

Interim Studies Review

November 26, 2018

Bicameral Senate Interim Study Seeks to Increase Care for Traumatized Children

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Senate Studies Innovation within Oklahoma Education

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Senate Studies Workforce Development for Students

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OK Senate Legislative Update

Bicameral Senate Interim Study Seeks to Increase Care for Traumatized Children

Senator Greg McCortney, R-Ada, and Minority Leader Senator Kay Floyd, D-Oklahoma City, jointly requested a study in late September that examined the definition and impact of *Adverse Childhood Experiences* (ACEs) in Oklahoma. Adverse Childhood Experiences are specific incidences of trauma based on a 10-point scale that can affect brain development resulting in developmental delays for children based on how high they score. With an ACE score of 6 or more, life expectancy is reduced to 60 years of age and Oklahoma has recently been identified as leading the country in the percentage of children exposed to one or more ACEs at 49%. To address incidences of ACEs, the study discussed prevention and intervention strategies including positive parenting, home visitation services, increased investments for early childhood programs, strong relationships and engagement. In 2018, the Legislature created a Task Force to look more in depth at addressing care for children with high ACE scores.

Senate Studies Innovation within Oklahoma Education

Another September Interim Study requested by Senator Standridge, R-Norman, focused on showcasing the variety of innovative practices occurring within several Oklahoma schools. Presentations included

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the Bartlesville Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) initiative, LeMonde French Immersion Charter School, Millwood Public Schools' conversion school, Collegiate Hall college preparatory charter school, Epic Virtual Charter School, Paths to Independence – a program serving children and adults with autism spectrum disorders, and the Opportunity Scholarship Fund tax credit. Additionally, the Oklahoma State Department of Education displayed the Champions of Excellence program, which will publicly recognize schools for innovative programs in the areas of STEM, Fine Arts, World Languages, Safe and Health schools, Social Studies/Civics, and more. While there are many Oklahoma schools that possess unique programs, the study encouraged educational centered groups to continue championing an innovative thinking.

Senate Studies Workforce Development for Students

This study, requested by Senator Jason Smalley, R-Stroud, largely focused on the importance of the WorkKeys exam provided by ACT. Initial presenters from Oklahoma companies spoke about the need for workforce education development. Attention was then shifted to the ACT WorkKeys assessment tests. The ACT WorkKeys is a skills assessment test for those who are interested in or are currently working for employers that place an emphasis on the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC), which is the credential achieved by those who successfully complete the exam. Employers presented the tool as providing value for students by connecting their talents to available careers in Oklahoma and providing a certification upon completion. Eddie Foreman, CEO of Central Oklahoma Workforce Innovation Board, commended the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) for building a website that will place career information in one place making it easy for individuals to see possible jobs in their area of interest.