

MINUTES OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL FINANCE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Kathe Decker at 9:00 A.M. on January 31, 2006 in Room 313-S of the Capitol.

All members were present.

Committee staff present:

Kathie Sparks, Kansas Legislative Research
Carolyn Rampey, Kansas Legislative Research
Art Griggs, Revisor of Statutes Office
Ann Deitcher, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Kathie Sparks, Legislative Research
Mary Ellen Isaac, Wichita Public Schools
Bill Reardon, Kansas City, KS Public Schools
Bob VanCrum, Blue Valley
Mark Tallman, KASB
Val DeFever, Schools for Quality Education

An overview of the Legislative Post Audit Report's Cost Study Analysis was given by Kathie Sparks on At-Risk Weighting. (Attachment 1).

Mary Ellen Isaac spoke regarding the need for "at risk" funding. (Attachment 2).

Next to appear in support of funding for the at risk program was Bill Reardon. (Attachment 3)

Offering testimony advocating a change in the definition of at-risk pupils was Bob VanCrum. (Attachment 4).

Mark Tallman spoke next in support of an increase in at-risk funding. (Attachment 5).

Val DeFever offered testimony in regard to more flexibility in how at-risk dollars can be spent. (Attachment 6).

Mark Desetti told the committee that KNEA supported an increase in at-risk weight that better reflects the cost of offering services to all at-risk students. They feel the Post Audit proposal would do just that. (Attachment 7).

An informational sheet from the Legislative Research Department was distributed to the Committee. (Attachment 8).

The meeting was adjourned at 10:50 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 1, 2006.

At-Risk Weighting

Under current law, the at-risk weighting factor is .193 and under the LPA Study the weighting factor would be .484 or an increase of .291 for all school districts(page 18).

The Study also creates a new urban at-risk weighting for districts that meet two criteria: the city is classified by the U. S. Census Bureau as a large city or mid-size city and poverty is equal to or greater than 26.7 percent. Four districts meet both criteria in Kansas: USD 501 (Topeka); USD 500 (Kansas City); USD USD 259 (Wichita); and USD 202 (Turner-Kansas City)(Appendix 16, pages 196-263)

The Urban at-risk or poverty weighting would be a total of .726 or an additional .242 on top of the .484 (page 18).

William Duncombe and John Yinger, Syacuse University, point out that "one of the key factors affecting the cost of reaching performance levels is the number of students requiring additional assistance to be successful in school. Poverty has consistently been found to be negatively associated with student performance. Poverty measures should accurately capture the percentage of a district's students living in low-income households. The most commonly used measure of poverty in education research is the share of students receiving free or reduced price lunch in a school. Another measure of child poverty is the child poverty rate produced by the Census Bureau every ten years as part of the *Census of Population*. For this study, we will use the percent of students receiving free lunch as the child poverty measure, because it is available every year, and is used presently as the at-risk measure in the General State Aid formula. The share of free lunch students, and the Census child poverty rate are strongly related (correlation = 0.7). The free lunch count is collected by KSDE from school districts using the Superintendent's Organization Report. Nationally, there is some descriptive evidence suggesting that student performance in high poverty inner city schools is significantly worse than high poverty rural schools (Olson and jerald, 1998). To examine whether this appears to be the case in Kansas, we have created an additional poverty variable, which is the percent free lunch students multiplied by pupil density (pupils per square mile). The higher the pupil density, the more urbanized we would expect the school district to be. If there is an urban poverty effect on costs, the regression coefficient on this measure should be positive and statistically significant from zero." Apparently, this did occur for the four districts. (Page C-10 and C-11).

