

MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jean Schodorf at 1:35 p.m. on March 8, 2007, in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

Committee members absent: Carolyn McGinn
Chris Steineger

Committee staff present: Sharon Wenger, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Shirley Higgins, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Representative Barbara Craft
Robert Shannon, Superintendent,
Manhattan-Ogden USD 383
Colonel (Ret) Stephen J. Kempf, Ft. Leavenworth USD 207
Board of Education
Major Colleen Wright, Garrison Operations Officer, Ft.
Riley
Lamont Godsey, Ft. Riley USD 475 School Board
Heidi Zimmerman, Legislative Division of Post Audit

HB 2159 – School finance; enrollment; date of determination

Sharon Wenger, Kansas Legislative Research Department, explained that **HB 2159** allows school districts to conduct a second count of students on February 20, 2008, and February 20, 2009. This second count would be permitted for students who are dependents of full-time active members of the military service or dependents of the military reserve who have been ordered to active duty for at least 30 consecutive days. The second count would be allowed when the number of students enrolled on February 20, 2008, has increased from the number counted on September 30, 2007, by at least 25 students or one percent or more of the district's enrollment. The district's student enrollment on February 20, 2008, then becomes the official enrollment count for the 2007 and 2008 school years. The fiscal note estimated an impact of \$4,021,200 in state aid for FY 2008 because the Department of Education estimated approximately 640 additional students would be counted using this procedure. This fiscal estimate includes both general state aid and state aid related to local option budgets.

Representative Barbara Craft testified in support of **HB 2159**. She reminded the Committee that a bill passed by the Legislature two years ago allowed certain school districts to take a second count on February 20 due to large numbers of military students coming in after the official September 20 count date. This law will sunset at the end of 2007, but military growth continues; therefore, the bill extends the second count authority for another two years. Representative Craft noted that she would not object to the bill being amended to extend the authority for another four years. She pointed out that being able to include most of the incoming military students in the enrollment figure reported to the state each year gives the impacted school districts the assurance of additional aid and the ability to plan in advance of the students' arrival. (Attachment 1)

Robert Shannon, Superintendent, Manhattan-Ogden USD 383, testified in support of **HB 2159**. Noting that his school district is located along the eastern boundary of Ft. Riley, he informed the Committee that his district experienced a year-to-year increase of 300 students last September. He noted that the February 20 count provided the district the confidence to make the best possible plans for both military and non-military students before the school year opened. He went on to say that there were currently 725 military students in his district, and projections from military personnel indicated that this number would continue to increase for at least another two years and probably through 2011. He then discussed the action his school district has taken to date to accommodate the welcomed new growth. The Board of Education believes it is important to extend the second count authority in order to continue to meet the educational needs of new military students who will be coming to their region. (Attachment 2)

Colonel (Ret) Stephen J. Kempf, President of the Board of Education for Ft. Leavenworth USD 207, testified in support of **HB 2159**. He informed the Committee that the Ft. Leavenworth school district is responsible for approximately 1,800 military dependent children each year, and 65 percent of those children are family members of military officers taking a course at the Army's Command and General Staff College. Because

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of the nature and length of the class, a majority of the officers bring their families and secure housing on Ft. Leavenworth or in the surrounding communities. Current world events have had a direct impact on the number of military officers attending the Command and General Staff College, and it is anticipated that this course will continue indefinitely. The district added 113 students through the second count last year, and 154 students were added this year. Continuation of the second count date will allow the district to accommodate the anticipated continued growth in the student population. ([Attachment 3](#))

Major Colleen Wright, Garrison Operations Officer at Ft. Riley, testified in support of **HB 2159**. She noted that the soldier population at Ft. Riley in 2005 was at 9,933 with an associated student K-12 population of 4,805. Today, it is at 13,584 with a K-12 population of 6,572. It is estimated that, by FY 2011, the population will be at 18,437 with a K-12 population of 8,821. She commented that the Army is very aware that area schools experience enormous financial strain when significant numbers of students arrive after the official count date, and it enjoys a close working relationship with the two school districts which serve the majority of Ft. Riley's K-12 population. She expressed her strong support for any action to take care of soldiers and their families and urged the Committee to extend the second count provision. ([Attachment 4](#))

Lamont Godsey, a member of the Ft. Riley USD 475 School Board, testified in support of **HB2159**. He observed that the extension of the count date was a strong indicator that Kansas is a state which is friendly to the military. In his opinion, if the Army is to remain strong, Kansas must be just as strong. He urged the Committee to express their support for military families and dependents through the passage of the bill. ([Attachment 5](#))

Senator Schodorf called the Committee's attention to written testimony in support of **HB 2159** submitted by Don Adkisson, Director of Finance for USD 260 Derby. ([Attachment 6](#))

There being no others wishing to testify, the hearing on **HB 2159** was closed.

At the request of Senator Schodorf, Heidi Zimmerman, Legislative Division of Post Audit, reviewed the Legislative Post Audit report entitled, "*K-12 Education: Alternative Models for Organizing Middle Schools and High Schools.*" A copy of the report may be obtained at the office the Legislative Division of Post Audit located at 800 SW Jackson, Suite 1200, Topeka, Kansas. The performance audit answers the following question: What are the advantages and disadvantages of various alternative models for middle schools and high schools used in Kansas school districts or in other states? Ms. Zimmerman explained that Division of Post Audit found 41 middle and high schools nationwide using alternative models that experts had identified as being successful. She outlined the following major approaches to middle and high school reform which were identified through the research: (1) alternative scheduling, (2) theme-based programs, (3) small learning communities, (4) alternative instructional formats, and (5) comprehensive school reform. As part of the research on the five models, Post Audit found that, while most models have examples of successful schools, there is little rigorous research available that assesses the effectiveness of each model. The report concludes that the handful of models which have been rigorously evaluated and shown to be effective in improving student performance are the models policymakers should look at when considering school reform.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 12, 2007.

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