

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Dwayne Umbarger at 1:38 p.m. on January 29, 2002 in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Senator Hensley (excused)

Committee staff present: Ben Barrett, Legislative Research
Carolyn Rampey, Legislative Research
Theresa Kiernan, Revisor of Statutes
Dale Dennis, Deputy Commissioner of Education
Judy Steinlicht, Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Bill Frick, Shawnee Mission School District
Amy Brunner, KASB
Dale Dennis, Deputy Commissioner of Education

Others attending: See Attached List

SB394 – Authority of school boards to close school buildings

Senator Vratil offered a substitute bill to replace **SB394**. The substitute bill would repeal five statutes which provide a specific procedure for the Shawnee Mission School District to close schools. Shawnee Mission is the only school in the state with a student population of 1600 or more required to follow this elaborate procedure that was adopted in 1977. Senator Vratil's proposal is to repeal those statutes so that Shawnee Mission would be covered by the general school closing statutes applicable to all school districts in the state.

Bill Frick, Shawnee Mission School District, spoke as a proponent on **SB394**. Mr. Frick explained to the Committee the additional time and costs involved with the procedures they are now required to follow. (Attachment 1)

The Committee discussed having a formal hearing for the public prior to closing a school. It seemed to be the consensus of the Committee that a formal hearing should be held and in most cases this is done.

Amy Brunner, KASB, offered testimony as a proponent on **SB394**. KASB agrees that the current procedures required in Shawnee Mission inhibit the school board's ability to be efficient in managing the school buildings within its district. Many Legislators have called upon schools to be more efficient and this bill would allow Shawnee Mission to run their school district more efficiently. KASB also asked that the Committee introduce a second bill which would allow all school districts, including those with less than 1,600 enrollment, to close school buildings by a simple majority vote of the board. This bill would repeal the provisions under Kansas Statute 72-8213 requiring a resolution, public hearing, and protest petition. (Attachment 2) The Committee further discussed notifying communities when a school closing is being considered.

Senator Vratil made a Motion to amend SB394 with a Substitute Bill to repeal five statutes which provide a specific procedure for the Shawnee Mission School District to close schools. Seconded by Senator Emler. Motion carried.

Senator Vratil made a motion to pass favorably SB394 as amended. Seconded by Senator Emler. Motion carried.

Senator Vratil moved that the Senate Education Committee introduce a bill on school closings to eliminate the distinction between school districts above or below 1600 enrollment and provide that all school districts in the state can close a school upon finding that it is in the best interest of the district to close the school following a notice and public hearing on the question. They could close

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the school by majority vote of the board of education. Seconded by Senator Lee. Motion carried.

Dale Dennis distributed information to the Committee on income eligibility guidelines for free meals and reduced price meals. These guidelines are established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Dale explained the material to the Committee. (Attachment 3)

Meeting adjourned 2:30 p.m.