

MINUTES

2010 COMMISSION

November 13-14, 2006
Room 123-S—Statehouse

Members Present

Rochelle Chronister, Chairperson
Dr. Ray Daniels, Vice-Chairperson
Senator Jean Kurtis Schodorf
Representative Kathe Decker
Representative Sue Storm
Barbara Mackey
Carolyn Campbell
Dennis Jones
Stephen Iliff
Jesse Paine, Attorney General's Office
Barbara Hinton, Legislative Post Auditor

Staff Present

Carolyn Rampey, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Sharon Wenger, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Michele Alishahi, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Art Griggs, Revisor of Statutes Office
Theresa Kiernan, Revisor of Statutes Office

Monday, November 13

The 2010 Commission attended the Legislative Post Audit Committee meeting to hear the completed report entitled *K-12 Education: Reviewing Free-Lunch Student Counts Used as the Basis for At-Risk Funding, Part I.* Katrin Osterhaus presented the report. 2010 Commission members participated in a question and answer session of the auditors along with the members of the Legislative Post Audit Committee after which time 2010 Commission members moved to Room 123-S to begin the 2010 Commission meeting.

At 11:15 a.m., the 2010 Commission meeting was called to order by Chairperson Rochelle Chronister. Questioning of the auditors continued. A great deal of discussion ensued regarding using poverty via the free-lunch counts as a proxy for determining the number of at-risk students.

Representative Decker told the Commission that the House Education Committee reviewed this issue for eight years and found that the free-lunch count was the best proxy for determining at-risk students. Chairperson Chronister questioned the audit's random sample containing only 500 students. Barbara Hinton, Legislative Post Auditor, explained that the sample was representative of student demographics across the state and was statistically valid.

Dale Dennis, Deputy Commissioner of the Kansas Department of Education (KSDE), presented information on Leadership Academies across the state. Mr. Dennis explained that KSDE used some Department indirect funds to fund six or seven leadership mini-grants at a total of \$7,500 in the first year and \$6,000 in the second year. Mr. Dennis told the Commission that there was no organized leadership program in the state; and those that had occurred, had not been evaluated. He also explained that the Professional Development law, designed to provide matching funds to school districts for in-service education for certificated school employees, was never fully funded.

Scott Frank from Legislative Post Audit discussed performance audit report status and scope statements. Mr. Frank reported that Part II of the audit entitled *K-12 Education: Reviewing Free-Lunch Student Counts Used as the Basis for At-Risk Funding* will be presented at the Legislative Post Audit Committee meeting on December 14, 2006. This audit will answer the following question: How does the number of free-lunch students in Kansas compare with the number of students who receive at-risk services?

2010 Commission members discussed several audit topics and approved three school district performance audit topics for the Legislative Post Audit school audit team. They are:

- Reviewing the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategies Used by Kansas School Districts;
- Reviewing the Cost of Vocational Education Programs; and
- Reviewing Issues Related to Virtual Schools.

Scope statements for these audits are Attachment 1.

Commissioner Iliff made a motion to approve an audit entitled "K-12 Education: Comparing the Centralization of School District Accounting in Different States." Motion seconded by Commissioner Campbell. Motion failed.

Chairperson Chronister discussed potential school visit plans for the 2010 Commission next year. She would like to visit Northwest Kansas, Salina, and Junction City in the spring of 2007.

The Commission members proceeded with comments and recommendations to be included in the Commission report. Ms. Hinton, Legislative Post Auditor, and Jesse Paine, representing the Attorney General, are non-voting members, and did not vote on any of these recommendations.

Senator Schodorf moved to add conclusions to the report regarding the importance of the following:

- *All-day Kindergarten and Programming At-Risk Four Year Olds;*
- *Professional Learning Communities;*

- Schools within Schools;
- At-Risk Education.

Barbara Mackey seconded. Motion carried.

Dr. Daniels moved that the following conclusions be added to the report regarding improving the quality of staff:

- Leadership Academy Development.
- Mentoring New Teachers Enhancement.
- Professional Development Enhancement.

Carolyn Campbell seconded. Motion carried.

