

MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jean Schodorf at 1:35 p.m. on February 8, 2005, in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

Committee members absent:

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: Dale Dennis, Deputy Commissioner, State Board of Education
Representative Kathe Decker
Lamont Godsey, President, Board of Education, USD 495
Major Colleen Wright, Board of Education, Ft. Riley
Mark Desetti, Kansas National Education Association
Representative L. Candy Ruff

HB 2059–School districts; enrollment, increases relating to military-connected personnel

Theresa Kiernan, Revisor of Statutes Office, noted that **HB 2059** was introduced by several House members. She explained that the bill would provide a second date for enrollment count for certain school districts on February 20 for a two-year period when there has been an increase of a minimum of 25 students or 1 percent of the district's enrollment who are dependents of a full-time active duty member of the military service or military reserve. She noted that the House Committee made a clarifying technical change to the bill.

Dale Dennis, Deputy Commissioner, State Board of Education, explained further that the bill provides that the September 20 enrollment count would still be taken in the affected schools just as in all other school districts. However, if additional students who are military-connected enroll between September 20 and February 20, they will be added to the enrollment. He pointed out that the bill is not applicable if the additional students are not the dependents of members of the military service.

Representative Kathe Decker testified in support of **HB 2059**. She noted that Fort Riley will see an increase of approximately 3,400 servicemen and women, and Fort Leavenworth will see an increase of approximately 500. As a result, more children will be coming into the school districts in those areas. In her opinion, the economic impact of the new military families in the community will more than make up for the cost of having two counts. (Attachment 1)

Lamont Godsey, Board of Education President of Geary County USD 475, testified in support of **HB 2059**. He informed the Committee that the Fort Riley area school districts currently have approximately 6,300 students, and 64% of those students are connected with Fort Riley. He noted that there are five elementary schools and one middle school on the Fort itself. He pointed out that approximately 50% of the 3,400 soldiers expected to arrive at Fort Riley will be married with children. He anticipated an increase of anywhere from 250 to 600 students in the district. He noted that 70% of those students will arrive at Fort Riley during the month of January, and in order to maintain a top quality education, the district must begin preparing for their arrival. The district's immediate concern was staffing. He noted that it is not possible to hire teachers in January and that, even in the summer, it is very difficult to hire teachers in certain areas. The bill will enable the district to take a second count on February 20, thus, state aid will be increased, and the district will have funds to pay for extra staff needed. He noted that the Geary County School Board has had a long-standing working relationship with Fort Riley and that the influx of military personnel will have a significant impact on the economy not only for the Fort Riley area but also for the state. In conclusion, Mr. Godsey called attention to copies of a position paper on increased student enrollment due to the changed mission of the Army. He directed the Committee's attention to a list on the reverse side of the paper showing all Fort Riley area school districts that are directly involved. (Attachment 2)

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On behalf of the Fort Riley military community, Major Colleen Wright, Fort Riley Board of Education, testified in support of **HB 2059**. She explained that the Army is currently undergoing a transformation in the structure and stationing of its combat units, and Fort Riley will receive a new unit configuration called the Unit of Action, which will bring approximately 1,900 families with 4,700 family members to Fort Riley. They will begin to arrive in small numbers in July of this year, but the bulk will arrive in the fall. The bulk of new family members will arrive in the middle of the school year. She went on to say that the current school finance formula calculates aid based on the number of students enrolled in September; therefore, funding for the local schools will not accurately reflect their true population demands or funding needs. The bill would allow Fort Riley's surrounding communities to be adequately funded to meet the needs of all children in their school districts. (Attachment 3)

Mark Desetti, Kansas National Education Association (KNEA), testified in support of **HB 2059**. He noted that KNEA supports the bill primarily because those serving in our armed forces should not have to worry about the education of their children. They should know that their children will have all the resources necessary in making the transition to a new school and a new community. (Attachment 4)

Representative Candy Ruff testified in support of **HB 2059**, noting that it would benefit the Fort Leavenworth school district. She explained that the Fort Leavenworth Command and General Staff College has widened the number of officers being educated and broadened the leadership class. She noted that College anticipates the arrival at least 500 additional military officers, and she estimated one-third of them will have families who will live in Fort Leavenworth and in the surrounding community. She went on to say that, beginning in January, the officers will be taking a nine month course for a masters in Military Science. She commented that, potentially, the nearby school districts in Lansing and Easton will be also be impacted by the arrival of new military personnel at Fort Leavenworth.

