

## **MINUTES**

### **2010 COMMISSION**

May 19, 2006  
Room 123-S—Statehouse

#### **Members Present**

Rochelle Chronister, Chairperson  
Dr. Ray Daniels, Vice Chairperson  
Senator Jean Kurtis Schodorf  
Representative Sue Storm  
Carolyn Campbell  
Leo Hafner  
Stephen Iliff  
Barbara Mackey

#### **Members Absent**

Representative Kathe Decker  
David Davies  
Dennis Jones

#### **Staff**

Theresa Kiernan, Revisor of Statutes Office  
Kathie Sparks, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Carolyn Rampey, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Gary Deeter, Committee Secretary

#### **Conferees**

Dale Dennis, Deputy Commissioner, Kansas State Department of Education  
Scott Frank, Audit Manager, Division of Legislative Post Audit  
Michael Stewart, Director of Research and Analytics, Standard and Poor's School  
Evaluation Services  
Jason Kingston, Lead Project Analyst, Associate Director, Applied Analytics,  
Standard and Poor's School Evaluation Services

#### **Others Attending**

See attached list.

**Morning Session**

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

*The minutes for January 9 and March 3 were approved. (Motion, Representative Storm; second, Barbara Mackey)*

The Chairperson welcomed Dale Dennis, Deputy Commissioner, Kansas State Department of Education, who briefed Commission members on the fiscal impact of SB 549, the school finance bill approved by the 2006 Legislature (Attachment 1). He explained that the Kansas Supreme Court would next review the bill to determine its constitutionality. He explained specific provisions of the plan; reviewed the estimated increases in costs of programs funded by the state, which total \$194.5 million for FY 2006-07, \$149 million for FY 2007-08, and \$122.7 million for FY 2008-09; and listed how the provisions would affect local school districts. He noted that only one provision could be severed from the plan without nullifying the entire plan—the requirement that the Joint Committee on Building Construction approve any school construction bonds for a district that has experienced declining enrollment for the previous three years and receives state aid on bond and interest. Answering questions, Mr. Dennis explained the various accounting provisions in the “at-risk” categories.

### **Afternoon Session**

Scott Frank, Audit Manager, Division of Legislative Post Audit, provided a list of potential audit topics for the 2010 Commission to consider (Attachment 2). He reviewed a previous audit topic authorized by the Commission—the causes of teacher shortages in Kansas, noting such factors as how Kansas teachers’ salaries compare with neighboring states; and it compiles a set of best practices for recruiting and retaining teachers and school principals. Mr. Frank said the report is scheduled to be available to the Post Audit Committee in late June.

Mr. Frank commented on several current topics being considered for audit. Members discussed factors regarding the validity of using students qualifying for free lunch as the basis for distributing state at-risk funds. He noted that the Alternative Schools topic had similar components to the Best Practices initiative. Answering a question, he said the free lunch audit would take 12-14 weeks and involve five auditors; the other topics would be given a shorter time allotment. Members discussed whether qualifying for free lunch is a good measure of poverty. Chairperson Chronister commented that the At-Risk Council report to the 2010 Commission is scheduled to be presented in September. Staff noted that an Educational Council of States study established a direct relationship between poverty and at-risk students. The Chairperson presented to the members copies of the letter from Senator Vratil, who had originally requested the audit (Attachment 3).

*A motion was made, seconded, and passed to authorize a Legislative Post Audit performance audit for topic #2 regarding free lunch data being used for at-risk funding, addressing the three questions listed in Senator Vratil’s letter. (Motion, Representative Storm; second, Vice-Chairperson Daniels)*

Regarding charter schools, Mr. Frank said extensive national research should provide more comprehensive data at a later time.

The Chairperson authorized Post Audit to expend up to 200 hours to gather information on charter schools, evaluating their effectiveness compared with typical public schools. Members discussed various aspects of charter schools. Mr. Dennis said more than 26 such schools existed in Kansas.

The Chairperson outlined the proposed 2010 Commission meetings for the interim:

- The last of June, meeting with Post Audit;
- August 21-22, Shawnee Mission and Olathe school districts;
- September 18-19, Southwest Kansas: a district selected by Dennis Jones, and the Wichita school district;
- October 16-17, Southeast Kansas: Baxter Springs (“gold standard” school district) and Galena (the least affluent school district in the state), as well as a visit to Greenbush Educational Center; and
- November 13-14, Salina and Geary County.

Members discussed the effectiveness of various types of schools and a school’s emphasis on a certain area, such as magnet schools, vocational education, special education, and at-risk programs.

*A motion was made by Ms. Campbell, seconded by Senator Schodorf, to authorize an audit for topic #4, extending the topic to include middle schools and academies as well as high schools, and examining the effectiveness of alternative approaches to school structure. After brief discussion, the motion passed unanimously.*

Michael Stewart, Director of Research and Analytics, and Jason Kingston, Lead Project Analyst, Associate Director, Applied Analytics, both representing Standard and Poor’s, reported on the Kansas Educational Resource Management Study (Attachment 4). (The full report is on file in the Kansas Legislative Research Department office.) Mr. Stewart reviewed the three phases of the study, which, commissioned by Governor Sebelius, intends to maximize student achievement through wise use of available resources. Noting that Kansas budgets more money for education than any other item of the State General Fund, he said the study identifies the best practices and the creative use of resources in Kansas schools.

Mr. Kingston briefed the Commission on the three phases of the study: using state-wide financial and student data, the study identified 17 highly resource-effective school districts; four were selected from the 17 for in-depth study (Olathe, Arkansas City, Geary County, Scott County); a final report will provide state policymakers and local school leaders with a set of principles for effective use of money, staff, time, and programs. He said the study considered only districts with more than 200 students and selected districts with diverse geography, demographics, English proficiency, and disabilities. He stated that the study compared highly resource-effective districts with the state-wide average, with peer districts, and with the 20 least-resource-effective districts, commenting on specific effective practices, commonalities among the four districts, such as allocating more time for math and language arts, and benchmarking best practices.

Mr. Kingston and Mr. Stewart responded to questions as follows:

- Mr. Stewart said the study team plans to disseminate the study’s findings through professional associations, local school districts, university educational departments, and through the Governor’s office.
- Mr. Stewart replied that the benchmarks established by the study can be implemented legislatively through accreditation requirements, re-allocation of resources, and by using the study as a reference guide.
- Mr. Stewart explained that Geary County School District, even with significant turnover of staff, employs a comprehensive and thorough interview process and has adopted the nine principles of the effective schools movement.

- Mr. Kingston added that the categories of the study need to be standardized in order to be applied to all school districts. A member commented that local district accounting procedures also need to be standardized.
- Mr. Kingston said that Scott County created a planning council to evaluate all instruction approaches before implementing them, thus encouraging the faculty to take ownership of new programs. They also use flexible student placement, outside resources, and make creative use of information technology.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:14 p.m.

Prepared by Gary Deeter  
Edited by Kathie Sparks

Approved by Committee on:

July 11, 2006

(Date)