

## MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jean Schodorf at 1:35 p.m. on February 12, 2008, in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

Committee members absent: Carolyn McGinn- excused  
Ruth Teichman- excused

Committee staff present: Sharon Wenger, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Carol Toland, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Theresa Kiernan, Revisor of Statutes Office  
Matt Todd, Revisor of Statutes Office  
Shirley Higgins, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Mark Tallman, Kansas Association of School Boards  
Don Jordan, Secretary, Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services  
Tracie Lansing, Kansas Children's Service League  
Stephanie Harder, Rainbows United, Inc.  
Kathy Johnson, TARC, INC.  
Tim Emerson  
Bill Craig, Lakemary Center

Continued hearings on:

**SB 407 – Transfer of certain early childhood education programs to State Department of Education**

**SB 408 – Early childhood education programs; transfer of the administration of tiny-k early head start and the pre-K pilot to State Board of Education**

Mark Tallman, Kansas Association of School Boards (KASB), testified in support of **SB 407** and **SB 408**. He emphasized that KASB viewed the bills as a further step in the process of strengthening early childhood and pre-school programs, which KASB believes will contribute to improving outcomes for the K-12 system and beyond. He went on to discuss the reasons KASB believes all publically funded pre-school education programs should be under the supervision of the State Board of Education and/or the locally-elected board. He noted that KASB believes that placing early childhood programs under the State Board allows a greater alignment and transition between programs helping prepare children for school and the schools they are being prepared to attend. In conclusion, he encouraged the Committee to consider the Governor's recommendations for expanded funding for early childhood programs. Furthermore, he suggested that the issues of funding, governance, and accountability be addressed together. (Attachment 1)

Don Jordan, Secretary, Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS), testified in support of **SB 408**. He noted that research indicates that school readiness efforts have a positive impact, and SRS is willing to work with the Legislature and active participants in early childhood education to ensure the continued success of the Early Head Start Program. (Attachment 2) In response to a question from Senator Vratil regarding a conferee's concern that \$8 million in federal funding would be lost if the authority for early childhood programs were transferred to the Department of Education, Secretary Jordan explained SRS receives approximately \$11 million in funding for early childhood programs made up predominately from three sources – tobacco money (\$1.6 million), the State General Fund, and federal child care development funds (\$7.9 million). For ease of administration, Secretary Jordan suggested that the \$11 million dollars move with early childhood programs and the State General Fund be substituted for the child care development funds. In his opinion, there should be no risk of losing federal funds as long as those funds are used by SRS or any other department for activities that are consistent with the program goals of the child care development fund.

Tracie Lansing, Kansas Children's Service League (KCSL), gave an overview of the KCSL Healthy Families program and offered support for early childhood programs that not only benefit Kansas children and families but the state as a whole. She explained that the Healthy Families program was designed to provide intensive services for first-time parents experiencing multiple stressors, to prevent child maltreatment, and to strengthen

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families. KCSL has a nationally accredited program; however, due to funding restrictions, KCSL has reached its capacity for the number of families it can serve. For the past ten years, KCSL has provided \$300,000 per year for the Healthy Families program. With the state's support, KCSL can grow further and achieve its mission to protect and promote the well being of Kansas children. Ms. Lansing stated that KCSL had no preference with regard to **SB 407** and **SB 408**, but she expressed her support for the funding of Healthy Families accredited programs with block grant dollars, especially programs serving infants and toddlers. (Attachment 3) At this point, she introduced Katherine Duncan and Maria Galvin, who shared their positive experiences with the KCSL Healthy Families program after they gave birth to their first child.

Stephanie Harder, Rainbows United, Inc., testified in opposition to **SB 408**. She explained that Rainbows United is the lead and fiscal agent for tiny-k services in Sedgwick and Butler counties, and in order to maintain and grow existing funding sources for tiny-k services, it is important that the services not be administered by the Kansas Department of Education. She went on to discuss information taken from annual reports sent to KDHE Part C by each network for the 2006-2007 fiscal year, noting that the numbers speak for themselves. She pointed out that the majority of states and territories have selected a lead agency that is not education to govern their infant-toddler programs as shown in maps she attached to her written testimony. She contended that a vote for the bill would sacrifice millions of private dollars now available and would cripple the creative collaboration and public/private system of support now in place for children and families. (Attachment 4)

Ms. Harder submitted written testimony in opposition to **SB 408** prepared by Jeanine Phillips, Fundamental Learning Center (Attachment 5); Michael DeBroeck and Teresa I. Rupp, Child Start, Inc. (Attachment 6); Don Youts, Male Focus Coalition (Attachment 7); Maureen Hofrenning, a mother who received tiny-k services from Rainbows United (Attachment 8); and Chad VonAhnen, Sedgwick County Developmental Disability Organization (Attachment 9).

Kathy Johnson, Coordinator for Shawnee County Infant-Toddler Services, TARC, INC., testified in opposition to **SB 408**. She explained that TARC, INC., is the lead fiscal agency in Topeka for Infant-Toddler Services, and TARC works collaboratively with a pool of funding sources to blend services and personnel to provide comprehensive services for children and families in Shawnee County. In her opinion, private funding could be jeopardized if the Department of Education is appointed as lead agency, and this kind of financial loss would be devastating to the network in their effort to maintain the integrity and quality of the services currently provided. She noted that schools would not be willing to add additional resources and funding to the tiny-k network, and in spite of considerable efforts over the years, Infant-Toddler Services has not been able to establish a collaborative relationship with local school districts to access categorical aid. In conclusion, Ms. Johnson emphasized that could see no benefit in moving tiny-k to the Department of Education. (Attachment 10)

Tim Emerson, a parent from Wichita whose son was diagnosed at birth with Down Syndrome, testified in opposition to **SB 408**. He explained that he and his wife received very little information from hospital staff; however, a tiny-k provider came to the NICU and brought them a book for new parents of children with Down Syndrome along with information on resources in the Wichita community. The family's relationship with the provider has continued over the past four years, and his son and the entire family continue to receive "wrap around" care as the needs of his son and his family change. He observed that tiny-k functions from a private, holistic approach; however, the Department of Education focuses solely on educational strategies. In his opinion, families face enough challenges without having to deal with yet another in the form of an untested transition process. (Attachment 11)

Bill Craig, Lakemary Center of Paola, testified in opposition to **SB 408**. In his opinion, the tiny-k program would not find its best home under the Department of Education. He noted that, as an outreach, early intervention, multi-organizational program, tiny-k goes well beyond the normal reach of educational services. He explained that thousands of children have thrived in the tink-k experience, but many of them have gone on to less satisfying experiences in schools as schools are not primarily social service agencies. In conclusion, he stated, "This is a solution seeking a problem that does not exist." (Attachment 12)

Senator Schodorf called attention to written testimony in opposition to **SB 408** by Tiffanie Krentz, a member of the State Interagency Coordination Council on Early Childhood Developmental Services and the parent

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of a child with special needs. Ms. Krentz was scheduled to testify but was unable to attend the meeting. (Attachment 13)

Written testimony in opposition to **SB 408** was also submitted by Jeff DeGraffenreid, and attorney from Wichita. (Attachment 14)

There being no further time, the testimony in opposition to **SB 408** by Tom Laing, InterHab, was rescheduled for February 13.

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

The next meeting is scheduled for February 13, 2008.