An Update on Patterns and Trends*).

The discussion began with an exchange between the conferees and Committee members, who were asked to describe attributes of good and bad learning experiences. "Good" learning experiences were characterized by information that was relevant, timely, salient, and of high quality. "Bad" learning experiences were described as those that had not been thought through, were not goal oriented, were isolated from actual experiences or had no context, and were laden with professional jargon. Participants agreed that even good learning experiences are not useful if there is no commitment to apply lessons learned to actual work situations.

Ms. Crowther identified the several principles that guide staff development in Kansas. They include a context characterized by learning communities, leadership, and adequate resources; a process that is data-driven, research-based, collaborative, and characterized by evaluations to demonstrate that staff development is having an impact on student learning; and programmatic content that stresses equity for all students, a commitment to quality teaching, and a willingness to involve families and other stakeholders in the student learning process.

The staff development rubric based on National Staff Development Council standards was developed by the Kansas Learning First Alliance and endorsed by the State Board of Education in April 2002. The rubric is intended for use by school districts to strengthen staff development practices and includes a number of components of successful learning. For example, staff development that improves the learning for all students requires skillful school and district leaders to guide continuous improvement, educators who are prepared to apply research to decision-making, and disaggregated student data to be used to determine adult learning priorities, monitor progress, and help sustain continuous improvement. For each standard in the rubric, four implementation levels are described, ranging from poor to highly successful, so that the rubric can be used by districts both to identify professional standards and to measure the extent to which the standards have been implemented.

As an exercise, Committee members were asked to think of a school with which they are familiar and evaluate the school on the basis of the rubric. In general discussion that followed, Ms. Levings and Ms. Crowther described professional development as one leg of a three-legged stool—the other legs being standards and curriculum, and student assessment. Ms. Levings cited research findings attesting to the importance of teacher qualifications to student achievement and also noted findings that report that the majority of teachers say they feel unprepared to teach to new teaching standards.

In response to a question about how much federal funding will be available for professional development, Dale Dennis, State Department of Education, explained that Kansas originally expected \$3.0 million, but he believes the amount will be less. When asked how much flexibility the state has in determining how federal funds may be spent at the local level, Mr. Dennis responded that federal funding for specific purposes, such as for professional development, usually is accompanied by strict federal guidelines as to how it may be spent. It also was noted that the State Board of Regents is the state-designated agency for certain Elementary-Secondary Education Act funding for teachers. (The staff was asked to get additional information about the involvement of the Board of Regents.)

Committee members noted the irony that federal funding may be reduced for certain aspects of the No Child Left Behind Act, yet the Act mandates higher standards for "qualified" teachers. Members discussed the problem of teacher retention and agreed that professional development is one component of the broader term "working conditions." It was noted by one member that working conditions, including administrative support and mentoring, may be more important than salaries in keeping teachers in the profession.

Ms. Levings concluded her presentation by asking the Committee to consider increasing the level of funding for the Inservice Education Program (currently funded at \$2.6 million) and to amend the Inservice Education Opportunities Act (KSA 72-9601 *et seq.*) to delete the word "inservice" wherever it appears because the term no longer is considered appropriate to describe professional development activities.

School District Budgets

Bill Bunten, a former legislator who resides in USD 501 (Topeka), described his efforts to become familiar with the budget of the school district and presented his recommendations for a budget which would show expenditures on a building basis

(Attachment 4). In the summer of 2000, he asked for a copy of the USD 501 budget after reading in the newspaper that the school board had approved an increase in spending, even though the enrollment of the district was going down. Informed that the budget approved by the board in August was not a detailed budget, he waited until November to get the final budget, which was 178 pages long. Mr. Bunten said that, in spite of his years of experience serving on the House Appropriations Committee, he found the budget difficult to understand and confusing. He concluded the following:

- The budget is built from the top down. That is, the district officials know how much money they have to spend and they devise a budget to spend that amount. In Mr. Bunten's view, it is more appropriate to determine how much it would cost to operate necessary programs and then collect only enough revenue to operate the programs, the implication being that money might be saved by the "bottom up" approach.
- There is no place in the budget that shows where the estimated 2,500 employees are sited.
- There is no summary of the amount of money from various revenue sources on a building-by-building basis.
- Based on conversations with principals and former principals, Mr. Bunten believes building-based administrators have little input into the budgetary process and that decisions are made by off-site administrators.
- Not all funds necessary to operate schools and programs are budgeted on a building basis but instead are lumped together in central administrative accounts, making it impossible to know how much it really costs to operate each school.
- Parts of the budget are confusing. For example, funding for special education is shown both in the general fund and as a transfer to the special education fund.

