

MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jean Schodorf at 1:35 p.m. on January 25, 2005, in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

Committee members absent: Senator Ralph Ostmeyer- 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: Jim Hays, Research Specialist, Kansas Association of School Boards

Senator Schodorf called upon Jim Hays, Kansas Association of School Boards (KASB) for a report on school district sharing of administrators and services. Mr. Hays distributed copies of his report which included charts with data provided by the State Department of Education and by KASB. (Attachment 1) After discussing statistics on page one of the report regarding USD certified employees for school years 2000-01 through 2003-04, he pointed out that the figures show where cuts were necessary in order to make increases in other areas. He noted that changes in student needs have increased the expectations of the system. He followed with a discussion of a KASB survey in which superintendents were asked to identify their "other duties." He pointed out that the superintendents of the smaller school districts reported more "other duties." He went on to discuss the most common USD cooperative arrangements (interlocal, special education, regional service center, and ITV network), calling attention to a list USDs by descending order of enrollment which showed the type of cooperative used by each district. He noted that most school districts are involved in some kind of cooperative arrangement. He followed with a discussion of other related issues about cooperation which include combined activities, Greenbush (Southeast Kansas Educational Service Center), and KASB services. Mr. Hays left a copy of the KASB school district organization handbook entitled "Cooperative Agreements, Consolidations, Closing School Buildings, and Transfer of Territory" with Senator Schodorf on permanent loan to be available to committee members upon request. In addition, he left a copy of the Greenbush 2004 Annual Report.

Senator Schodorf called upon Carolyn Rampey, Kansas Legislative Research Department, for an overview of voluntary incentives for school districts to consolidate. Ms. Rampey explained that the statute addresses the situation where two school districts combine and, because they are declining in enrollment, their combined budget is less than what the individual budget was for the prior year. She explained that, in order to encourage consolidation, the Legislature provided an incentive. When two districts combine, they can get for their budget, in the year that they combine, the budget that the individual districts had the year before, plus, for the next two years they get to choose the higher of the prior year's budget or what they would get under the formula. In 2002, the Legislature put a deadline on the incentive. If the districts consolidated by July 1, 2004, they would get three successive years (the prior year budget for the two individual districts for the year they consolidated added together plus the next three years. Last year, the Legislature knew that there were districts which were in the process of consolidation. Because it takes months to consolidate, those districts would miss the July 1, 2004, deadline. Therefore, the Legislature extended the deadline to July 1, 2005. Under the 2005 deadline, in the year of consolidation, the districts can get two budgets combined for the prior year plus the for next two successive years the higher of either what the district got the year before or what it would get under the formula.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 26, 2005.