

## MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jean Schodorf at 1:30 p.m. on January 20, 2005, in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

Committee members absent:

Committee staff present: Carolyn Rampey, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Theresa Kiernan, Revisor of Statutes  
Shirley Higgins, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Jim Hays, Kansas Association of School Boards

Senator Schodorf called upon Jim Hays, Kansas Association of Schools Boards for a presentation on population and demographic issues for Kansas schools. (Attachment 1)

At the outset, Mr. Hays explained that demographics boils down to three basic things: (1) Everyone is born, and everyone dies (2) Every year, everyone who is alive gets a year older, and (3) Every year, some people move and the rest don't. As to population, he noted the following: (1) Kansas currently has the smallest percentage of the total United States population since early statehood, (2) The baby boom and the "echo" are over, and (3) Of Kansas' 105 counties, 54 have less population today than they had 100 years ago. He noted that the depopulation of the Great Plains and the baby boom in the 20<sup>th</sup> century are the two most significant population issues in the United States. In this regard, he referred to a graph on page six of a companion handout, a booklet entitled, "Kansas School Enrollment and Demographic Information" prepared by KASB (Attachment 2). He pointed out that the graph shows that Kansas' population is less than 1.00% of the total U.S. population. He noted that the decline does not mean that Kansas' population has declined, but it means that the rest of the country has grown more than Kansas. He called attention to a chart on page eight (Attachment 3) showing how the baby boom affected school enrollment and how school enrollment in Kansas declined in the 1970s. He noted that the head count enrollment in Kansas peaked as a result of the baby boom in 1973 and declined for ten consecutive years. Many Kansas school districts became smaller than during the baby boom, and the period of realigning resources during the period of enrollment decline was used as an opportunity to make the system better. In the mid to late 1980s enrollment began to increase, partially as a result of the baby boom "echo" (baby boomers having children who entered the system), but the most significant cause of the increase was immigration, particularly in Johnson County. He noted that immigration and non-white births basically account for population growth in Kansas.

He called attention to a chart on page ten of the booklet (Attachment 4) which lists county population in Kansas as shown by federal censuses taken from 1890 to 2000. He noted that 31 counties in Kansas have less than six people per square mile, and this fact has significant ramifications for schools. During the 1990s, 48 Kansas counties grew in population, and 57 declined. Most of the growth counties were located in either the northeastern part of the state or the southwestern part of the state. The greatest decline in enrollment has occurred in north central Kansas all the way to the Colorado line. This decline was due changes in 20<sup>th</sup> century agriculture and changes in the industrial revolution. He noted that there is no indication that these trends are changing; therefore, significant new ideas are needed. He said, "The bottom line is we need more people who want to live here. We've done a great job in the 20<sup>th</sup> century of exporting our children." He noted that currently under 15% of Kansas' population lives in approximately 70 counties, and more than half of the population lives in the five urban counties (Johnson, Wyandotte, Douglas, Shawnee, and Sedgwick). In the 31 frontier counties, which have 3.7% of the population, the number of children born from September 1 through August 31, 2002, account for only 2.6% of births, and 49.5% were born in urban counties. He noted that currently there are 57 high schools in the frontier counties.

He went on to say that Kansas' Hispanic population tripled between 1990 and 2000, and in terms of school enrollment, the growth in Hispanic students has grown more than any other group during the last ten years. He noted that Kansas' growth in the 1990s was 8.50%, and the total population of the country was over 14%. Almost one-half, 4.80%, would have been Kansas' population growth without Hispanic immigration. At this point, Mr. Hays called the Committee's attention to a chart which estimates the county population after the 2000 census. (Attachment 5) He explained that the counties were listed in order of their 2003 enrollment. He pointed out that, according to the Census Bureau estimates, Johnson County has overtaken Sedgwick

## CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE Senate Education Committee at 1:30 p.m. on January 20, 2005, in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

