



House Education Committee Representative Highland, Chair

February 16, 2016
Jim Freeman, Chief Financial Officer
Wichita Public Schools

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments to H.B. 2596, which would create a classroom based school finance system. Today I am representing a subcommittee comprised of members of the Kansas School Superintendents Association, Kansas Association of School Business Officers, United School Administrators and the Kansas Association of School Boards.

After the Block Grant bill was passed last session, we held an open meeting for members of KSSA, KASBO and USA to come together to review and discuss our role in the school finance debate. The meeting was held on Friday July 31st, which is a busy time as school districts are preparing for enrollment and finalizing budget documents. Over fifty people from all across the state – East, West, rural, urban – came together. Members of the group overwhelmingly agreed that we want to work in partnership with the legislature to build the school finance formula. Subsequently, KASB held a school finance summit and USA, KSSA and KASBO created a joint school finance subcommittee. While I will share with you the subcommittee's work, it is important to understand that it has not been formally adopted by any of the organizations.

Our conversations have also included the work of the State Board of Education and Commissioner Randy Watson work to develop a new vision for Kansas education, which recognizes that Kansans have higher expectations for their schools, including employability and citizenship skills. The new vision calls for a more student-focused system that provides support and resources for individual success.

The State Board's vision is for Kansas high school graduates to have academic preparation, cognitive preparation, technical skills, employability skills, and civic engagement to be successful in postsecondary education, in the attainments of an industry recognized certification or in the workforce, without the need for remediation.

The State Board of Education has developed the following outcomes for measuring progress over time:

- Kindergarten readiness
- Individual Plan of Study focused on career interest
- High school graduation rates
- Post-secondary completion/attendance
- Social/emotion growth measured locally

As we have worked over the course of a number of meetings to re-envision school finance, we kept the State Board of Education's vision and outcomes for measuring progress in mind. Their work will create the accreditation process that will measure school district success. The funding formula will need to reflect the programs and structures required to meet the State Board's work.

USA, KSSA, KASBO School Finance Subcommittee

Collectively we developed a school finance framework, which states that a school funding formula needs to adhere to the following principles:

Every student in Kansas' public schools will have an equal opportunity to be college and career ready, as defined by the Rose Standards;

Some students will require greater supports to meet standards;

Funding to districts must be directly related to what it costs to educate each individual student;

Any formula must meet constitutional requirements for equity and adequacy;

The formula should recognize local control and provide funding of educational services; and,

The legislature and school districts need budgeting predictability.

Using the direction of the State Board of Education and principles above our work group has develop the following framework for funding schools based on needs of individual students.

1. Foundation aid based on enrollment
 - Using prior year audited enrollment provides the legislature greater predictability
 - No adjustments for changes in the fall
2. All day Kindergarten
 - Meet the State Board of Education's outcome on Kindergarten readiness
3. Pre-Kindergarten
 - Continue current grant program
 - Examine expanding for high needs students
4. High academic needs
 - Focus on needs of individual students
 - Consider census based poverty as the basis with other indicators of academic needs to develop a tiered system
 - i. Absenteeism
 - ii. Retention
 - iii. Expulsion/suspension
 - iv. Homeless or migrant
 - v. English language learners
 - vi. Scoring at level 1 on state assessments
 - vii. Poverty based on census or direct certification
 - This new a concept and needs further analysis

5. Career technical education
 - Move to a categorical, teacher based funding model
 - Include career counselors
 - Support for Individual Plans of Study beginning in middle school
 - Move \$1000 incentive to student for tuition at a post-secondary
 - Consider regional funding based on workforce needs
6. Virtual School
 - Examine the efficiency of the delivery model and success of students
7. Special education
 - Continue current formula
8. Transportation
 - Continue current formula
 - Consider funding for students living less than 2.5 miles away from school for qualified reasons
9. Teacher quality
 - Improving instruction for students
 - Consider funding based on number of certified teachers
 - Continue to fund stipend for National Board Certification
10. Local option budget
 - Roll average LOB mill levy into statewide 20 mill
 - Allow a local control of additional millage
 - i. Part equalized
 - ii. Concept is high wealth districts would pay part of the equalization for the low wealth districts
 - iii. Limited for non-instructional
11. Capital outlay
 - All districts should have access to locally generated and equalized funds for capital improvement
 - Support local control and flexibility of funds
12. New facilities weighting
 - New schools have additional costs
13. Low enrollment aid
 - Keep current structure
 - Review and analyze data
 - Careful consideration of geographical size compared to enrollment
14. Bond equalization
 - Consider a tiered plan: full equalization for schools; a lower tier for gyms, auditoriums, bus barns; and the lowest tier for athletic facilities, support and administration.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to bring to you our conversations and work to help construct a school finance plan which meets the needs of Kansas students, families and communities. We have more work to do and look forward to continuing to work with the legislature.