



**KANSAS ASSOCIATION  
OF SCHOOL BOARDS**

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Testimony before the  
**Senate Education Committee**  
on  
**SB 32 - Efficient Operation of School Task Force**

by

**Mark Tallman, Associate Executive Director for Advocacy**

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Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on **SB 32**, which would established the Efficient Operation of Schools Task Force. It is one of two bills introduced by the K-12 Performance and Efficiency Commission. KASB appears as a proponent of the bill for the following reasons.

First, when Chairman Sam Williams offered KASB the opportunity to testify before the Commission, we asked that local school boards be viewed as partners to work with toward the goal of improving school efficiency, not as obstacles to be overcome. We noted that local school boards are one of the three entities given responsibility for the governance of public education under the Kansas Constitution, along with the Kansas State Board of Education and the Legislature. We believe our system works best when all three of those groups work together in a balanced fashion. Overall, we believe the commission's recommendations reflect that ideal. We thank the chairman and other commissioners for being open to our recommendations.

Second, we believe the current system is working very well. Governor Brownback's campaign and his support for reelection frequently noted one survey showing Kansas has the fifth best academic performance in the nation. KASB is releasing this week our annual ranking of states on student success measures. Based on the most recent data, Kansas ranks eighth in nation. Every state ranking higher - in fact, every state in the top 10 - spends more per pupil than Kansas, even when adjusted for regional cost differences. Every other state in the top 10 has fewer free and reduced lunch eligible students, fewer students at 100 percent of poverty and fewer students at 250 percent of poverty than Kansas.

Kansas already ranks 17th in the nation in the percent of total revenues spent on instruction. Four of the top 10 states spend a lower percentage on instruction than Kansas. We believe efficiency should be defined and measured by the results state and districts get for the money they spend, not by how they spend money, regardless of results.

Third, KASB does not object to developing best practice guidelines for efficiency; in fact, we support providing local boards with more information to make the best possible decisions in leading their districts. Kansas districts are continually seeking ways to operate more efficiently and effectively. KASB, educational service centers, other interlocal agencies and service providers provide numerous programs to assist districts. However, we do not believe that every “guideline” is the right choice for every district. We do not believe the state always knows best. We do not believe that one size fits all. Making the final decision on how to allocate a district’s resources should be determined by those who know that community best - the local officials elected by that community.

We support **SB 32** because it provides an opportunity to give districts better information on which to make decisions, but does not control those decisions. Local school boards - and their communities - will receive information about how they “comply” with best practices, but the final decision is up to the local board.

Fourth, KASB believes school board representatives should be included in any state-initiated planning, advisory or decision-making process that affects public education. We appreciate that the commission amended this proposed legislation to direct the task force to “consult with superintendents, auditors and such other experts and knowledgeable individuals as the task force deems necessary to establish such best practice guidelines.”

We would also support the change proposed when the bill was presented at the joint Senate and House Education Committee meeting to add minority party representation to the task force, which the Commission chair indicated he would support.

Fifth, KASB supports another recommendation of the task force dealing with unfunded mandates. We strongly support the provision added in section three to require the state fund the additional cost of these compliance audits. It has been suggested that these audits will be a simple checklist that will not add any cost to the annual district financials - a cost, by the way, that is not considered “money in the classroom.” However, there is nothing in the bill to limit what is involved in the best practice guidelines or what will be required for performance audits.

Finally, one comment on section four, which provides for an audit of the Kansas State Department of Education. School districts would welcome a review of the “regulatory requirements placed on local school districts and whether increasing district flexibility would lead to efficiencies.” Such a review should include state laws and federal laws as well as KSDE regulations. However, our members generally have high praise for the service they receive from the department, but are concerned that funding reductions in the agency are making it more difficult to carry out its mission. We suggest any audit also look at the requirements placed on KSDE and whether adequate resources are being provided. Due to the many requirements and increased expectations on KSDE and local school personnel, we also recommend the Legislature stress the importance of accurate fiscal notes on any new requirements.

Thank you for your consideration.