In addition, free lunch is set at incomes at or below 130 percent of the federal poverty line and reduced price lunch is set at between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty line. In addition, households receiving Food Stamps, Temporary Assistance to needy Families (TANF) or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) are also eligible for free lunch. The federal poverty guidelines are up dated annually, around the end of January first of February. According to the Federal Register, Vol. 71, No. 15, January 24, 2006, pp. 3848-3849, the 2006 Health & Human Services Poverty Guidelines have been set at:

Household Size	Federal Poverty	130% Poverty
3 persons household	\$16,600	\$21,580
4 persons household	\$20,000	\$26,000
5 persons household	\$23,400	\$30,420
6 persons household	\$26,800	\$34,840
7 persons household	\$30,200	\$39,260
8 persons household	\$33,600	\$43,680
for each additional person, add	\$3,400	\$4,420

According to LPA, the at-risk weighting measures how much the statistical analysis showed it costs for students in poverty to achieve the same level of performance as other student achieve which is why it applies to both the input and outcomes studies.



House Select Committee on School Finance The need for increased "at risk" funding

January 31, 2006

*Mary Ellen Isaac
Chief Academic Officer
Wichita Public Schools*

Madame Chair and members of the Select Committee:

Today I come before you with three purposes:

1. Share Wichita's success
2. To share with you our challenges, the persistent achievement gap and high school reform plans
3. And, finally, to share with you how Wichita used the new money from the 2006 Regular and Special Sessions.

Wichita educates over ten percent of the students in Kansas. We educate a widely diverse student population. You may be surprised to learn Wichita is a **majority minority** district – the rapidly growing Hispanic population has now outpaced the African American students. While our total enrollment has remained very stable over the past ten years, the make up of the students has changed dramatically:

Total enrollment -- 48,865

Poverty -- students qualifying for free or reduced lunch has grown from 26,900 students six years ago to 32,500 this year

Bi lingual – 4110 six years ago to over 5500, a 25% increase

Special education – 8000 six years ago to over 8500 today

Even with all the challenges facing our district, test scores continue to climb upwards. This is not the experience of most large urban school districts. Sometimes we tend to think that Kansas isn't on the cutting edge of reform, but when Wichita attends national conferences our staff is constantly asked "how are you making improvement with all the demographic challenges you face".

The next pages show district wide scores on the state assessments. The bar represents the district's score. The line is the AYP (annual yearly progress) target set by the Department of Education. Overall scores are going up and exceeding the AYP targets in grade 5 reading, grade 4 math and grade 8 reading. Scores are up in 7th grade math but missed the AYP goal; and high school scores are flat.

