

## MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jean Schodorf at 1:35 p.m. on February 28, 2006, in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

Committee members absent: Barbara Allen- excused  
Greta Goodwin- excused  
Janis Lee- excused  
John Vratil- excused

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

Conferees appearing before the committee: Senator Phillip B. Journey  
Mark Tallman, Kansas Association of School Boards  
Dr. Jill Shackelford, Superintendent of Schools for USD 500,  
Kansas City, Kansas  
Mark Desetti, Kansas National Education Association  
Val DeFever, Schools for Quality Education

**SB 514—School districts; attendance and transportation of pupils residing outside district**

Senator Phillip Journey testified in support of **SB 514**. He explained that basically the bill would provide that on or before July 15 parents could make application to a nonresident district for the transfer of their child to that district. The allocation of state funds for the child would follow the child to the receiving school district. He noted that perhaps the bill should include a provision that the receiving district must respond to the application by August 1 to allow the parents time to look at other school options if the request for transfer is not approved. He explained that the Division of Budget indicated that the bill also provided for transportation of students to the receiving school district, and the parents would be required to apply to the sending district to seek authority for the student to be furnished transportation to and from school. He explained that, in drafting the bill, it was not his intent that the resident district incur any costs for transportation. In his opinion, transportation of the student should be up to the parents unless the receiving district voluntarily accepts that obligation. He noted that parents would not be required to make an economic decision except with regard to the cost of transportation, and thus, would be motivated to choose the school district that offered the most comprehensive education tailored to the individual child's needs and courses of desired study. He contended that offering parents a broad array of education options for their children would foster competition for students among public school districts and allow students to attend the school that they believe offers them the greatest opportunity for improving their education. He pointed out that the bill did not involve vouchers or tax credits but was simply a transfer of state aid between taxing entities. (Attachment 1)

In response to a question concerning the possibility that the receiving school district would only accept the "brightest of the bright," Senator Journey stated, "While that is certainly a possibility under the current drafting of the bill, I expect that school districts will be far more generous with their resources. The kids that I think this would help, besides the ones that are looking for an improvement in the quality of their education, are also ones that may have personal problems in their resident district. For example, if they are perceived to be in a group or social class where they picked on all the time, this might give the parents an option the following school year to get them out of there and help get that kid get a fresh start so they concentrate on learning rather than trying to figure out ways to keep from being beat up after school or on the bus or whatever."

Senator Teichman asked that Senator Journey provide statistics on the number of students that are transferring to other districts and the number that are being denied. Senator Schodorf noted that Dale Dennis, Deputy Commissioner for the Department of Education, would be able to supply those statistics.

Mark Tallman, Kansas Association of School Boards (KASB), testified in opposition to **SB 514**. At the outset, he commented that it was his understanding that currently a child can go to another district if the district accepts the child, and the district of residence cannot block the transfer. Therefore, it that was the

## CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE Senate Education Committee at 1:35 p.m. on February 28, 2006, in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

issue, a change in the statute would not be required. In addition, he noted that the money currently does follow the child if a transfer is accepted. He went on to say that, as he understood the bill, it would remove any limits of the authority of a school district to send a bus into another district to transport a child who wishes to attend a school in the non-resident district. He urged the Committee to consider the impact of this change. Furthermore, he pointed out that district expenses do not exactly reflect small changes in enrollment, and the loss of revenue would have a negative impact on the remaining children in the district. In conclusion, he expressed his concern that the change proposed in the bill would make it harder for school districts to consider school or district consolidation. ([Attachment 2](#))

There being no others wishing to testify, the hearing on **SB 514** was closed.

### **SB 563–School districts; relating to kindergarten pupils**

Senator Steineger, who requested the introduction of **SB 563**, introduced Dr. Jill Shackelford, Superintendent of schools for USD 500, Kansas City, Kansas, who followed with testimony in support of the bill. Dr. Shackelford rationalized the need for early childhood intervention, highlighted the need for full-day kindergarten in Kansas, and described the dire need for the funding of full-day kindergarten for Kansas City, Kansas, students. She presented statistics regarding the achievement gap before minority youth reach kindergarten, the school readiness assessments for entering kindergarten students in 2004, and the percentage of minority students, English language learners, and free lunch students in the 30 Kansas City, Kansas, schools. In conclusion, she emphasized that full-day kindergarten would give the USD 500 schools additional instruction time needed to stimulate language, boost cognitive skills, push literacy and math concepts, and improve social/behavioral skills. She pointed out that **SB 563** would bring the district's budget priorities closer to reality and would allow support for the priority to provide staff with competitive salaries and enhanced professional development. ([Attachment 3](#))

Mark Desetti, Kansas National Education Association, testified in strong support of **SB 563**. He observed that all-day kindergarten just makes sense. He went on to point out that all-day kindergarten makes economic sense for single parent families and families where both parents work, that it makes sense for at-risk students and students who are not at-risk, that it makes a difference in student learning, and that is good for school districts. He noted that the all-day kindergarten proposed in the bill was not mandatory; therefore, parents who do not want to put their children in any kindergarten would not be forced to do so. ([Attachment 4](#))

Mark Tallman, KASB, testified in support of **SB 563**. He explained that the bill would phase in support for all-day kindergarten over four years. He noted that KASB believes the program should be voluntary on the part of local districts as well as parents. In addition, KASB believes that all-day kindergarten is an effective way to strengthen education. He stressed that the Legislature would never have a better opportunity to implement this change and that funding for all-day kindergarten should be included in any plan responding to the direction of the Kansas Supreme Court. ([Attachment 5](#))

Val DeFever, Schools for Quality Education, testified in support of **SB 563**. She noted that many rural school districts still may not have any form of pre-school, and children have fewer opportunities to socialize with children because many families live far away from their small communities. Therefore, kindergarten is more important than ever for these children because it allows them to gain social and readiness skills. In her opinion, the need for more early education opportunities had not diminished over the past several years but has become more urgent. ([Attachment 6](#))

Written testimony in support of **SB 563** was submitted by Stuart Little, Little Government Relations, on behalf of the Shawnee Mission school district, USD 512. He suggested that the bill be amended to eliminate the at-risk population requirements and that all-day kindergarten be implemented and state funded for all Kansas kids. ([Attachment 7](#))

There being no others wishing to testify, the hearing on **SB 563** was closed.

Senator Schodorf called attention to the minutes of the February 13, 14, and 15 meetings.

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE Senate Education Committee at 1:35 p.m. on February 28, 2006, in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

Senator Ostmeyer moved to approve the minutes of the February 13, 14, and 15 meetings, seconded by Senator Teichman. The motion carried.

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

The next meeting is scheduled for March 2, 2006.