

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Senator Dwayne Umbarger at 1:35 p.m. on February 20, 2001 in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Committee staff present: Avis Swartzman, Revisor of Statutes
 Ben Barrett, Legislative Research Department
 Carolyn Rampey, Legislative Research Department
 Judy Steinlicht, Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Senator Dave Kerr
 Craig Grant, KNEA
 Diane Lindeman, KBOR
 Senator Christine Downey
 Diane Gjerstad, Wichita Public Schools
 Mark Desetti, KNEA

Others attending: See Attached List

SB220–At-risk pupil weighting and mastery of basic reading skills

Senator Dave Kerr, gave testimony in support of **SB220**. (Attachment 1) The goal of this bill is to further our efforts to have our children reading by the time they finish third grade or at least by the time they start fourth grade. If a child is not reading by this time, they are at-risk. If they cannot read, they cannot do any of their school work, including math. Reading is at the heart of it all. The bill has a reporting requirement. The number of children not reading at the end of the second grade level is reported with a strategy to have those children reading by the end of third grade and then the school must report how many of those children are still not reading after third grade.

Supportive comments were made by Committee members but there was concern of what would be done for a child who still could not read by the end of third grade. Literature is not conclusive of whether it is beneficial to hold a child back. The system will identify schools with children who do not read by the end of third grade and it is hoped that these schools can learn the strategies of the schools that have been successful.

Craig Grant, KNEA, spoke to the Committee in favor of **SB220**. (Attachment 2) Craig agreed that there are problems for children that have not learned to read by third grade. The goal of the bill is that all students master reading skills by third grade.

Diane Gjerstad, Wichita Public Schools, gave her testimony in favor of **SB220**. (Attachment 3) She agreed with statements made by Senator Kerr and Craig Grant. Her testimony showed facts and figures in her district. She stated that she totally supports the bill, but the dollars available are not adequate.

Hearings on **SB220** were closed. Senator Vratil made a motion to pass **SB220** favorably. Senator Oleen seconded the motion. Motion carried.

SB200–Teacher service scholarships, qualified student definition to include certificated teachers

Diane Lindeman, Associate Director of Fiscal Affairs/Student Financial Aid, Kansas Board of Regents, gave testimony in support of **SB200**. This bill is not new, but makes changes to an

existing one, the Kansas Teacher Scholarship Program. Changes are outlined in (Attachment 4.) To make the program truly effective, it would be necessary to increase the funding.

Senator Downey offered testimony in favor of **SB200**. (Attachment 5) These bills, **SB220** and **SB219** are very small pieces of a very complex solution of teacher shortages. This bill addresses the issues of recruitment.

Senator Oleen stated that there is another bill, **HB2014**, dealing with these same issues. If one of the Senate bills could be blessed, she would get the house bill and work on putting the components of the bills together and make a presentation. Senator Downey agreed that this would be a good idea.

SB219–School districts, grow your own teachers program

Senator Downey offered testimony in favor of **SB219**. (Attachment 6) This bill would encourage schools to look within their own schools for qualified employees that could be encouraged to pursue a teaching degree with forgivable loans as a part of the incentive package. Districts would receive a 50% match for the amount invested in certification attainment by an employee.

Diane Gjerstad offered testimony in favor of **SB219**. (Attachment 7) The Wichita School District has used two versions of the “grow your own teacher” program successfully.

Mark Desetti, KNEA, also gave testimony supporting **SB219**. (Attachment 8) He supports the bill for three reasons, first, it maintains high standards for entry in teaching profession. It recognizes the forgivable loans, and finally for the support program that is put in place by the school district is critical.

Hearings were closed on **SB219** and **SB220**. Chairman Umbarger will ask that these two bills be blessed.

Meeting was adjourned. The next meeting is scheduled February 27, 2001 at 1:30 p.m.