

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION.

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chairperson John Vratil at 1:30 p.m. on March 6, 2002 in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Senators Corbin, Downey, Hensley, Lee, Oleen, Umbarger
(excused)

Committee staff present: Ben Barrett, Legislative Research
Carolyn Rampey, Legislative Research
Theresa Kiernan, Revisor of Statutes
Dale Dennis, Deputy Commissioner of Education
Judy Steinlicht, Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Jerry Niebaum, Planning Coordinator, KAN-ED

Others attending: See Attached List

KAN-ED Presentation

Jerry Niebaum, Planning Coordinator, KAN-ED for the Board of Regents, came before the Committee to provide a status report. The purpose of the KAN-ED Act is to provide for a broadband technology-based network to which schools, libraries and hospitals may connect for broadband Internet access and intranet access for distance learning. The creation, operation and maintenance of such a network was to be known as the KAN-ED network and the Kansas Board of Regents was charged with this task. Twenty-eight states now have comprehensive statewide networks and Kansas is not yet one of them.

The broadband network is important to continuing education. Kansas had 500 teaching positions unfilled last year. KAN-ED will offer opportunities for continuing education, professional development, and opportunities for teachers to interact with other teachers. Some schools offer courses through interactive distance learning, but many cannot communicate with other networks. KAN-ED interactive distance learning will reach all of our school districts. For health care workers, KAN-ED will offer professional assistance, especially in rural areas. Kansas is comprised of many small businesses and KAN-ED expects to provide informational resources through local libraries to help insure their success.

KAN-ED's recommended annual budget is \$11.8 million, of which \$10 million would come from state sources and \$1.8 million would come from the federal universal service fund. KAN-ED says that this is an extraordinarily frugal budget compared to other states.

KAN-ED has contracted with the State Division of Information Systems and Communications (DISC) to create the statewide network service, taking advantage of the extensive contracts they have in place to deploy and support such a network. KAN-ED is ready to move forward with its plans and needs action by the Legislature to create a revenue source. (Attachment 1)

During discussion, Mr. Niebaum stated that if funding is provided, they would expect to move quickly and have a significant number of connections by the beginning of the school year this fall. If the program is not funded this year, it is feared that a lot of the enthusiasm and momentum will be lost.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:50 p.m.