In August 2001, Mr. Bunten appeared before the board and presented a sample budget that showed expenditures for each school. For his sample, he used the district's staffing numbers and determined the necessary operating costs. He told the Committee that, even after budgeting salary increases for teachers and administrators, there was more money than necessary to maintain the schools. In fact, he determined that taxes could be reduced. Nevertheless, that year the school district budget went up. He concluded that the school district budget was difficult to understand and that school district officials had no interest in changing either the format or the budgetary process.

The following year, Mr. Bunten was appointed to a committee created by the Superintendent of USD 501 which was charged with simplifying the budget document so that it would be readable and understandable by lay people. The committee met a number of times before it was terminated. According to Mr. Bunten, although the committee did not complete its work with a written report, agreement was reached among members for a

budget that would show appropriations and expenditures for each school. Mr. Bunten continued his efforts, following termination of the committee, and developed another sample budget that was presented to the local board in August of 2002. That budget gives information about each school and shows the source of funding for operations, maintenance, and repairs on a building-by-building basis.

Mr. Bunten concluded his remarks by saying that he is convinced that USD 501 officials are resistant to change and are resentful that he, a patron, has suggested the budgetary format and process could be improved.

Implementation of Post Audit Recommendations

Brad Stauffer, representing USD 501 (Topeka), responded to a request from the Committee at an earlier meeting regarding recommendations made by the Legislative Division of Post Audit in a March 2002 audit entitled *School District Budgets: Determining Ways to Structure the Budget Document to Make it Understandable and Allow for Meaningful Comparisons* (Attachment 5).

Mr. Stauffer said school district officials:

- Support the repeal of the current law that requires districts to budget to spend all of their carry-over funds; and
- Support the creation of a task force to study reporting formats.

Mr. Stauffer told the Committee that recent requests from the State Department of Education for more comprehensive reporting, including all state and federal grant funds and gifts, have resulted in additional work for staff that is estimated to cost about \$4,000. He said a brief document intended to be easily understood by the public is in the preparation stage and will cost between \$5,000 and \$6,000 to produce. According to Mr. Stauffer, if the requirement is imposed that budgets be on a building-by-building basis, personnel costs to hire two additional accountants would be \$80,000 annually, in addition to other operating expenditures.

Mr. Dennis reported on the status of the State Department of Education implementation of the post audit recommendations (Attachment 6). The recommendations and status of implementation are as follows:

- The State Department should work to ensure that information on elementary-secondary expenditures in Kansas that is reported to the National Center for Education Statistics is comparable to information reported by other states.
 - **Status of Implementation.** The State Department has made an effort to collect additional information concerning federal funds, private grants, district activity funds, and gifts (excluding scholarships).

- The State Department should develop uniform definitions and guidelines for counting student populations that currently are not being reported in budget documents—such as pre-kindergarten students, adults, and postsecondary area vocational-technical students—and require districts to report these enrollment counts to the State Department in the future.
 - **Status of Implementation.** The State Department has revised definitions and guidelines as it deems appropriate. However, regarding the matter of changing how student enrollment is reported, the State Department continues to report enrollments for federal data collection purposes on the basis of headcount, as required by federal reporting guidelines, and to report enrollment in Kansas on the basis of statutory definitions of pupil. To implement the recommendation of the post auditors would require that enrollments be reported a third way, a requirement the State Department has not implemented.

- The State Department should develop uniform definitions and guidelines for compiling and reporting the number and type of positions funded within each of the major functional categories, such as instruction, student support, district administration, and so forth.
 - **Status of Implementation.** Beginning with the 2002-03 school year, the State Department is requiring that school districts show, for each salary and wages line item in the budget, the number of positions funded.

