

## MINUTES OF THE HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Clay Aurand at 9:05 A.M. on March 12, 2008 in Room 313-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:  
Benjamin Hodge- absent

Committee staff present:

Theresa Kiernan, Office of Revisor of Statutes  
Dianne Rosell, Office of Revisor of Statutes  
Dale Dennis, Kansas State Department of Education  
Martha Dorsey, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Sharon Wenger, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Janet Henning, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Heather Morgan, Juvenile Justice Authority  
Diane Gjerstad, Wichita Public Schools  
Senator Laura Kelly  
Bill Pollock, parent  
Austin Vincent, Christian Home Educators Confederation of Kansas  
Valory Harrison, Teaching Parents Association  
Jamie Runyan, parent  
Written testimony - Jim McDaniel, Superintendent, Kaw Valley USD 321  
Written testimony - Rebecca Creech, parent  
Written testimony - Todd Thalmann, parent  
Written testimony - Lisa McKinney

Representative Phelps requested a "Point of Personal Privilege" from the Committee. Representative Phelps introduced Ruksana Kibria, Professor and Chair, Department of International Relations, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh and advised she was visiting and observing at Fort Hays State University.

### **SB 401: School districts; pupils receiving education services while residing at a psychiatric residential treatment facility.**

Theresa Kiernan, Senior Assistant Revisor, Office of the Revisor of Statutes, gave an overview of **SB 401**.

Heather Morgan, Juvenile Justice Authority, spoke to Committee members with an explanation and background of **SB 401**.

Diane Gjerstad, Wichita Public Schools spoke to Committee members in support of **SB 401**. Ms. Gjerstad advised the bill was a technical clean-up and encouraged the Committee to amend the bill by adding the youth placements which prior to July 1, 2007 were specifically listed in statute for school finance. (Attachment #1)

A question and answer session followed the presentations. Chairman Aurand advised Committee members that any Committee member who wanted to pursue this bill with amendment should also be prepared to include a fiscal note.

The Chairman closed the hearing on **SB 401**

### **SB 399: Mandatory attendance of kindergarten; age of eligibility**

Theresa Kiernan, Senior Assistant Revisor, Office of the Revisor of Statutes, gave an overview and explanation of **SB 399**.

Senator Kelly spoke to Committee members in support of **SB 399**. Senator Kelly stated she had introduced the bill to do two things:

## CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE House Education Committee at 9:05 A.M. on March 12, 2008 in Room 313-S of the Capitol.

- Lower the age at which children are required to attend school in Kansas from seven years old to six years old
- Mandate kindergarten attendance

Senator Kelly stated that because kindergarten attendance is not currently required in Kansas, there was absolutely nothing a teacher could do to get the children into the classroom. Each day they miss, puts the child further behind their peers and sets them up for failure in years to come. (Attachment #2)

Written testimony was submitted by Jim McDaniel, Superintendent, Kaw Valley USD #321, in support of **SB 399**. (Attachment #3)

A question and answer session followed the presentation.

Bill Pollock, parent, testified before Committee members in opposition of **SB 399**. Mr. Pollock told Committee members that it is his belief that government has gradually taken the responsibility of educating children away from parents. The result is that each generation seems to be less responsible than the last. (Attachment #4)

Austin Vincent, Legislative Liaison, Christian Home Educators Confederation of Kansas, spoke to Committee members in opposition of **SB 399** and stated this bill is a further encroachment upon the constitutionally protected discretion of parents to determine the education of their young children. (Attachment #5)

Valory Harrison, Teaching Parents Association, spoke to Committee members in opposition to **SB 399**. (Attachment #6)

Marci Laffen, a parent and registered nurse, spoke to Committee members in opposition to **SB 399**. (Attachment #7)

Jamie Runyan, parent, educator, and concerned citizen, spoke to Committee members in opposition to **SB 399** and urged Committee members not to legislate educational policy based on isolated incidences, especially legislation that would have a far reaching impact on many families. (Attachment #8)

Written testimony was received from Rebecca Creech in opposition to **SB 399**. (Attachment #9)

Written testimony was received from Todd Thalmann in opposition to **SB 399**. (Attachment #10)

Written testimony was received from Lisa McKinney in opposition to **SB 399**. (Attachment #11)

A question and answer session followed the presentations.

The Chairman closed the hearing on **SB 399**.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:50 A.M. The next meeting is scheduled for March 13, 2008.