

# SENATE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

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### **Sen. President Morris Appoints Garden City's Dr. Julia Ford to Newly Created At-Risk Education Council**

TOPEKA – Senate President Steve Morris ( R-Hugoton) today announced the appointment of Dr. Julia Ford, Deputy Superintendent of Public Schools in Garden City, Kan., to the At-Risk Education Council. This new entity was created as part of the school finance package passed during this summer's special legislative session.

Morris stated, "Dr. Ford will be a tremendous asset to this council. She brings extensive experience in evaluating and supervising staff and programs targeting students who are considered at risk of failing. With the Supreme Court's focus on special education and at-risk students in its recent school finance decisions, we must ensure we have the best possible people to serve in this very important capacity. It is critical to maintain effectiveness and accountability in the programs we fund to help those students who are most vulnerable. I am confident Julia Ford will prove to be an outstanding member of this new panel. I am so pleased she is willing to make this commitment for the students of Kansas."

Dr. Julia Ford has held several positions in the Garden City School District since 1988. She has been a classroom and Title I Reading teacher, District Staff Development Coordinator, Assistant Superintendent and currently, Deputy Superintendent. She also served as Director of Curriculum and Instruction K-12 for Norman Public Schools in Norman, Okla. in 2001-2002; during 2002-2003, Dr. Ford was Director of Elementary Programs for Canyon Public Schools in Canyon, Tex., and at the same time, was a consultant for the Southern Regional Education Board working on *High Schools that Work* and *Making Middle Schools Matter* for Ohio and Kentucky.

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Dr. Ford has had extensive experience in evaluating programs and educators, in developing programs and curriculums as well as instruments to measure their effectiveness. She has served as a facilitator, trainer and consultant on a number of initiatives which dealt directly with at-risk students and the efforts targeting at-risk students. She has also worked with English as Second Language students and programs and has supervised and evaluated Special Education Coordinators; these are also areas of concern mentioned by the Supreme Court in its rulings.

The At-Risk Education Council is charged with identifying the conditions and circumstances that put a student at risk for failure. The council is to develop and recommend programs and services to meet the needs of at-risk students, to help close the achievement gap, and to establish methods for assessing and evaluating those programs and services. They are also to recommend funding alternatives for these programs. The council will provide a report on its activities to the 2010 Commission and the Governor in 2006, and a final report to include all its recommendations in 2007. The council is set to disband on June 30, 2007.

According to the statute, the council is composed of six members including one each appointed by the Senate President, the Speaker of the House, the minority leaders in both chambers, the Commissioner of Education or his/her designee and a chairman to be appointed by the Governor. Members of the council are to be selected "with special reference to training, experience or expertise in serving at-risk children." No legislators are to be appointed to the council.