

MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jean Schodorf at 1:10 p.m. on April 26, 2006, in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

Committee members absent: Carolyn McGinn- excused

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

Conferees appearing before the committee: None

SB 596—Schools; accreditation; student performance standards

Senator Schodorf noted that **SB 596** was referred to the Senate Education Committee on March 31. The bill was sponsored by Senator Vratil, and he requested that the bill be discussed.

Theresa Kiernan, Revisor of Statutes Office, explained the definition of terms and the provisions in New Section 1 of the bill. She explained that Section 2 amends the current provision of law relating to school accreditation. It also amends a provision that was in **SB 329** which was introduced by the LEPC last summer. In that bill, there was extensive clean-up of the language, and it amended the time in which curriculum standards are reviewed. Basically, the key amendment is that, subject to the provisions of Section 1, the State Board of Education shall design and adopt a school performance accreditation system which reflects high academic standards and is measurable. It deletes the requirement that the system be based upon improvement in performance. It says that the State Board could still adopt standards or a system which is based upon the goal of improvement or student proficiency.

In response to questions from the Committee, Senator Vratil noted that **SB 596** would not eliminate QPA. He stated, "What it does do is focus on the student performance mandatory requirements that the State Board has implemented as part of their accreditation standards. It says that no public agency shall use any state or federal money to implement or enforce those mandatory student performance standards. It does not affect QPA in any other way. The real impact of the bill is that it allows the State Board of Education to set student improvement goals but not mandatory standards."

Ms. Kiernan clarified that currently schools are accredited if they meet the required standards, which are based upon improvement in performance. Under the bill, improvement in performance will no longer be required as a condition for accreditation.

Several committee members requested that conferees be invited to speak on the bill before the Committee took any action. Acknowledging that it was customary to invite conferees to comment on bills, Senator Vratil noted that the bill's concept had been discussed throughout the entire session. He stated, "I'm absolutely convinced in my own mind that, if we allow the State Board of Education to continue enforcing mandatory student performance standards, we're going to bankrupt this state in a matter of years. If we don't do something to stop that, then we're going to contribute to that bankruptcy. So I'm ready to pass this bill out of Committee right now."

Senators Lee, Apple, Teichman, Steineger, and Goodwin requested that the bill be set for a hearing to allow conferees to comment on what they feel the bill would do to education in Kansas.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for April 27, 2006.

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE Senate Education Committee at 1:10 P.M. on April 26, 2006, in Room 123-S of the Capitol.