



# Unified School District No. 333

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Testimony before the  
**Senate Committee on Education**  
Concerning  
**SB 294**  
Pilot school finance plan

By  
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**Coalition of Innovative School Districts, Vice Chair**

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SB 294 on behalf of the Coalition of Innovative School Districts, and USD 333. I submit this testimony as a proponent of the bill, with three proposed amendments.

In our efforts to be named as one of the Coalition of Innovative School Districts, USD 333 identified one goal, which is also our definition of student success. Our priority is to create a learning environment that provides opportunities for our students to graduate from high school with a year of college credit, and/or industry-recognized certification, or successful entry into the military. The finance formula outlined in SB 294 aligns to our goal, by providing appropriations for the success incentive state aid. (SB 294 also includes poverty state aid, sparsity state aid and equalization aid, which are also very important factors to consider in a formula.)

We face a lot of uncertainty in school funding, and although this formula will likely need modifications, we support the concepts outlined in SB 294. It is well-known that you make progress at what you aim for, and we support a target of student success, as described in this bill. We believe this has the potential to guide professional discussions and decisions that are best for kids and provide a measure of student success. Single subject area assessments may be tools that we use to help us accomplish our goals, but these annual scores should not define student success.

Although “change” is not without challenge and controversy, USD 333 and the Coalition districts are willing to be part of the solution to assist in piloting a new finance formula. The Coalition is an established and organized group that meets each month, in open meetings, and seems to be a logical group to pilot this finance formula. The Coalition has established positive working relationships with the Kansas State Department of Education, the Kansas State Board of Education and the Kansas Legislature. The Coalition represents districts that vary in wealth, are large and small, and are geographically located in regions across the entire state. Kansas school districts are very diverse, and the opportunity to participate in this pilot will give stakeholders the chance to see if this type of formula can be scaled to include all districts in the following years.

Two proposed amendments:

- 1) Opportunity to opt out, if our local Board of Education chooses to do so after a bill is passed in final form
- 2) Opportunity to be eligible for the extraordinary need funds, (described in the block grant)
- 3) Elimination of the GAAP requirement