

MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Dwayne Umbarger at 1:32 p.m. on February 24, 2004 in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

All members were present:

Committee staff present:

Carolyn Rampey, Legislative Research
Theresa Kiernan, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Judy Steinlicht, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Theresa Kiernan, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Mark Desetti, Kansas National Education Association
Susan Helbert, Kansas State Department of Education
Senator Bill Bunten
Senator Dave Jackson
John Atchley, former President & Chair of American Home Life Insurance
Paul Fink, former Principal of Topeka High School
Kim Borchers, Radio Show host and home maker
Doris Riley, Concerned Citizen
Charlene Bredemeier, Kansas State President of Eagle Forum
Jim Edwards, Kansas Association of School Boards
Mark Dick, CPA, Wichita
Rob Balsters, Chief Fiscal Officer, Seaman USD#345

Others attending:

See Attached List

SB293--School safety and security act; weapon defined

Theresa Kiernan, Revisor of Statutes, explained amendments that make technical and clarifying changes to **SB293**. Theresa provided a balloon showing the amendments and explained that the result would be to broaden the definition of "weapon" by giving local boards the authority to adopt resolutions that include their own definition of what would be considered a weapon and, to prohibit the possession of weapons on school property which are not otherwise prohibited under current law. (Attachment 1)

Mark Desetti, KNEA, believes the revised bill meets the concerns of KNEA.

Senator Oleen made a motion to amend **SB293** as described in the balloon amendment and to recommend **SB293** as amended favorably for passage. Seconded by Senator Schodorf. Motion carried.

SB157--Alternative teacher preparation programs

Susan Helbert, coordinator for teacher certification for the State Department of Education, appeared before the committee to answer questions raised about whether the bill would comply with the No Child Left Behind provisions and licensure requirements of the State Department of Education. Susan explained reasons why the bill does not comply.

Senator Bunten thought the bill was a good idea with the shortage of teachers and made a motion to recommend **SB157** favorably for passage. Seconded by Senator Emler. Motion failed.

SB512--School districts; building-based budgeting

Senator Bill Bunten explained that **SB512** provides for school based budgeting by Kansas school districts in a format that is readable and understandable by lay people. Senator Bunten provided a copy of the school budget format that the School Based Budget Working Group endorsed. It breaks the system wide figures down to a manageable, informative and understandable level. Senator Bunten believes that information in the hands of district patrons would be beneficial to education. It would allow those who

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fund the schools and those who run the schools to know where the dollars are spent, what the school board's priorities are and finally to determine if more dollars are in fact needed or if better use of existing funds is required. ([Attachment 2](#))

Senator Dave Jackson testified in support of the concept and principles of **SB512** which he believes simplifies the budget process to an understandable level. ([Attachment 3](#))

John Atchley, retired, former President and Chair of American Home Life Insurance, testified in support of **SB512**. Mr. Atchley told the committee that he served on Senator Bunten's School-Based Budget Committee. He said that he was not an expert on school finance, but in years of business experience, he could state that the budgeting process is one of the most important parts of managing a successful company. He believes the problem is that no one knows how much is needed to provide adequate funding for education. Mr. Atchley believes each school should prepare a budget based on their needs and submit the budgets to be studied to determine the total funding needed for all schools. ([Attachment 4](#))

Paul Fink, former principal of Topeka High School, offered testimony in favor of **SB512**. Mr. Fink feels the greatest value of this bill would be the ability of the patrons to understand budgets. He sees this bill as chance to work the budget from the ground up and to involve the principal as well as the staff people in developing the kind of program that the schools should have. ([no attachment](#))

Kim Borchers, radio show host and home maker, testified in favor of **SB512**. Ms. Borchers told the committee that she was a recent school board candidate and at the first budget meeting that was intended to bring them "up to speed" created a lot of glazed looks. She believes this bill is the first step in the right direction to seriously examine how Kansas funds education. ([Attachment 5](#))

Doris Riley, citizen & former teacher from Overland Park, Kansas, believes that **SB512** would benefit school districts and that the citizens of Kansas deserve clear, standardized reports. Ms. Riley believes if all schools used standardized accounting procedures and common definitions, and report at a meaningful level, everyone in the education process would have the ability to understand the strengths and needs of each district. ([Attachment 6](#))

Charlene Bredemeier, Kansas State President of Eagle Forum, testified in favor of **SB512**. She believes the March 2002 Legislative Post Performance Audit Report clearly spelled out the problems existing in the present system of school district accountability. Some very basic changes and additions would help the average citizen to see how their taxes are being spent for education. She believes that we must get a better handle on how the billions of education tax dollars are being spent before we can ask the taxpayers for more money. ([Attachment 7](#))

Jim Edwards, Kansas Association of School Boards testified as an opponent to **SB512**. This bill would require individual school building budgets and increase the size of the main school budget by 11 pages. Last year, a great deal of time was spent to produce alternatives to school budgets and what evolved was an additional budget publication that is compiled for all of the unified school districts in Kansas and is made available to anyone that desires a copy. School districts already make available to taxpayers more budget information than any other unit of government. Three budget documents are available, 1) the total budget, 2) the district's Budget Profile and 3) the district's Budget at a Glance. Mr. Edwards introduced Mark Dick, an accountant with more than 30 years experience. ([Attachment 8](#))

Mark Dick, accountant and trained auditor, appeared as a citizen and an opponent of **SB512**. His opinion is that government is not like business and a personal business is not a democracy. A business is there to make a profit and schools are there to provide an education. A school should have good business principles and be efficient and effective, but they are not there for profit. Government budgets, and controls cost by function, not by each site from which the function is delivered. Mr. Dick said he has studied this issue many hours and believes **SB512** would increase the administrative cost of providing education in Kansas and found no credible information to support that building based budgeting would result in a reduction of the cost of education. ([Attachment 9](#))

Rob Balsters, Chief Fiscal Officer, Seaman USD 345, was given the assignment to make some building-

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based budgets for the schools in USD #345. He provided the committee with summary information for Seaman High School, Northern Hills Junior High, Logan Junior High and East Indianola Elementary which are all schools in USD 345. Mr. Balsters said he believed that the forms duplicate themselves a lot. Each school would have a packet of about 8 or 9 pages. This budget is a laborious task and represents about 50 hours of work. Mr. Balsters doesn't think this type of budget gives any additional information that you could not get from another source. He doesn't think it would be understood any better either. If school principals were put in charge of preparing the budget, they would have to hire someone. Mr. Balsters does not believe that budgeting from bottom up would save any money and in fact it would increase the cost of education. Mr. Balsters stated that he was definitely an opponent of **SB512**. One sample budget for Northern Hills Junior High is attached. ([Attachment 10](#))

Written testimony in support of **SB512** is attached from Dr. Walt Chappel, President of Educational Management Consultants. ([Attachment 11](#))

Written testimony in opposition of **SB512** is attached from Dr. Kent Hurn, United School Administrators ([Attachment 12](#)); Val DeFever, Schools for Quality Education ([Attachment 13](#)) and Dr. Gary George, Olathe USD #233 ([Attachment 14](#)).

Diane Gjerstad, Wichita School District provided a newspaper editorial from the Wichita Eagle regarding the Budget at a Glance stating "the document is a marvel of clarity and simplicity. The dense, confusing district budget book of the past are no more."

The meeting was adjourned at 2:33 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled March 2, 2004.