

MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jean Schodorf at 1:35 p.m. on January 19, 2005, in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

Committee members absent: Senators Allen and Vratil – Excused

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: Mark Tallman, Kansas Association of School Boards
Mark Desetti, Kansas National Education Association
Jim Menze, United School Administrators of Kansas

Noting that several Wichita public school ROTC students were present, Senator Schodorf introduced Col. Bob Hester, who is in charge of the Wichita ROTC program which currently includes 2,377 middle school and high school students. Col. Hester explained that a group of ROTC cadets visits the Capitol each year to see how government works and to meet legislators. He introduced Cadet Captain Jesse Gilmartin from North High School and Sgt. Major Juliana Shaw from Brooks Middle Magnet, who came prepared to speak to the Committee about their ROTC experience. Both students emphasized that the ROTC leadership program improved their academic achievement and that their participation in the ROTC program was instrumental in their becoming more involved in school events and in community service.

Presentations by statewide education organizations

Mark Tallman, Kansas Association of School Boards (KASB), distributed copies of various KASB publications and copies of the KASB Constitution. He noted that KASB positions are adopted at a delegate assembly where every school board that is a member may have one vote, and the KASB Board of Directors sets the KASB legislative priorities for the year. He called attention to copies of KASB's position on the Kansas Supreme Court *Montoy* school finance decision. He noted KASB is pleased that the Court put a strong priority on looking at education as a process of improvement. Furthermore, KASB agrees with the Court's finding that Legislature is not providing the funding necessary to meet the definition of a suitable education and that the Legislature must address how funding is distributed to school districts. Mr. Tallman also discussed actions which KASB believes the Legislature must take to correct the deficiencies in the school finance system. (Attachment 1) In conclusion, he called the Committee's attention to copies of a list KASB strategic directions to help all students meet or exceed high standards, to recruit and retain a competent teacher for every classroom, and to design an educational delivery system to ensure learning for all. (Attachment 2) Mr. Tallman also distributed copies of KASB's summary of the Kansas Supreme Court Decision on School Finance. (Attachment 3)

Mark Desetti, Kansas National Education Association (KNEA), distributed copies of several KNEA pamphlets. In addition, he gave several KNEA booklets and a copy of an article on Kansas' performance excellence to Senator Schodorf to be available to committee members upon request. Mr. Desetti noted that KNEA is a member-driven organization, and he explained how KNEA works for a quality public school for every child, a strong teaching profession, and the well-being of its members. (Attachment 4) In conclusion, he distributed copies of the KNEA legislative agenda for the 2005 Session which outlines four serious challenges facing Kansas public schools and suggests what the Legislature must to address the challenges. (Attachment 5)

Jim Menze, United School Administrators of Kansas (USA), explained that USA encompasses nine member associations, and its mission is to serve, support, and develop education leaders and to establish a significant force to improve Kansas education. As to USA's reaction to the Kansas Supreme Court ruling on school finance, Mr. Menze said USA agrees that schools have been underfunded and that the amount of money allocated to schools should reflect the cost of a suitable education in a school district. He noted that USA wishes that the Court would have been more prescriptive on what would satisfy the mandate of the constitution. (Attachment 6) Mr. Menze distributed copies of USA's summary of legislative positions. (Attachment 7)

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE Senate Education Committee at 1:35 p.m. on January 19, 2005, in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

Senator Schodorf commented that it has been suggested that perhaps “suitable education” should be redefined. She asked the conferees if they felt the Legislature should do nothing or should adopt the definition which the Supreme Court cited. Mr. Menze said USA believes the definition the Supreme Court used was adequate. Mr. Desetti said the state has already defined “suitable,” and it ensures that all children move on to very high standards. Mr. Tallman concurred with the opinions expressed by Mr. Menze and Mr. Desetti.

Dale Dennis, Deputy Commissioner, State Board of Education, distributed copies of information requested by Senator Apple at a previous meeting. The first packet regards 2004 assessed valuation as reported by unified school districts (Attachment 8) and the second packet regards an increase in budget per pupil and the effect of such increase on the local property tax (Attachment 9).

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

The next meeting is scheduled for January 20, 2005.