- The State Department should consult with school district officials to identify areas in the accounting handbook that are incomplete or unclear and provide training to school district officials on any changes.
 - **Status of Implementation.** The State Department revised its accounting handbook in the spring of 2002, using input from school district officials. Copies of the handbook were made available to school district officials and certified public accountants who attended the school district budget workshops in June of 2002.

- The State Department should consider expanding its audit program for school districts to include some testing to ensure that expenditures are being appropriately classified according to the accounting handbook.
 - **Status of Implementation.** The State Department is not opposed to this recommendation, but cannot implement it because money is not available to hire more auditors.

- The State Department should work with the two districts in the sample that had carry-forward balances in excess of what is allowed under federal law to ensure that they comply with the law in the future.
 - **Status of Implementation.** Contact has been made with all school districts reminding them that they have to comply with federal laws regarding fund balances. Regarding the two that were found to be out of compliance, the State Department has reviewed the districts' cash balances and required them to respond and submit plans to the State Department as to corrective action they have taken.

Committee members asked Barb Hinton, the Legislative Post Auditor, her opinion of building-by-building-based budgets. She replied that the post auditors believe a building-based document is not feasible because too many costs can be allocated only at the district level and cannot be apportioned among buildings.

Governor's Vision 21st Century School Finance Task Force

David Brant, Chair, Governor's Vision 21st Century School Finance Task Force, reported on the Task Force's consideration of the study of a "suitable" education conducted by Augenblick & Myers (A&M) ([Attachment 7](#)). The recommendations of the Task Force are the following:

- The incoming Governor and the 2003 Legislature should utilize the A&M study to increase state funding for schools over three years and to implement needed reforms in the school finance formula, as outlined in the Task Force's 2000 report. In particular, policy makers should work with the State Department of Education to review the A&M recommendations concerning the \$4,650 foundation level, the impact of any changes on the state's smallest school districts, and the impact of regional cost factors relating to salaries for teachers and administrators, suggested amounts for pupil weightings, and additional state aid for health insurance coverage.
- In addition, the incoming Governor and the 2003 Legislature should reconsider and implement recommendations from the Task Force's 2000 report pertaining to enhanced teacher compensation, a broadened definition of "at risk", equalization of the capital outlay mill levy so that less wealthy districts are not disadvantaged, and a link between funding and accountability for the purpose of providing incentives for improved performance.

Committee Minutes

Upon a motion by Senator Vratil, seconded by Senator Oleen, the minutes of the August and September meetings were approved.

Friday, October 11

**Activities of the Jones Institute
for Educational Excellence**

Staff from the Jones Institute for Educational Excellence reviewed activities currently underway ([Attachment 8](#)). Dr. Leo Pauls, Executive Director of the Institute, reported that \$250,000 appropriated to Emporia State University for operating expenses related to training additional Reading Recovery Teacher Leaders in FY 2003 has not been spent because school districts did not have funds to meet the local matching requirement.

Dr. Connie Briggs presented information about Reading Recovery, a program for first-graders who are having trouble learning to read and write. Small groups of students are instructed in short "pull-out" sessions during their regular school day. The program has a 17-year history nationwide and includes the following components: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.

Reading Recovery Teacher Leaders typically work with eight to ten Reading Recovery students during the school year and spend a large part of their time working with children in other literacy programs or helping other teachers. Information presented by Dr. Briggs for school year 2001-02 shows that there were ten Reading Recovery Teacher Leaders in Kansas. They, and 167 Reading Recovery teachers, served 1,302 students in 79 districts. Of the children who remained in the program until completion, 77 percent were able to return to regular reading programs in their classes and no longer needed Reading Recovery services. Longitudinal data from studies in five states show that students who have completed a full Reading Recovery program continue to show gains in reading and writing through the fifth grade.

In discussion with Committee members following her presentation, Dr. Briggs noted that the No Child Left Behind Act places a high priority on early intervention programs for children. In response to a question, she said that Emporia State University prepares reading teachers as part of its regular teacher education program. Dr. Pauls said Kansas has a grant application for federal funds under the Reading First program, which has not yet been approved. He also said he hopes Kansas takes advantage of available federal funding for teacher professional development programs.

