

STATE NEWS WEEKLY SUMMARY CONTINUED

EDUCATION

GOVERNOR COMMENTS ON SCHOOL-TO-WORK ISSUES

■(GIT) The school-to-work issue has raised questions again concerning disputes within the Oklahoma School-To-Work Executive Council, and involvement of the vocational-technical system with school-to-work initiatives.

Recently, Governor Frank Keating asked one of his Council appointees to step down. Keating said that he asked Joe Esposito, a contractor from Owasso, to resign from the Council because he disrupted discussions by the group on school-to-work initiatives.

Keating also charged the State Department of Vocational and Technical Education with acting like a "monopoly," on the implementation of statewide school-to-work programs. "They (the vocational-technical system) are playing the role of small business."

—MARTA MCCLOSKEY
04/30/96

GCCA APPROVES MID-TERM FUNDING PLAN

■(GIT) The legislature's General Conference Committee on Appropriations on Wednesday approved a mid-term funding proposal, taking many at the capitol by surprise.

Considered one the most controversial issues of the legislative session, previously presented plans had taken a beating on the floor of the House and the Senate.

Part of the plan mirrors an allocation agreement announced last week by the legislature's Democratic leadership, calling for some \$13 million to be pulled from the Rainy Day fund for mid-term funding. Another \$1.5 million will be taken from the fund for the establishment of a student identification or tracking system. That plan was also part of the allocation agreement.

Specifically, the plan approved Wednesday calls for \$6,317,545 to be taken from the Rainy Day fund and combined with another \$6,317,545 from the state's general fund to cover mid-term funding costs for the 1994-95 school year.

For the 1995-96 school year, the legislature will again tap the Rainy Day fund for \$6,770,799. An equal amount will also be allocated from the general fund for a total of \$13,541,598.

No Rainy Day money will be used for 1996-97 mid-term funding, but \$15,082,197 will be drawn from the general fund under the terms of a plan also approved on Wednesday.

The plan for distributing the 1996-97 money would be based on 1.5 percent growth over the highest of the two preceding year average daily membership, plus \$343 per student under 1.5 percent growth.

Under the terms of a permanent plan which will take effect with the 1997-98 school year, state aid would be based on the current year's growth and chargeable formula; funds will be set aside to pay for mid-year adjustments do to average daily membership growth; and districts will be allocated state aid beginning in August based on expected chargeable with state aid being adjusted during the year at the time of student growth adjustments on the basis of the most recent year's chargeable numbers.

Data used in the current year formula will take into account current year ad valorem chargeables and the highest of the first nine weeks audited average daily membership or the previous two years average daily membership.

—SHAWN ASHLEY
05/01/96

STATE REGENTS CHAIRMAN SPEAKS OUT ON ENID HIGHER EDUCATION

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) Stating that the time had come to set the record straight, Frederick McCann, Chairman of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, Wednesday released a statement clarifying the role of the state's higher education system relating to higher education in Enid.

"Two separate proposals relating to higher education in Enid have been brought forward. The first would abolish the Enid Higher Education Program and create a campus of Northwestern Oklahoma State University in its place. The NWOSU-Enid campus would be housed in the current Enid Higher Education Program facility and would be a sister campus to the campus in Alva.

"This proposal would require approval by the Oklahoma Legislature.

"A second and totally separate proposal has been brought forward by the City of Enid. The City has stated that it is prepared to purchase the Phillips University campus, should the university not be able to overcome its

current financial difficulties. If the sale were approved, the City of Enid would own the Phillips University campus.

"These two proposals are not linked. The approval or implementation of one is not dependent upon the other. Unfortunately, because these two proposals came forward at approximately the same time, some impressions have been given that each depends upon the other. That's just not the case.

"I want to stress that neither of these proposals recommends that Phillips University — as an institution — become a part of NWOSU or of the state system of higher education.

—STATE REGENTS FOR HIGHER ED
05/01/96

GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

SENATE ARGUES OVER WRECKER SERVICE FEES

■(GIT) State Senators today voted to accept the Conference Committee Report for SB1101, but only after extensive questioning and debate. The measure, authored by Sen. Keith Leftwich, D-Okla. City, deletes the fee remittance requirement relating to payment of removal fees to the state for motor vehicles.

Leftwich said that the same measure passed with a unanimous vote previously in the Senate. However, the bill was considered in a conference committee to examine the possible fiscal impact of deleting the wrecker fees. As a result of the committee hearings, the title was restored and the effective date was changed to July 1, 1997 to further examine fiscal impacts.

Under current law, if a vehicle is abandoned or stolen, as it comes into any contact with any Public Safety officer in the towing process, a fee of \$10.00 must be paid to the state to notify the owner of the vehicle's location. Leftwich said the bill was requested by the wrecker services who are in conflict with the Department of Public Safety (DPS) over "outrageous" bills.

Leftwich said by deleting the fee, car owners would still be notified of the vehicles location, but would not be required to pay the fee to obtain this information.

However, Sen. Dave Herbert, D-Midwest City, argued that the problem is not with the fee, but rather in the control of DPS.

Stressing the issue the bill is addressing