

Under the Dome – 2009 Session Wrap-up

Education legislation considered during the 2009 session

Financial Literacy: The [conference committee report on SB 41](http://skyways.lib.ks.us/ksleg/KLRD/2009ConfCommRpts/Ccrb41_001_30.pdf) as adopted expands financial literacy requirements on schools and directs the State Board of Education to put financial literacy standards on the state assessments. KNEA and KASB jointly opposed this bill as an unfunded mandate. The requirements were softened a bit, allowing this to be implemented as state assessments were normally revised. (http://skyways.lib.ks.us/ksleg/KLRD/2009ConfCommRpts/Ccrb41_001_30.pdf)

Disabilities History and Awareness: The [conference committee report on SB 41](http://skyways.lib.ks.us/ksleg/KLRD/2009ConfCommRpts/Ccrb41_001_30.pdf) as adopted also puts a requirement on school districts to provide instruction in disabilities history and awareness and directs the State Board of Education to establish a period of time to be designated for disabilities history and awareness. KNEA had opposed the original bill as an unfunded mandate (it required a “course of instruction on disabilities history and awareness”). The bill was rewritten to address our concerns and still meet the goals of the proponents.

(http://skyways.lib.ks.us/ksleg/KLRD/2009ConfCommRpts/Ccrb41_001_30.pdf)

Vouchers for students with autism (HB 2227): This bill, introduced by Rep. Lance Kinzer (R-Olathe) had a hearing the House Education Committee and was set aside. KNEA testified against the bill. While no action was taken this year, the bill is still available for consideration in 2010.

Services for students with dyslexia: This began as a bill and was ultimately turned into a resolution – [HCR 5015](http://www.kslegislature.org/bills/2010/2009_5015.pdf). The bill placed significant new requirements on school districts and provided no funding for their implementation. The Resolution calls on the State Department of Education to review assessments and best practices for addressing the needs of students with reading difficulties and dyslexia.

(http://www.kslegislature.org/bills/2010/2009_5015.pdf)

Working after retirement: The first conference committee on HB 2072 had been adopted by the Senate but was then rejected by the House. The only thing it did was to treat contracted retirees who return to work the same as those who are hired directly by school districts. There was no change in the earnings limit and no change in the KPERS surcharge.

A new conference committee brought out a new [conference committee report on 2072](http://skyways.lib.ks.us/ksleg/KLRD/2009ConfCommRpts/Ccrb2072_002_56.pdf) with some significant changes.

The changes are:

- Contracted employees are treated the same as those hired directly by school districts,
- The separation in service before returning is raised from 30 days to 60 days,
- For licensed public school employees, the earnings cap is lifted for a period of three years, allowing retirees to return to the same employer from which they retired,
- The KPERS surcharge is set at the employer actuarial rate plus eight per cent for a total surcharge of 20.07 per cent in 2010),
- Substitute teachers are not impacted by these changes, and
- It allows the purchase of KPERS participating service credit for work experience necessary to obtain certain technical or vocational teacher certifications.

The new increased surcharge will likely discourage some hiring of retirees but at the same time, the lifting of the earnings cap may encourage some districts to bring their own retirees back. Much of this bill was crafted to balance various legislative positions including those that want to discourage early retirement just to return to work, those that want their districts to be able to rehire their own retirees, and those that just want to get rid of the contractors. The vote would indicate that every legislator but one got what he or she wanted. (http://skyways.lib.ks.us/ksleg/KLRD/2009ConfCommRpts/Ccrb2072_002_56.pdf)

School medical aides and epinephrine: This bill came about when it was discovered that a school nurse could not administer epinephrine to anyone exhibiting the symptoms of anaphylactic shock unless that person had been diagnosed with anaphylaxis. The original version of the bill would have allowed anyone on a school campus to be identified as a medical aide and, with some training, be permitted to administer epinephrine. KNEA felt that it would be far better to simply give nurses (persons with medical training) this authority. The conference committee thought the same thing and the [conference committee report on HB 2008](http://skyways.lib.ks.us/ksleg/KLRD/2009ConfCommRpts/Ccrb2008_001_39.pdf) gives the school nurse this authority and allows the school to voluntarily stock epinephrine under the watch of a pharmacist.
(http://skyways.lib.ks.us/ksleg/KLRD/2009ConfCommRpts/Ccrb2008_001_39.pdf)

Minimum wage increase: The [conference committee report on SB 160](http://skyways.lib.ks.us/ksleg/KLRD/2009ConfCommRpts/Ccrb160_001_36.pdf) will raise the Kansas minimum wage from \$2.65/hour to \$7.25/hour effective January 1, 2010. This action makes the state minimum wage the same as the federal minimum wage. Kansas' current minimum wage is the lowest of all states and territories with a minimum wage (45 states plus Guam, American Samoa, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands). KNEA has long supported this as a way to help bring families out of poverty.
(http://skyways.lib.ks.us/ksleg/KLRD/2009ConfCommRpts/Ccrb160_001_36.pdf)