

MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Senator Ruth Teichman at 1:35 p.m. on March 10, 2005, in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

Committee members absent: Senators Schodorf, Vratil, and Allen—Excused

Committee staff present: Carolyn Rampey, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Shirley Higgins, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Sharon Wagner, Felten Middle School, Hays, Kansas

Senator Teichman informed the Committee that Senator Schordorf was absent because her daughter had been in an automobile accident earlier in the day. Although her daughter was not seriously injured, she went to be with her. Vice Chairman Vratil was unable to attend the meeting due to a prior commitment.

Senator Lee introduced Sharon Wagner, an art teacher at Felten Middle School in Hays. Senator Lee explained that she was invited to visit Ms. Wagner's classroom, and she was very impressed by the way she integrates art into everything else in the student's life.

Ms. Wagner said it was interesting that, as you walk through the Capitol you see E. Felten's sculpture in the cubicles. She went on to say that she would be taking the Committee on a trip to her classroom through a visual presentation. She explained that she teaches sixth, seventh, and eighth grade art, and three years ago she went through the National Board certification process, which she views as a growing experience for teachers. She began her presentation which was entitled, "Making Art Relevant in Today's School Climate or No Child Left Behind in Art." (Attachment 1) At the outset, she said, "We think of art as a canvas for students to contemplate about life. With their critical, imaginative, expressive eyes, they think about the past, the present, and their future. We are concerned about physical and emotional well being, and we do independent and group work." She noted that she is concerned, "With No Child Left Behind Act, we are seeing narrowing of education, and I'm hoping you will see in this presentation how vital the arts really are for an overall education of our students. Historically, we have known that we should be teaching arts, humanities, and sciences. Of course, the No Child Left Behind Act only addresses two of the intelligences; there are eight of them. The arts really do reach all of the intelligences." She explained that the first art standard is the one where you create art work. The second one is about organizing it by using elements and principles so that you have a function or a purpose. The third one is choosing and evaluating a range of subject matters, symbols, and ideas. Number four is understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures. Number five is reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others. The last is making connections between the visual arts and the other disciplines. Ms. Wagner went on to discuss the assignments she has made this year. She showed the committee the art work of several of her students and related their art to their personalities and lives. In addition, she discussed the tests she gives and the grading standards she uses. In conclusion, Ms. Wagner expressed her concern that her budget has been cut 75% and that art classes are being cut. She commented, "I think that students need to have a place where they can be themselves, and also I think discipline breakdown might happen if we didn't have the arts in school."

After thanking Ms. Wagner for coming, Senator Teichman called the Committee's attention to the minutes of the February 15, 16, 17, and 21 meetings.

Senator Goodwin moved to approve the minutes of the February 15, 16, 17, and 21, 2005, meeting, seconded by Senator Ostmeyer. The motion carried.

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

The next meeting is scheduled for March 14, 2005.