**Overall State Academic Achievement, with revenue per pupil and student poverty indicators**

Rank	Overall Average (without ACT)		Total Revenue Per Pupil, 2012, and Rank		Total Revenue, Regionally Adjusted, and Rank		Percent Students on Free/Reduced Meals and Rank, 2012		Percent of Children below 100% of Poverty and Rank, 2012		Percent of Children Below 250% of Poverty and Rank, 2012	
1	Vermont	64.4	\$17,873	6	\$17,713	3	39.2	41	15	41	48	36
2	Massachusetts	64.1	\$16,930	7	\$15,793	10	35.1	48	15	41	38	43
3	New Hampshire	62.7	\$15,002	12	\$14,126	15	26.3	50	16	39	40	45
4	New Jersey	62.3	\$20,008	2	\$17,535	4	35.5	47	15	41	39	46
5	Nebraska	61.9	\$12,267	23	\$13,615	19	43.8	31	18	32	50	30
6	North Dakota	61.9	\$13,368	18	\$14,787	13	32.8	43	13	50	39	46
7	Iowa	61.6	\$12,175	24	\$13,604	20	40.0	40	16	39	48	36
8	Kansas	61.1	\$11,557	27	\$12,856	25	48.9	23	19	29	53	27
9	Maryland	60.8	\$16,103	8	\$14,468	14	41.8	34	14	48	39	46
10	Minnesota	60.6	\$13,163	19	\$13,500	22	37.1	44	15	41	42	44
11	Connecticut	60.6	\$18,886	3	\$17,264	5	35.7	46	15	41	37	50
12	Maine	60.2	\$13,649	16	\$13,885	18	43.0	33	21	24	54	24
13	Wisconsin	59.9	\$12,582	21	\$13,544	21	40.8	36	18	32	49	32
14	Pennsylvania	59.5	\$16,085	9	\$16,297	7	40.2	39	20	27	49	32
15	Montana	59.4	\$11,336	29	\$12,034	29	40.3	38	20	27	56	18
16	Virginia	59.2	\$11,686	26	\$11,323	34	39.2	42	15	41	44	43
17	Idaho	59.1	\$7,405	50	\$7,311	49	49.0	22	21	24	62	4
18	Colorado	58.9	\$10,165	39	\$10,005	41	40.9	35	18	32	48	36
19	Missouri	58.9	\$11,139	30	\$12,644	26	46.5	28	23	20	56	18
20	Illinois	58.8	\$14,074	13	\$13,990	16	49.0	21	21	24	50	30
21	Utah	58.7	\$7,607	49	\$7,858	50	47.6	27	15	41	54	24
22	Rhode Island	58.4	\$15,914	10	\$16,184	8	43.9	30	19	29	48	36
23	New York	58.3	\$22,238	1	\$19,271	1	49.7	19	23	20	51	29
24	Indiana	58.3	\$12,063	25	\$13,241	23	48.0	25	22	23	56	18
25	Ohio	58.1	\$13,511	17	\$15,147	11	43.6	32	24	16	54	24
26	Washington	58.0	\$11,358	28	\$11,006	36	44.5	29	19	29	49	32
27	Texas	57.7	\$10,282	38	\$10,655	39	51.1	17	26	10	59	11
28	Hawaii	57.6	\$13,875	15	\$11,839	31	49.3	20	17	35	45	42
29	South Dakota	57.5	\$10,149	40	\$11,507	32	38.6	43	17	35	53	27
30	Wyoming	57.5	\$18,446	4	\$19,135	2	37.1	45	17	35	48	36
31	Kentucky	57.3	\$10,547	36	\$11,877	30	54.4	11	27	5	58	17
32	North Carolina	57.2	\$8,746	47	\$9,548	45	52.4	16	26	10	59	11
33	Tennessee	57.1	\$8,961	45	\$9,880	42	57.5	8	26	10	60	8
34	Delaware	56.5	\$15,301	11	\$14,957	12	48.9	24	17	35	49	32
35	Oklahoma	56.1	\$8,767	46	\$9,752	43	61.2	4	24	16	60	8
36	Michigan	56.1	\$12,433	22	\$13,171	24	48.0	26	25	13	55	23
37	Oregon	56.0	\$10,724	34	\$10,854	38	53.2	14	23	20	56	18
38	Arkansas	56.0	\$10,830	32	\$12,363	27	60.9	5	29	2	64	3
39	California	56.0	\$10,732	33	\$9,505	46	54.1	12	24	16	56	18
40	Florida	55.3	\$9,077	44	\$9,187	47	57.6	7	25	13	60	8
41	Arizona	54.9	\$8,347	48	\$8,509	48	50.0	18	27	5	61	5
42	West Virginia	53.2	\$14,033	14	\$15,838	9	52.8	15	25	13	59	11
43	South Carolina	53.1	\$11,003	31	\$12,131	28	56.8	10	27	5	61	5
44	Alabama	53.0	\$9,582	41	\$10,877	37	57.5	9	27	5	59	11
45	Georgia	52.8	\$10,518	37	\$11,433	33	58.7	6	27	5	59	11
46	New Mexico	51.9	\$10,584	35	\$11,164	35	68.5	2	29	2	65	2
47	Alaska	51.8	\$18,226	5	\$17,018	6	40.6	37	14	48	46	41
48	Mississippi	50.5	\$9,104	43	\$10,537	40	71.5	1	35	1	69	1
49	Louisiana	49.7	\$12,698	20	\$13,892	17	67.1	3	28	4	59	11
50	Nevada	48.3	\$9,457	42	\$9,630	44	54.1	13	24	16	61	5
	U.S. Average		\$12,331		\$12,331		49.6		23		54	
	Top 10 States		\$14,845		\$14,800		38.1		15.6		43.6	
	States 11-20		\$12,701		\$12,890		42.5		19.2		50.5	
	States 21-30		\$13,550		\$13,584		45.3		19.9		51.7	
	States 31-40		\$10,612		\$11,110		54.8		24.6		57.7	
	States 41-50		\$11,355		\$12,103		57.7		26.3		59.9	