County and is now the most populous county in Kansas. Mr. Hays commented, "What's really interesting and troubling here is that to a large extent during the 20<sup>th</sup> century we were talking about rural population stagnation or decline, and since 2000, the estimates indicate that 20 Kansas counties have increased in population, and the other 85 declined in population." He noted that the population in urban counties such as Sedgwick, Shawnee, Wyandotte has declined further since 2000. He commented, "A lot of the school enrollment growth in Kansas has been in districts that are either in or surrounding urban areas. If we are approaching a period of time during the rest of this decade when the only enrollment growth is in Johnson County when other urban areas are starting to level off, then that changes the dynamics considerably and, perhaps, argues for an even greater enrollment decline than some people think is on the horizon for us as a state." He cautioned, "If the slow down in immigration is the issue, then that might be something that we could do from a public policy standpoint. If it's an increase in deaths or a decrease in births or some kind of combination of the two, then that makes it a little tougher. But movement of people can be influenced. If immigration is the situation, and I suspect that it is, then that's something that we can deal with."

Mr. Hays noted that this is the seventh consecutive year when more than 60% of Kansas school districts have declined in enrollment from the previous year. He called attention to a listing of all USD enrollments by school district for the last ten years beginning on page 46 of the KASB booklet with totals on page 52 (Attachment 6). He pointed out that statewide enrollment peaked in the 1998-99 school year and has declined slightly since. He noted that the 1998-99 was not the highest peak; the highest was in 1973. Noting that secondary education is usually more expensive on a per pupil basis than elementary education, he called attention to a chart regarding high school enrollments for 2003-04 found on page 33 which lists buildings which have high school grades associated with them (Attachment 7). Of 355 buildings, those ranking above the median enrollment enrolled over 85% of the students. Those ranking below the median enrolled just over 14% of the students. He pointed out that 14.3% of the students go to school in one-half of the high schools. He called attention to a list of high school statistics (high-to-low on building enrollment) beginning on page 34 (Attachment 8). Also included with the data is a forecast of what would happen if the enrollment rate went up or down during the next five years as it did during the last ten years. He explained that a better way to project enrollment is the "CoHort Survival Method." This method involves comparing births for each year to the number of first graders from that group who actually end up in Kansas public schools. He noted that the birth rate has not declined during the last several years, and retention of students in Kansas public schools is good. Special education continues to grow statewide. He emphasized that the statistics for an individual school district could be considerably different from statewide statistics.

Senator Vratil asked Mr. Hays what the three most significant conclusions the Committee should draw from the data he presented. Mr. Hays answered, "Number one, we are extremely diverse as a state and getting more so all the time. When you've got half the state in five counties, when you've got two-thirds of the enrollment in 50 districts out of 300, you've got a lot of diversity; and any way you that you try to figure out how to run schools or finance them has got to account for that extreme diversity. One of the things that school finance formulas do is account for that diversity in terms of the overall operational size of the administrative unit. They account for that diversity in terms of things like pupil weighting and targeting special things. Number two, no matter where you go in Kansas, the problems are very much the same, particularly the educational challenges and the things that school boards are confronted with. And certainly the constitution applies in all 105 of those counties regardless of whether they are growing or declining in population. If there's one kid left out there, the constitution applies to him just like it applies to the 30,000 or 40,000 in the big districts. That is a significant challenge not only for the local school board but for the Legislature. Number three, this data doesn't say it specifically, but clearly when your source of new enrollment is children who are most difficult to deal with, then you're talking about significant amounts of new resources in the system. And I think the Court obviously recognizes that."

Senator Schodorf asked committee members to begin visiting with each other about what should be included in the education plan. She noted that she planned visit with each member individually and that Dale Dennis, State Board of Education, would be available to answer any questions members may have.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 24, 2005.

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE Senate Education Committee at 1:30 p.m. on January 20, 2005, in Room 123-S of the Capitol.