

## MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Melvin Neufeld at 9:00 a.m. on April 4, 2003, in Room 514-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Representative Andrew Howell - excused  
Representative Melvin Minor - excused

Committee staff present: Becky Krahl, Legislative Research Department  
Amy Deckard, Legislative Research Department  
Carolyn Rampey, Legislative Research Department  
Mike Corrigan, Revisor of Statutes  
Nikki Feuerborn, Administrative Analyst  
Shirley Jepson, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Bill Daugherty, Kansas State School for the Blind  
Bob Maile, Superintendent, School for the Deaf  
Mark Tallman, Kansas Association of School Boards  
Dale Dennis, Department of Education  
Diane Gjerstad, Wichita Public Schools

Others attending: See attached

Representative Henry moved to introduce legislation that would place a one year moratorium on closure of any Department of Social Rehabilitation Services satellite offices in the state of Kansas. The motion was seconded by Representative Ballard. Motion carried.

A memo was distributed to the Committee, from Susan Duffy, State Corporation Commission, in response to questions and concerns of the Committee regarding well plugging in Kansas. The memo addressed the procedures for the processing or sale of salvage material at state-funded well-plugging operations and the number of wells plugged by the oil and gas industry versus the number of abandoned wells plugged with state funds (Attachment 1).

The Chair announced that the Committee would return to start working the Omnibus bill at 9:00 a.m. on April 24, 2003; continue working on April 25, 2003 and possibly April 26, 2003. The first item of business on April 24, 2003, will be a report from the Department of Transportation on asphalt and concrete.

**HB 2463--Special education funding for the Kansas State School for the Deaf and the Kansas State School for the Blind.**

Carolyn Rampey, Legislative Research Department, to explained the bill which would amend the formula for special education state aid which is currently distributed to school districts. The change would be to count certificated special education teachers, administrators and paraprofessionals at the Kansas School for the Blind and the Kansas School for the Deaf in the distribution formula (Attachment 2).

The expected cost to fund approximately 83 teachers, administrators and paraprofessionals at the State schools for the blind and deaf, would be approximately \$1,585,050 in special education state aid. If the bill is funded within the current special education money approved for FY 2004, the effect would be to reduce the teaching unit reimbursement statewide by approximately \$175 per teacher. Ms. Rampey stated that the growth in special education teaching units for FY 2004 is estimated at 1.4%, the smallest growth increase since 1988.

The Chair recognized Bill Daugherty, Kansas State School for the Blind, who presented a few comments referring to testimony he gave to the Committee on February 19, 2003 (Attachment 3). Mr. Daugherty stated that the budget is \$219,000 short in the current year for meeting the school's needs and down approximately \$500,000 over the past several years. In order to meet the Governor's budget reductions of \$224,244, the School will need to furlough all non-teaching staff for three days; reduce teacher contracts by two to three days; increase fees for services to school districts; layoff two dormitory staff; layoff two teachers of the visually impaired; and reduce the four-week Summer

CONTINUATION SHEET

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School Program to two weeks. The School is trying to maintain \$165,291 of that cut to fund priorities of maintaining the two teachers for the visually impaired; maintaining two dormitory staff because of security and safety issues in the dormitories; and restore one week of the summer school.

Responding to questions from the Committee, Mr. Daugherty stated that the School has a good relationship with school districts around the state. The School has 31.6 teaching units, including some personnel who give service to other schools.

Bob Maile, Superintendent of the Kansas State School for the Deaf, testified that the School for the Deaf has approximately 25 vacant positions at the present time, resulting in a reduction of services. Approximately \$100,000 of the \$362,000 shortfall, would result in not being able to obtain technology equipment, vehicles, audio training equipment, etc. The remaining money would be student-related and most important to protect for the school. Mr. Maile stated that the School has 51.4 FTE positions.

Mark Tallman, Assistant Executive Director/Advocate for the Kansas Association of School Boards (KASB), stated that KASB has not taken a position on whether the state schools for the blind and deaf should be included for special education funding (Attachment 4). Their concern is that passage of the bill without adding funding to cover the additional cost could result in a reduction of funding for all other school districts.

Representative Shultz suggested that the Legislature might want to take a serious look at a pupil weighting system for special education funding during next year's session.

In response to a question concerning why the School for the Blind and School for the Deaf are not included under the school district system, Dale Dennis, Department of Education, commented that the schools are considered state institutions and the Legislature has treated them as state agencies. Mr. Dennis stated that these schools have access to Title VI-B funds, Medicaid funds and some other special federal grants.

Ms. Rampey stated that the School for the Blind received \$199,000 and the School for the Deaf received \$111,000 in FY 2002 from the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Act funding, the same per capita funding as other school districts receive.

The Committee noted that a number of regular school districts use the services of the School for the Blind and School for the Deaf. At the present time, the School for the Blind and School for the Deaf can only charge 20% of the actual cost of these services to the individual regular school districts. There was some thought that this might be raised to 30%; however, there was concern that this could cause a hardship for the school districts. The Committee indicated they needed to find a fair way to provide additional services for the individuals at the Schools of the Blind and Deaf.

Diane Gjerstad, Wichita Public Schools, noted that passage of **HB 2463** without adding funding, would have a direct effect on the special education budget of Wichita schools. Ms. Gjerstad stated they have approximately 470 certified special education teachers, 500 paraprofessionals and 9,000 students with IEP's in the Wichita system.

The hearing on **HB 2463** was closed.

The Chair thanked all of the Committee members for their hard work during the past weeks in working together to accomplish the tasks set before them.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 a.m. The next meeting was be at 9:00 a.m. on April 24, 2003.

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Melvin Neufeld, Chair