Linda Hazel discussed the National Board Certification Program. Currently, there are 70 teachers in Kansas who have National Board certification, with another 44 or 45 people who are in the program to become certificated this year. She told the Committee it is difficult to do research on the impact of National Board certification in Kansas because the sample of teachers is too small. She estimated that a group of at least 100 teachers is necessary before a valid study can be done. Nevertheless, she told the Committee she surveyed teachers in 2001—a group of teachers who had attained National Board certification and a group currently in the program—and found that both becoming National Board certified and participating in the program had a positive impact on knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Information about the 70 National Board teachers in Kansas presented by Ms. Hazel indicates that most are involved in mentoring other teachers and are working in some way,

such as administrators, staff at a regional education service center, or part of a standards board or some other group, that enables them to have a positive impact on learning in Kansas. According to Ms. Hazel, National Board certified teachers are among the leaders in their profession and are responsible for a variety of innovative programs or have made other significant contributions. She observed that, at the beginning of the program in Kansas, candidates for certification tended to come from rural parts of the state, but currently the trend leans toward teachers from urban school districts.

Ms. Hazel told the Committee that \$29,000 of the \$90,000 appropriated to Emporia State University for the National Board Certification Program in FY 2002 was not spent. In response to a question, she said a number of states provide incentives or bonuses for teachers who attain National Board certification. Kansas, for example, provides a bonus of \$1,000 for each of the ten years for which a National Board certificate is valid. Other states have bonuses that range from \$500 to \$10,000 a year.

Following Ms. Hazel's presentation, general questions were asked about the budget for the Jones Institute. The Institute is part of the Emporia State University budget and receives funding for operating expenses through appropriations to the University. In addition, in FY 2002, the Legislature made individual grants available to the Institute for specific programs: \$90,000 for the National Board Certification Program and \$65,000 for the Future Teacher Academy. Dr. Pauls said that the FY 2004 budget request submitted by the University, as approved by the State Board of Regents, does not contain the grants. He indicated that there are several alternatives that could be considered regarding the budget for the Institute, such as making it a separate line item within the Emporia State University budget or funding it as a line item in the budget for the State Board of Regents in recognition of its statewide role.

Dr. Scott Waters discussed the Future Teacher Academy, initiated in 1989, which has graduated more than 650 high school juniors and seniors who had an interest in becoming teachers. According to a study of the program by Dr. Robert Glennen, published in February 2000, 92 percent of Academy participants attended college in Kansas and 65 percent majored in teacher education.

Dr. Waters explained that the Academy is a summer program for about 50 high school juniors and seniors that lasts four to six days. It was not held in 2001 because of a lack of money. (Foundation funding, which formerly paid for the Academy, is no longer available.) Funding in FY 2002 was \$65,000 from the Legislature in the form of a grant and also \$10,000 as a recruitment grant from the State Department of Education. The money enabled the Jones Institute to add a site in Western Kansas (Dodge City), in addition to the regular location in Emporia. Expansion plans include establishing a one-day "junior" Academy for eighth graders and increasing the number of state and nationally recognized educators who are part of the Academy staff.

Dr. Pauls concluded the presentation by praising the work of the Renaissance Group, a nationwide consortium of 33 teacher education institutions that graduates one in ten of the new teachers in the country. He said Kansas provides leadership in the group.

Uniform School District Budgets

Upon a motion by Representative Tanner, seconded by Representative Reardon, the Committee adopted a motion that the Chair of the Legislative Educational Planning Committee appoint a task force, which would be advisory to the Committee, comprised of six representatives of school districts (three from districts with enrollments of more than 10,000 students and three from districts with enrollments of fewer than 10,000 students), one person designated by the Post Auditor, and one person representative of the State Department of Education to consider the matter of school district budgets. The task force is to make its recommendations, including any associated implementation costs, to the Committee by May 15, 2003. Following adoption of the motion, it was agreed that the creation of a task force should be subject to approval by the Legislative Coordinating Council (LCC). Accordingly, the Chair of the Committee was directed to write a letter to LCC requesting its approval.

According to Representative Tanner, the purpose of the task force is to examine the value of developing a model budgeting system for school districts on a statewide (not building-by building) basis with an eye toward a simple and straightforward presentation so that budgets can be understood by the public. The task force also should consider the costs to impose such a model budgeting system statewide.

The meeting was adjourned.

Prepared by Carolyn Rampey

Approved by Committee on:

November 8, 20002