

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Senator Dwayne Umbarger at 1:30 a.m. On January 18, 2001 in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Senator Dave Corbin (excused)

Committee staff present: Avis Swartzman, Revisor of Statutes  
Ben Barrett, Legislative Research Department  
Carolyn Rampey, Legislative Research Department  
Judy Steinlicht, Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Others attending: See Attached List

Chairman Umbarger introduced Dale Dennis, Deputy Commissioner of Education, to give the committee a briefing on the Governor's Task Force on K-12 Education. The findings of this study are attached in "Vision 21st Century Initiative, K-12 Education: Financing for Results" ([Attachment 1](#)).

Dale Dennis introduced David Brandt, Kansas Securities Commissioner, who chaired the Task Force committee. Mr. Brandt talked about the impact of declining enrollment, which is covered in the attached, "Problem: Impact of Declining Enrollment". ([Attachment 2](#)) and "Increased State Aid Funding for Fiscal Year 2002 Comparison of Recommendations". ([Attachment 3](#))

Chairman Umbarger opened the floor to the other Task Force members present for their comments. They are Senator Vratil, Representative Ballard and Sheila Frahm.

It was stated that there was a reason for the recommendation for a study on what it costs to provide a suitable or adequate education. The task force felt that this was the most important recommendation they made because it formed a basis for everything else. As Mr. Brandt indicated, they needed to have facts upon which to base their decision, without it they would be guessing every year what is necessary and what is appropriate. Suggestions have been made that such a study is dangerous because it might indicate that they need to spend far more money than the state can afford. If the cost of an adequate or suitable education is more than the state can afford, then the Legislature may need to adjust what is a suitable or adequate education.

The second point is the growing problem we have in retention of teachers and teacher supply. The task force felt the alternative compensation funding proposal would address that problem to some extent.

The third item was 100 percent of excess cost of special education. This is not a new proposal, but the formula for distribution of special education money recommended is new. The task force was concerned about the growing increases in special education costs. They felt like a two-tier weighting system would help control those costs, they felt like it was consistent with the philosophy of the current school finance formula, i.e. additional weighting for special students. What has not gotten much media attention is the portion of the recommendation that recommended a study on a census based formula for distributing special education aid. We think this might be an important key to funding special education in this state.

In an effort to encourage increased performance and accountability the task force recommended several grants designed to encourage schools to improve their performance and receive rewards or enhancements for showing that type of improvement. The grants were designed to go to individual schools, not school districts.

For one member, it was felt that the number one thing that came out in the study is that the quality of the teacher really determines what happens in our children's education.

## CONTINUATION SHEET

January 18, 2001

The task force commented that they acknowledge \$205 million is a high figure, but one that the committee wanted to bring to the table and for discussion. The task force felt comfortable the \$205 million was an area where they could feel comfortable in recommending that kind of benefit to the State of Kansas for education.

Chairman Umbarger opened the floor for questions. The word "suitable" education was questioned. The word suitable was chosen from the constitution. It is not magic, it is the nature and the extent of education that this state wants to provide to all students.

In regards to the task force request for further study, Mr. Brant stated that they put in a fiscal suggestion for \$450,000. The time they expect the further study to take would be one year. They would like to start the study immediately so that it could be concluded by next December so the Legislature would have the data to work with next session.

The Task Force was asked to differentiate between the two-tiered pupil rating system for special ed and the census based funding and why one was chosen over the other. The proposal described was a weighting system, and with the census based formula you just add it to the base amount per pupil. The task force looked at the census based formula, but did not make a specific recommendation because they did not feel like they had the time, money or expertise to get into the census based funding at this time.

Chairman Umbarger expressed his appreciation to David Brandt, Dale Dennis and the Task Force members for bringing the information before the committee.

Chairman Umbarger stated that he, Senators Vratil and Downey will be meeting in Senator Downey's office every Thursday at 8:00 a.m. to set up the next weeks agenda and discuss where they want to go with education. The meeting is open to everyone.

Senator Vratil made a motion to introduce 6 bills, 1rs0232, AN ACT concerning school finance; increasing at-risk pupil weighting; 1rs0258, AN ACT concerning school districts; providing for capital outlay state aid; 1rs0229, AN ACT concerning school district finance; increasing base state aid per pupil; 1rs0230, AN ACT concerning school district finance; relating to contingency reserve fund; 1rs0254, AN ACT concerning school district finance; revising and effecting definitions; affecting determination of program weighting; 1rs0252, AN ACT concerning school district finance; revising the definition of at-risk pupils; The motion was seconded by Senator Teichman. Motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned.

The next meeting is Monday, January 22, 2001