There being no others wishing to testify, Senator Schodorf closed the hearing on **HB 2059** and opened Committee discussion of the 2005 Senate K-12 School Finance Plan. At the outset, she thanked committee members for their input and efforts in developing the plan. She noted that the proposed plan was the first step in putting a plan on the table for all legislators to debate and that several other plans would be forthcoming. She commented that the 2005 Senate School Finance Plan is a three-part plan, and she believed that it would improve education for the state. She noted that changes and additions to the plan were welcomed. She called the Committee's attention to a handout entitled, "Proposed framework for K-12 Finance and Reform" (Attachment 5), which she used as an aid while she discussed the three parts of the plan – funding, vision and reform (The 2010 Commission), and accountability and monitoring of school finance (Legislative Post Audit).

With regard to funding, she noted that the proposed plan provides for a three-year increase in state aid for K-12 education. She reminded the Committee that there has been no increase in state aid for education since 2001. She discussed the data shown in a chart on the third page of the handout concerning the formula adjustments in the three-year plan with regard to BSAPP, at-risk weighting, bilingual weighting, special education excess cost, local option budget, and elimination of 0.50 vocational weighting. With regard to the elimination of vocational weighting, she noted that the Augenblick and Myers study said that vocational education did not cost as much as the 0.50 weighting. She commented that there are school districts which depend on vocational weighting; therefore, there would be considerable debate on vocational weighting. She went on to point out that the total package for funding the proposed plan is \$415 million over three years.

With regard to vision and reform, she noted that the creation of The 2010 Commission was proposed by the Senate President. She explained that this portion of the plan concerns the question, "What is education going to look like in the year 2010?" The work of the Commission would be to determine what Kansas school children need to succeed in the 21st Century and how to best provide it to them. The Commission's assigned task would be to continually review the state's current and future educational needs and costs. She recalled that the Supreme Court's decision mentions that education must be a process of continual improvement in the educational system. She explained that the Commission would be composed of 13 members and that the proposed bill would provide how the members would be appointed and would list their duties.

With regard to the accountability and monitoring of school finance portion of the plan, she noted that it relates to the Supreme Court's directive to determine the actual costs of an education and how they are analyzed

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without the use of historical data or political gains. The duties and responsibilities of the Legislative Division of Post Audit would be expanded to include measuring actual school district costs and providing ongoing monitoring of school district costs in addition to making recommendations for improved efficiency and cost savings. At this point, she distributed copies of a chart concerning the conceptual framework/questions used when determining what could be done through the Legislative Division of Post Audit. (Attachment 6) She listed the topics in the proposed bill that could be included for school district performance audits.

In summary, Senator Schodorf said the Senate School Finance Plan was a good faith effort for increased funding of public education to show the Supreme Court that the state has a long-range vision and a plan for funding public education. The 2010 Commission will look at the future of public education in Kansas through funding formulas and weights. The accountability part increases the work of the Post Audit Division so that it will be helpful in monitoring and calculating ongoing costs. She noted that Post Audit would work with The 2010 Commission.

She commented that it was early in the session, and the plan was an overall framework for a funding plan. It was proposed that the first year be funded within existing resources without a tax increase. Two funding possibilities for the first year included the ending balance and the growth in the economy. New money for year two and three would be needed. The money could come from an increase in sales and income taxes, or, if those increases do not receive support from the majority of the Legislature, there could be alternative financing proposals. She informed the Committee that the three proposals would be introduced on February 9 in the Senate Ways and Means Committee, which is an exempt committee, and the bills would then be referred to the Senate Education Committee.

As requested by the Committee at a previous meeting, Dale Dennis, Deputy Commissioner, State Board of Education, distributed copies of a computer printout indicating the effects of the proposed school finance plan. (Attachment 7)

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 9, 2005.