

MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Steve Abrams at 1:30 pm on Monday, March 07, 2016, 144-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:
Senator Dan Kerschen – Excused

Committee staff present:
Jason Long, Office of Revisor of Statutes
Lauren Douglass, Legislative Research Department
Erna Fabert, Kansas Legislative Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the Committee:
Chriz Dally, LeadK Spokesperson
Kester Horn-Marsh
Cynthia Taylor
Tim Anderson, Executive Director, United Way of Leavenworth County
Susie Ternes, Executive Director, KSHA
Mark Tallman, KS Assoc of School Boards (KASB)

Others in attendance:
[See Attached List](#)

Hearing on: SB444 — Creating a language assessment program for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Chairperson Abrams opened the hearing on **SB444** and set forth rules for the conferees. Revisor Long gave a brief summary of the bill. ([Attachment 1](#)) There were no questions on the content of the bill.

Chriz Dally, one of the sponsors of the bill, presented a power point in support identifying the three components of the bill as language assessment, establishment of an Advisory Committee that represents the interests of the deaf and hearing impaired community, and the publication of findings from the assessments for accountability purposes. ([Attachment 2](#)) ([Attachment 3](#))

Kester Horn-Marsh presented testimony in support, describing his experience as being a former leader of a Cub Scout pack from the Kansas School for the Deaf and citing statistics for students who had access to both ASL and English versus those who did not. ([Attachment 4](#))

Cynthia Taylor spoke in support, relating that developing strong American Sign Language skills has helped her deaf daughter to become an honor student.
([Attachment 5](#))

Tim Anderson spoke in support, emphasizing that **SB444** is an opportunity to ensure that deaf and hard

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of hearing children are given every opportunity to develop the skills necessary to maximize their own education. ([Attachment 6](#))

Written proponent testimony was also provided electronically by the following individuals:

Janell Mosher ([Attachment 7](#))
Tymber Marsh ([Attachment 8](#))
Jack Cooper ([Attachment 9](#))
Jennifer Soemer ([Attachment 10](#))
Robin Olson ([Attachment 11](#))
Tara Schupner Congdon ([Attachment 12](#))
Lorrie Shank ([Attachment 13](#))
Samuel Sanders ([Attachment 14](#))
Earleene Hicks ([Attachment 15](#))
Suzanne Dennis ([Attachment 16](#))
Marie Qualls ([Attachment 17](#))
Kimberly Symansky ([Attachment 18](#))
Sharon Mc Glynn ([Attachment 19](#))
James Clark ([Attachment 20](#))
Matthew Gwynn ([Attachment 21](#))
Lorallee Plummer ([Attachment 22](#))
Kim Enos ([Attachment 23](#))
Rosie Cooper, Exec. Director, KACIL ([Attachment 24](#))
Robert A. Maile, Ph.D., Deaf Educator ([Attachment 25](#))

Susie Ternes spoke in opposition, stating that her organization of speech-language pathologists had not been contacted concerning this bill and recommended more dialogue among various professional groups who work with this population. ([Attachment 26](#))

Written opponent testimony was also provided electronically by the following individuals:

Ronald L. Sarnacki, Ph.D., Director of Special Education, Cowley County ([Attachment 27](#))
Patrice Stephenson ([Attachment 28](#))
Michael J. Fowler, J.D. ([Attachment 29](#))
Jaynee A. Handelsman, Ph.D., CCC-A ([Attachment 30](#))

Oral neutral testimony was provided by Mark Tallman, who reported that KASB has been working with the bill sponsors on proposed amendments that address issues of concern to his organization, mainly in the areas of assessing language only through American Sign Language (ASL) and the possibility of the advisory committee recommending changes to the state's special education law when there are no committee members familiar with those requirements. ([Attachment 31](#))

Written neutral testimony was also electronically provided by the following:

Michael Donnelly, Director of Rehab Services, KS Dept of Children and Families ([Attachment 32](#))

Unless specifically noted, the individual remarks recorded herein have not been transcribed verbatim. Individual remarks as reported herein have not been submitted to the individuals appearing before the committee for editing or corrections.

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Sarah Walters, Program Coordinator, KS Dept of Health and Environment ([Attachment 33](#))

Questions followed concerning advisory committee members, different types of sign languages utilized, possible amendments that could be added to gain consensus, and the revised fiscal note.

There being no further conferees or questions, the chairperson closed the hearing on **SB444** .

The meeting was adjourned at 2:25 pm.

The next meeting of the Senate Education Committee will be on Tuesday, March 8, 2016 at 1:30 pm in Room 144-S of the Capitol.