

MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jean Schodorf at 1:35 p.m. on January 23, 2007, in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

Committee members absent:

Committee staff present: Sharon Wenger, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Michele Alishahi, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Ashley Holm, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Theresa Kiernan, Revisor of Statutes
Shirley Higgins, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Katrin Osterhaus, Legislative Division of Post Audit
Mark Desetti, Kansas National Education Association
Sue Gamble, Legislative Liaison, State Board of Education
Dr. Roxanne Kelly, Director of Academic Services, Kansas Board of Regents
Dale Dennis, Interim Commissioner of Education
Diane Lindeman, Director of Financial Aid, Kansas Board of Regents

Senator Chris Steineger requested the introduction of a bill which would set standards for beverages that are sold in schools in an attempt to get high sugar soft drinks products out of the schools.

Senator Steineger moved to introduce the bill, seconded by Senator Teichman. The motion carried.

Senator Steineger requested the introduction of a bill which would set nutrition standards for schools in an attempt to get more fresh fruits and vegetables into the diet standards for school lunches.

Senator Steineger moved to introduce the bill, seconded by Senator Vratil. The motion carried.

Katrin Osterhaus, Legislative Division of Post Audit, presented an overview of the Legislative Division of Post Audit report entitled: "K-12 Education: Reviewing Issues Related to Developing and Retaining Teachers and School Principals". A copy of the report can be obtained from the office of the Legislative Division of Post Audit at the following address: 800 SW Jackson Street, Suite 1200, Topeka, KS 66612.

Ms. Osterhaus summarized the Division of Post Audit's findings regarding the following questions: (1) To what extent does Kansas have a teacher shortage and why, (2) How do Kansas teacher salaries compare with other states, and what does the research literature show about the relationship between salary levels and student outcomes, and (3) What are the best practices for attracting, developing, and retaining high-quality teachers and school principals in different types of school districts. In summary, the answer to the questions are as follows: Question One – The pending growth in retirement is likely to exacerbate the current teacher shortage, especially in those regions of the state that already are struggling to fill positions with qualified teachers. Question Two – Kansas teacher salaries still rank in the bottom half of all states. However, because there is no clear evidence linking teacher salaries to student achievement, across-the-board salary increases are unlikely to be an efficient means of improving performance. Question Three – School districts that are located in high-poverty and rural areas often have difficulties finding teachers. Research shows that teachers prefer to teach close to where they grew up, prompting "grow-your-own" teacher programs. Some districts have used "grow-your-own" programs to attract administrators as well.

SB 22 – Teacher education matching grant program

SB 23 – Teacher service scholarship program

Theresa Kiernan, Revisor of Statutes Office, noted that **SB 22** and **SB 23** were related and were introduced at the request of the State Board of Regents through the Legislative Educational Planning Committee (LEPC). She explained that **SB 22** would establish a new teacher education competitive grant program, which

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would be administered by the State Board of Regents. It would be a two-for-one match (two dollars by the state, one dollar by the institution) for the purpose of establishing or expanding a teacher education program at the institution. The State Board would establish the standards and guidelines for reviewing, evaluating, and approving the applications for the grants. The institutions then would be required to submit reports as required by the State Board. The program would be subject to appropriation. Ms. Kiernan explained that the intent of **SB 23** was to consolidate the four teacher service scholarships into one. She noted that the amount shown on page 2, line 43 should be amended to read \$2,500 instead of \$2,000 as printed. She explained that the language in Section 3 was modified to broaden what students must do to comply under all four acts. She noted that the language needed some technical amendments.

Mark Desetti, Kansas National Education Association, testified in support of **SB 22** and **SB 23**. He noted that, if **SB 23** is passed, **SB 22** will be absolutely necessary. He pointed out that **SB 23** would provide scholarships for a prospective teacher, for a current teacher seeking an additional endorsement, and for a licensed teacher who is pursuing an advanced degree. He noted that **SB 23** would likely create a demand, and **SB 22** would help teacher training programs meet that demand. (Attachment 1)

Sue Gamble, Legislative Liaison, State Board of Education, testified in support of **SB 22** and **SB 23**. She emphasized that the expansion of teacher education programs as provided in **SB 22** was crucial because 24 percent of Kansas teachers will be eligible to retire in the next five years, and 34 percent of the teachers are over 50 years of age. She noted that the Board was supportive of the expansion of students eligible for scholarships as provided in **SB 23** and also supported Section 3 of the bill which provides criteria that must be included as part of the agreement with the student. (Attachment 2)

Dr. Roxanne Kelly, Director of Academic Services, Kansas Board of Regents, testified in support of **SB 22**. She discussed the looming teacher shortage, teachers who are teaching out-of-field, and the pattern of teachers moving out of high-poverty areas and out of state. To address the teaching shortage in the state, The Board of Regents developed a two-pronged approach: (1) creation of a \$2.75 million pool of funding for a competitive grant program whereby public postsecondary institutions would bring forward proposals specifically targeted at increasing the supply of teachers, especially in areas with shortages and (2) consolidation and simplification of the existing teacher scholarship programs and the addition of \$1.0 million in new funding in order to increase the funding to \$2.0 million (**SB 23**). She went on to say that the grants as established under **SB 22** would be made available to the public universities and would focus on hard-to-fill teaching disciplines and underserved areas in the state. (Attachment 3)

Dale Dennis, Interim Commissioner of Education, emphasized that the teacher shortage is much more serious now than it has been in the past. He informed the Committee that North Carolina needs several thousand teachers next year, and representatives from North Carolina will be coming to Kansas to recruit teachers. He noted that representatives from Texas already have come to Kansas and offered a bonus and extra benefits to Kansas teachers and students who will graduate in the spring.

Diane Lindeman, Director of Student Financial Assistance, Kansas Board of Regents, testified in support of **SB 23**. She noted that the Board currently administers four statutorily authorized teacher scholarship programs, and each of the programs has a different amount of funding and different service obligations. The Board supports **SB 23** because it would streamline all four programs into one efficient program. Further, administrative authority would provide flexibility to award scholarships consistent with market demand, and rules and regulations authority would allow the Board to adjust scholarship targets to meet the state's current and future teacher needs. She noted that the Governor's 2008 budget recommendations included \$1,962,859 for the four teacher scholarship programs. However, the Division of Budget's fiscal note indicates that the effect of **SB 23** would be to eliminate expenditures for the three scholarships (\$636,115) because they are being repealed. The Board's intent is that the existing funding for the three programs be merged into the new program for a total of \$1,962,859 in teacher scholarships. (Attachment 4) For the Committee's information, Ms. Lindeman distributed copies of a chart which compared current teacher scholarship programs with the proposed new program in **SB 23**. (Attachment 5)

There being no others wishing to testify, the combined hearing on **SB 22** and **SB 23** was closed.

Senator Schodorf opened committee discussion on a previously heard bill, **SB 69** concerning cost of living

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and declining enrollment weightings. She reminded the Committee that conferees urged the Committee to take action on the bill as soon as possible. Senator Lee suggested that the bill be amended to include a mill levy. Due to lack of sufficient time to take action on the bill, Senator Schodorf continued the discussion to the January 25 meeting.

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

The next meeting is scheduled for January 24, 2007.