

Carpe Diem Charter School touted as a grand idea

Today, Carpe Diem charter schools was given several hours to advertise its services among the House Education Committee in the Kansas Legislature. The not-for-profit Carpe Diem schools were founded by Rick Ogston of Yuma, Arizona. Mr. Ogston described himself as a former superintendent of schools, former marriage counselor, and current owner of the FOR-PROFIT management company which exclusively contracts to manage Carpe Diem schools.

Ogston was introduced by Senator Jeff Melcher who is sponsoring a sort of "Carpe Diem tour" in Kansas. Melcher invited the room to view an 8 minute Carpe Diem advertorial.

During the nearly two-hour meeting, Mr. Ogston touted the successes of his schools as nothing short of miraculous. High school students who come to his schools with pre-Kindergarten reading skills are brought up to speed in a few short months working through computer-driven curricula with facilitation by human teachers whose pupil ratios were sometimes 50-1. An Arizona Carpe Diem school had as many as 240 students for one mathematics teacher! Ogston says his teachers were 'repurposed' in his system.

In regards to accepting students with disabilities, Ogston indicated that while his student population included autistic students, most of those defined by public schools as 'learning disabled' were simply suffering from gaps in learning caused by public school failures. Although he did note that they didn't have any students who he would define as "exceptionally retarded" or "like that".

While Carpe Diem is being touted in anti-public school circles as "the answer", others have differing opinions. While Ogston shared a great deal of data on specific sets of achievers in previous years, some have noted that for the last several years, students in his flagship school in Yuma, Arizona have shown ever decreasing scores on assessments. Notably, one prominent testing agency indicated a much higher than normal rate of erasures by students on standardized tests which often relates to cheating.

More On Carpe Diem Charter Schools:

Indiana, Here comes Carpe Diem, Like It or Not

<http://dianeravitch.net/2013/03/01/15749/> [1]

Carpe Diem, Seize the Tax Dollars

<http://www.journalgazette.net/article/20130215/BLOGS13/130219665> [2]

Charter School Charades

<http://www.journalgazette.net/article/20130228/BLOGS13/130229487/-1/blogs13>
[3]

The Truth About Charter Schools

http://www.salon.com/2014/01/10/the_truth_about_charter_schools_padded_cells_corruption_lousy_instruction_and_worse_results/
[4]

All-Day K Committee holds another meeting

Amanda Adkins, Chair, and Janice Smith, Executive Director of the Kansas Children's Cabinet provided testimony to the House Education Special Committee on All-Day Kindergarten that is analyzing a proposal by Gov. Brownback to phase-in state funding of all-day kindergarten over five years. The Children's Cabinet advises the Governor and Legislature regarding the use of money credited to the Children's Initiative Fund (CIF) and assesses programs that receive CIF money. The CIF is tobacco settlement money.

Adkins suggested that the state may want to target funds to pay for full-day kindergarten in specific areas that show a need. She said any increase in funding should be accompanied by monitoring to determine the effectiveness of the expenditure which was short of giving Governor Brownback's proposal CIF endorsement.

Gayle Stuber, Early Childhood Coordinator for the Kansas Department of Education, said full-day kindergarten allows teachers to spend more time with children at a critical point in their development. Currently, the state provides funding for half-day kindergarten. Fifteen school districts in the state offer only half-day kindergarten. All other districts provide all-day kindergarten by using other state funds, local funds, or by charging fees to parents.

Committee Chairman Jerry Lunn, R-Overland Park, expressed concerns about the \$80 million cost of Brownback's plan. Each .1 increase in funding for all kindergarten children will cost roughly \$16 million. In the first year, when kindergarteners are .6 FTE, the state must spend an additional \$16 million; in year two, when kindergarteners are counted as .7, the state will be spending an additional \$32 million and so on for five years. Fully funded, all-day kindergarten will cost the state an additional \$81.5 million.

Lunn directed the Education Department to try to provide information on how children in those districts perform on statewide tests to determine if there is any difference between children who attend half-day or full-day kindergarten.

The Committee will meet again next Thursday, February 27, 2014 at 7:15 a.m.

1. <http://click.email.nea.org/?qs=01ccca0db468e53cd364964d61d408a63562b9b15ab1fe34c2c8987ef7a67c06c98158aef34334fc>
2. <http://click.email.nea.org/?qs=01ccca0db468e53cf30ee30741a9c1f67a3acc44b6872fe3567283dbe4d57d8d1aee6b8050ed9fdf>
3. <http://click.email.nea.org/?qs=01ccca0db468e53cf98478253952c1e8e6c06c143b519b8fd39ae4307fe406d8e8d9bb734185de63>
4. <http://click.email.nea.org/>

