

## **MINUTES**

### **2010 COMMISSION**

August 28-29, 2006

Olathe, Shawnee Mission, and Kansas City, Kansas USDs

#### **Members Present**

Rochelle Chronister, Chairperson  
Representative Kathe Decker  
Senator Jean Kurtis Schodorf  
Representative Sue Storm  
Carolyn Campbell  
David Davies  
Barbara Hinton  
Stephen Iliff  
Dennis Jones

#### **Members Absent**

Dr. Ray Daniels, Vice Chairperson  
Barbara Mackey

#### **Staff Present**

Kathie Sparks, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Carolyn Rampey, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Sharon Wenger, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Michele Alishahi, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Theresa Kiernan, Revisor of Statutes Office  
Art Griggs, Revisor of Statutes Office

#### **Monday, August 28 Olathe and Shawnee Mission USDs**

The 2010 Commission attended a briefing at the Olathe North High School Culinary Arts room by Dr. Patricia All, Superintendent, and her executive staff. The Olathe schools provide an alternative day program for students in grades eleven or twelve who are at risk of dropping out of high school. Eligible students can gain credit towards graduation from the program and may eventually transition back to their home schools. In addition, the Choices program is offered for students ages 13-18 who are on House Arrest, Intensive Supervision Probation, or in Juvenile

Authority custody through the Department of Corrections. Eligible students may attend the program until the end of the semester in which House Arrest or Supervision ends. The Hope alternative day program is for students grades 7-12 who have been long-term suspended or expelled from the Olathe district schools. Eligible students are recommended by the district long-term suspension or expulsion hearing committee to apply for admission to Hope. Students may attend Hope only until the completion of their suspension. In general, students may attend Hope only one time. The district does provide other alternative schools as well as for special education and for other students at risk of dropping out of school.

The Olathe Special Education Executive Director, Gerry Reynaud, explained that the Olathe district provided 2,863 students with disabilities or 12 percent of the student population with services during the 2005-2006 school year. In addition, the district provided services to 834 gifted students or 4 percent of the student population and had 45 private school students in special education services for the same time period. Challenges that the Olathe district is facing with providing special education services include:

- Funding the rising costs of special education;
- Recruitment and retention of highly qualified Special Education (SPED) staff;
- Reduction of paperwork with regard to the Individual Education Plan requirements;
- Disproportionate representation of minorities in special education and under-representation of diverse populations in gifted education; and
- Incongruence between the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) which focuses on individual student progress and No Child Left Behind which focuses on group accountability, both federal requirements.

The Commission visited the classrooms and spoke with staff and students at Olathe North High School, Oregon Trail Junior High School, and Westview Elementary.

During the afternoon, the Commission traveled to Shawnee Mission North High School and Rosehill Elementary and visited with students and staff of the special education classrooms, English Language Learners (ELL) classrooms, and programs targeted for at-risk students. At the end of the day, the Superintendent, Dr. Marjorie Kaplan, explained the district's need for additional funding and the request for continuation of the Non-Proficient At-Risk funding.

## **Tuesday, August 29 Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools**

The 2010 Commission visited Eugene Ware Elementary School and a brief description of the demographics of the school was provided by Principal Janice Turner. After the initial meeting, the Commission members and staff were provided time to visit all of the classrooms and were encouraged to interact with the students and staff. Eugene Ware provides its students with animated literacy, guided reading or Read 180, and Math Investigations as well as requiring all fourth and fifth grades to take classes in music.

The second school visited by the Commission was Central Middle School. Central Middle School has experienced a large increase in the number of ELL students, from 32 percent in 1999 to 53 percent in 2002 and 64 percent in 2004. Adjustments were made in the way the small learning communities were organized in order to meet the needs of the students. More interpreters have

been needed to communicate with parents who do not speak English. More teachers have been earning ELL endorsement.

Central also has a large population of students (95.15 percent) on free and reduced lunch. Factors that impact instruction have included students who enter middle school who are below grade level in reading and math, lack parent involvement, and have poor daily attendance. The First Things First program implemented at Central contains seven critical features designed to improve the quality of instruction, set high standards of expectations, and build relationships between the school and community. In order to accomplish these goals, Central structured the staff and students into small learning communities called "houses." The students remain with the same house for the three years that they are in middle school. The houses are grade level houses, with two house coordinators, and are staffed with approximately nine to ten teachers. Special education students are in regular classes with collaboration to give support. Some students do receive support services in reading through a Resource Room. After the presentation by Principal Kristen Ludwig, the Commission members and staff toured the classrooms and spoke with students and teachers.

The final stop for the Commission was Wyandotte High School. Wyandotte High also has implemented the First Things First Program and the school is divided into the Business Academy; Health Careers/Life Sciences Community; Hospitality Community; Humanities/Liberal Arts Community; Performing Arts Community; and Visual Arts and Technology Community. Each student entering Wyandotte High applies to enter one of the schools and remains in that school for the four years they attend. Students with permission are allowed to change their chosen field of study. The Commission and staff visited each one of the communities or academies in Wyandotte High School.

The Commission tour ended at 4:00 p.m.

Prepared by Kathie Sparks

Approved by Commission on:

September 15, 2006

(Date)