Dale Dennis, Deputy Commissioner of KSDE provided information on the following topics:

- All-Day Kindergarten ([Attachment 2](#));
- Non-Proficient At-Risk Weighting ([Attachment 3](#));
- Teacher Mentoring Program ([Attachment 4](#));
- Professional Development ([Attachment 5](#));
- School within a School ([Attachment 6](#));
- Four-Year Old At-Risk ([Attachment 7](#));
- High-Density At-Risk ([Attachment 8](#));
- Excluding KPERS from Cost-of-Living Calculation ([Attachment 9](#)); and
- Characteristics of Districts by Achievement ([Attachment 10](#)).

Representative Decker moved that the Commission recommend that the Legislature review the Legislative Post Audit study entitled K-12 Education: Reviewing Free-Lunch Student Counts Used as the Basis for At-Risk Funding, Part I, concerning free-lunch students to ensure at-risk funding is provided to those students for which it was intended. This Post Audit recommendation states that the House Select Committee on School Finance and the Senate Education Committee should hear testimony regarding instituting an age limit for free-lunch students for the purpose of at-risk funding and changing the at-risk funding count from a headcount to an FTE count.

However, the Commission does not recommend any reductions in at-risk funding be made. Stephen Iliff seconded. Motion carried.

Dennis Jones moved that \$19 million (the amount identified in the free-lunch performance audit paid in at-risk funding for ineligible students) of school funding be used to expand all-day kindergarten. Representative Storm seconded. Motion failed.

Dr. Daniels moved that in support of the recommendations made by the At-Risk Education Council, the second level of funding for at-risk students, which is the high density formula, be based

on the prior year's data and implemented using a linear transition calculation, that continued support of the data system being developed by the Kansas State Department of Education so that tracking a student's proficiency can be easily done. Dennis Jones seconded. Motion carried.

Regarding education for English Language Learners, Dr. Daniels made the following motion regarding Commission recommendations:

- Request that the Legislature send a letter to the U.S. Department of Education requesting that more than one year be allowed between the time an English Language Learner student enters a bilingual program and the time the student must take an assessment test.
- Request the Kansas Board of Regents review higher education instruction for students studying to become teachers. All students completing instruction to become public school teachers should be instructed in teaching English Language Learners, and furthermore, should be required to gain an ELL endorsement to their teaching certification.
- Recommend the Legislature continue to look at best practices in training ELL students.
- Because the current bilingual weighting probably underreports the number of children who need English language assistance, the Commission recommends that the weighting be changed from a full-time equivalent weighting with contact hours to headcount and adjusted to 0.2 from the present 0.395 weight.

Representative Storm seconded. Motion carried.

Representative Daniels moved that the Commission recommend that \$500,000 be added annually and ongoing to support leadership academies across the state. Motion carried.

Stephen Iliff moved that any future leadership academies include an evaluation component so that progress over time, on a three, five, and ten-year basis, is measured. Representative Decker seconded. Motion carried.

In recognition of the importance of mentoring programs for new teachers, Representative Storm moved that the Commission recommend an additional \$1 million be added to the Teacher Mentoring Program so the program could be extended to provide a second year of mentoring to new teachers. Dr. Daniels seconded. Motion carried.

Dr. Daniels moved to recommend an increase of \$4 million to the Professional Development Fund. Barbara Mackey seconded. Motion carried.

Dr. Daniels advocated a close monitoring of Professional Development activities be done by KSDE.

The following observations and notes were made by Commission members for addition to the final report.

Chairperson Chronister feels strongly that no child should be required to ride on a school bus—one way—more than 60 minutes per day. If it requires additional bus routes, the state and federal government should be prepared to pay for them. The Commission heard a report of one family whose children were on the bus for one hour and forty minutes —one way—and several families having children who ride a bus over an hour.

The Commission recognizes the importance of ensuring our state's schools are safe for all children. The school tour recognized a particularly innovative strategy for ensuring safety through an air-lock entrance observed in one middle school on the interim Commission tour of schools. This air-locked area required every visitor to the school to be "checked in" at the school office before further entering the school building.

One very important concept recognized by the Commission is that parental involvement in school activities is crucial to a child's success. Some of the most successful schools went to extraordinary lengths to involve their parents; including making home visits to families who failed to attend parent-teacher conferences.

Prepared by Sharon Wenger

Approved by Commission on:

December 8, 2006

(date)