

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Clay Aurand at 9:00 a.m. on January 15, 2009, in Room 785 of the Docking State Office Building.

All members were present except:

Representative Lana Gordon- excused
Representative Steve Huebert- excused

Committee staff present:

Sharon Wenger, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Reagan Cussimano, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Theresa Kiernan, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Dale Dennis, Kansas State Department of Education
Janet Henning, Committee Assistant

Chairman Aurand introduced staff members to Committee members and welcomed new Committee members to the Education Committee.

Dr. Alexa Posny, Commissioner, Kansas State Department of Education, gave an overview to Committee members of the progress of education in Kansas. Committee members were advised the State Board of Education's goals and objectives include:

- Ensuring that all students meet or exceed high academic standards and are prepared for their next steps
- Redesigning the delivery system to meet the students' changing needs
- Providing an effective educator in every classroom
- Ensuring a visionary and effective leader in every school
- Improving communication with all constituent groups and policy partners

Dr. Posny told Committee members that children who have not been exposed to early learning opportunities have one-third less language capabilities. She advised that ninety-eight percent of Kansas children attend kindergarten, even though kindergarten is not mandatory in Kansas. She also advised that seventy-eight percent of Kansas children attend an all-day everyday kindergarten.

Dr. Posny told Committee members that ninety-seven percent of Kansas children are entering kindergarten with good oral language skills. She also advised that children who were read to every day had higher reading scores and scored higher on all academic achievement areas. Dr. Posny told Committee members that children who attended preschool for a great number of years prior to kindergarten scored higher in academic areas and children in full-day kindergarten classrooms have higher spring scores in the academic area as well.

Dr. Posny told Committee members that Kansas student performance results have been phenomenal. Dr. Posny advised that in reading, math, and science testing, student scores have raised dramatically.

Dr. Posny advised the American Legislative Exchange Council's 2007 report card listed Kansas seventh in the nation for its academic achievement. Kansas students rank in the top ten percent for reading and mathematics on the ACT.

Dr. Posny advised that students who take challenging courses and meet high standards in middle school are much more likely to enter high school ready to succeed. She further stated that research has shown that a powerful predictor of whether high school students will graduate and earn a college degree is the rigor of the high school curriculum they complete. Advance Placement (AP) exams show how many students are taking challenging courses and attempting to earn college credit while still in high school. She also advised that 500 more students took the ACT test last year.

Dr. Posny told Committee members that seventy percent of the fastest growing jobs will require education beyond high school. Forty percent of all new jobs will require at least an associates degree and thirty percent of all new jobs will require postsecondary education with less than an associates degree

Dr. Posny spoke to Committee members of teacher shortages and advised that forty percent of the teachers leave the field after seven years. Thirty-six percent of the current teachers can retire within five years. She advised fifty percent of reported personnel are over 45 and thirty-six percent are over 50. She stated twelve percent fewer students have gone into teaching over the past six years. Fifty percent of administrators can retire in five years. However, she advised that when the economy goes down, more students choose education because it is a stable career. (Attachments 1 and 2)

A question and answer session followed the presentation.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 20, 2009.