

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Dwayne Umbarger at 1:40 p.m. on January 28, 2002 in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Committee staff present: Ben Barrett, Legislative Research
Carolyn Rampey, Legislative Research
Theresa Kiernan, Revisor of Statutes
Dale Dennis, Deputy Commissioner of Education
Judy Steinlicht, Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Mark Tallman, KASB
Jim Edwards, Senior Vice President, KCCI
Craig Grant, KNEA

Others attending: See attached list.

Chairman Umbarger announced that all Committee members are invited to attend the House Education Meetings on January 29 and January 30 to listen to presentations by Dr. Steve Wyckoff of ESSDCAK and Milt Dougherty, Superintendent of Little River (USD 444) on Learning for the 21st Century.

SB166--Conferring power of local control on school district boards of education

Mark Tallman, KASB, spoke as a proponent on **SB166**. School boards currently can only take actions that are specifically authorized by law. Under this bill, school boards are authorized to “transact all school district business and adopt policies that the board deems appropriate to perform its constitutional duty to maintain, develop and operate local public schools.” The bill specifies that it does not intend to relieve other units of government of duties and responsibilities provided by law. It would be similar to the powers of cities and counties often referred to as “home rule.” It would provide schools with more flexibility in their operations. It would reduce the need for the Legislature to consider bills to authorize school boards to take “common sense” actions on a local level every year. If the Legislature believes school boards are doing something inappropriate, it can simple pass a law to stop that action. (Attachment 1)

Jim Edwards, KCCI, spoke as a proponent on **SB166**. Mr. Edwards simply stated that it does not make sense to make elected school boards go through the steps that they are sometimes required to do when they could deal with issues best on a local level. (Attachment 2)

Craig Grant, KNEA, spoke as an opponent on **SB166**. KNEA believes that the Legislature would not want to give up the authority to oversee school spending since the Legislature has control over funding of our schools. They are concerned that a few school districts may abuse the flexibility and authority this bill gives. For those few that would abuse the authority, KNEA believes the Legislature should keep the current practice. (Attachment 3)

After a short discussion, Chairman Umbarger called for a vote on the bill.

Senator Teichman made a motion to pass SB166 favorably out of the Committee. Seconded by Senator Corbin. After additional discussion, the Committee voted and the motion carried.

Senator Lee asked to share a first in the history of mankind with the Committee. Her son is an astro-physicist at the University of Chicago and with a team of five, they located an orphan afterglow. Her reason for sharing is that three from the team of five were educated in Kansas, two from Johnson County and one from Smith County and the wife of the fourth is from Kansas.

Senator Oleen requested that the staff prepare for the Committee a review of the procedures involving the

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consolidation of school districts and a review of the report from last year.

Ben Barrett, at the request of the Committee, researched and found information in a House bill from 1999, **HB2303** with supporting material, that would help to define criteria for eligibility of the various categories of at-risk which are described in **SB79**. (Attachment 4)

Senator Oleen introduced five Girl Scouts visiting the Education Committee today.

The meeting adjourned at 2:13 pm.