



Testimony before the
House Committee on Education
on
HB 2393 - School district accounting and financial publication requirements

by

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Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on **HB 2393**. We appear in opposition because we believe this bill, which we assume will be promoted as a way to improve efficiency, transparency and dollars to the classroom, will have exactly the opposite effect.

First, the bill requires the state to standardize from one to five accounting and payroll systems. The information school districts must report is already standardized for all districts. No evidence has ever been presented that the state is unable to get the financial data it requires. No evidence has ever been presented that states with standardized accounting systems - assuming they exist - are either more cost effective or have better results than Kansas.

Accounting and payroll systems are simply tools. Many different tools can do the same jobs. One of the advantages of local control of school districts - like a federal system of states - is that they are allowed to experiment, to find solutions that best fit their unique needs, and to allow service providers to compete for their service.

It seems remarkable the same Legislature which has promoted innovative school districts free from most state regulations, approved tax credits for private schools that do not have to report standardized financial information, and has many members interested in a wider range of charter schools to operate outside of state and local restrictions, would consider more requirements on local school operations that have nothing to do with student success.

In fact, the most likely result of state accounting mandates is to require schools to spend more time and money on new systems and additional training - in short, on administrative costs with no impact on the classroom.

Second, the bill requires additional information to be compiled and placed in a district budget document and on the district website. All of this information is already public information, and KASB

has no objection to its reporting, but any new reporting and formatting will also increase administrative costs.

The bill also seems to require reporting expenditures by building. However, this information will explain nothing about the reason for differences, such as age of the building, seniority of the staff, or special services that may be centered in that building such as special education.

The Senate already passed a bill expanding reporting requirements. School districts will do their best to comply with all of these requirements, but each new mandate in this area takes time away from other district functions - like teaching and learning.

Finally, this bill appears to require that all school districts must comply with generally accepted accounting principles from the Governmental Accounting Standards Board. Kansas has historically allowed this waiver because these standards were not seen as necessary under the state cash basis law.

Repealing this waiver will likely require additional accounting changes and training when no clear reason for making the changes has been advanced that would make a difference in student success.

For these reasons, we oppose **HB 2393**. Thank you for your consideration.