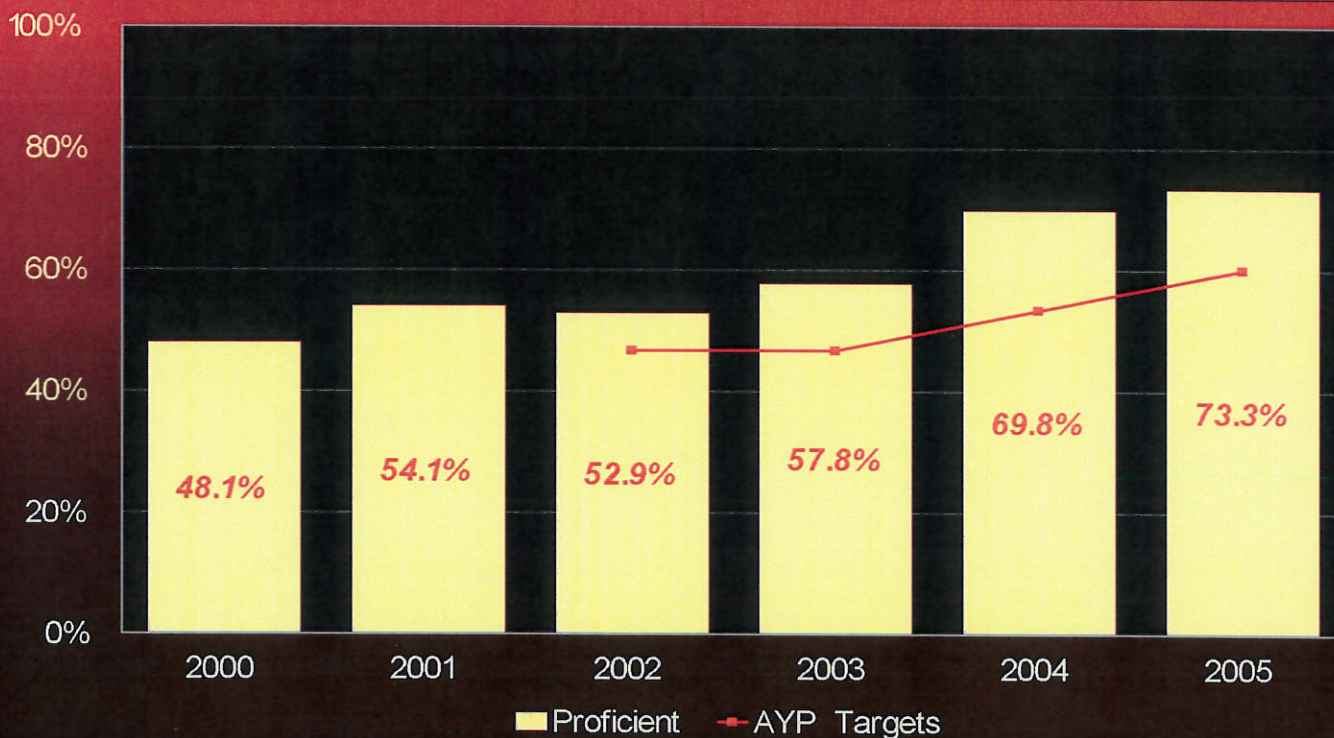
Select Comm. on School Finance

Date 1-31-06

Attachment # 2-1

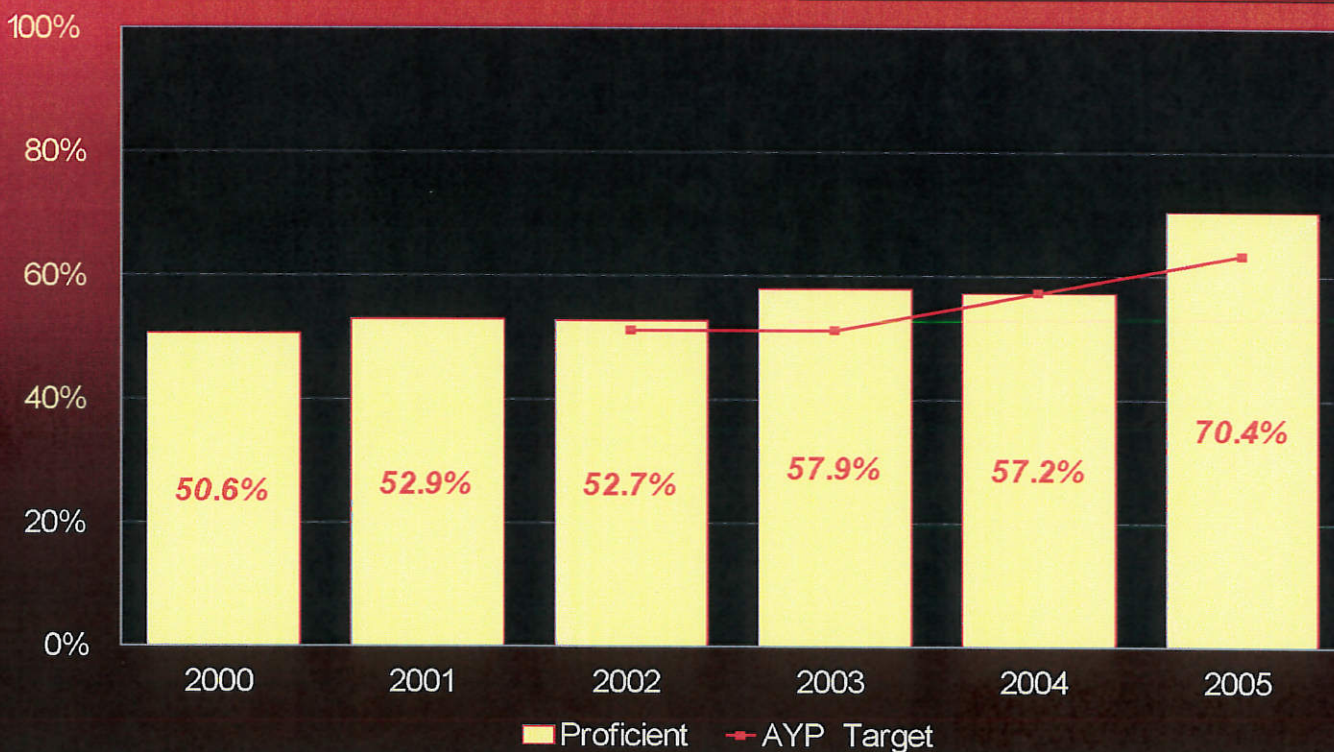
Performance on the State Math Assessment at Grade 4

Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient or Better for the Past Six Years



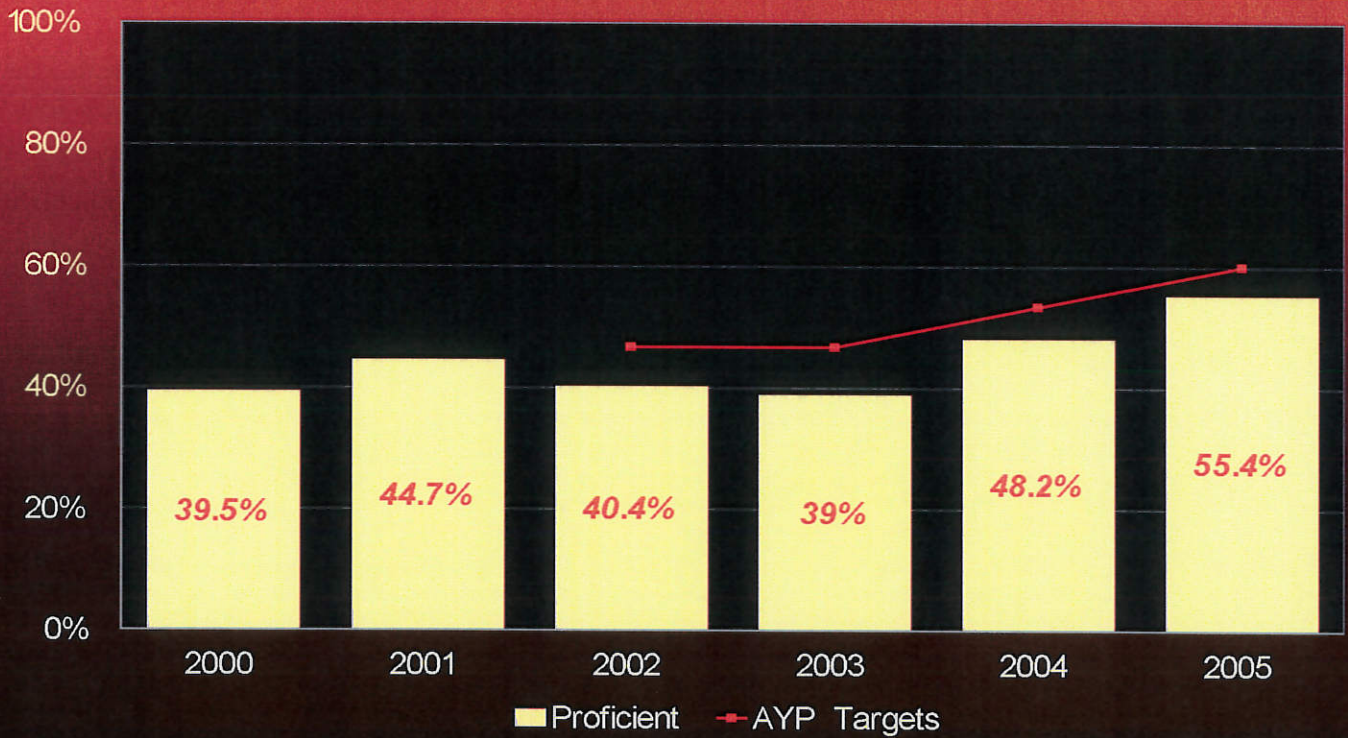
Performance on the State Reading Assessment at Grade 5

Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient or Better for the Past Six Years



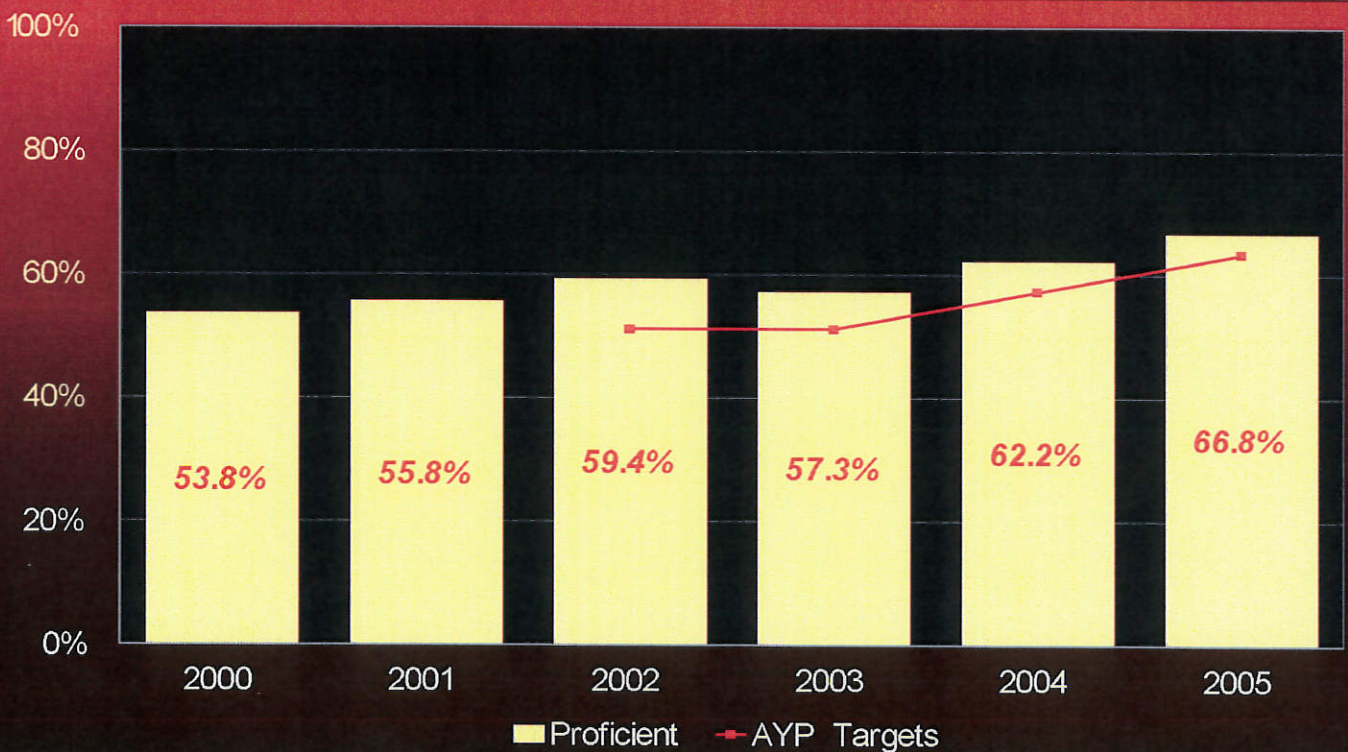
Performance on the State Math Assessment at Grade 7

Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient or Better for the Past Six Years



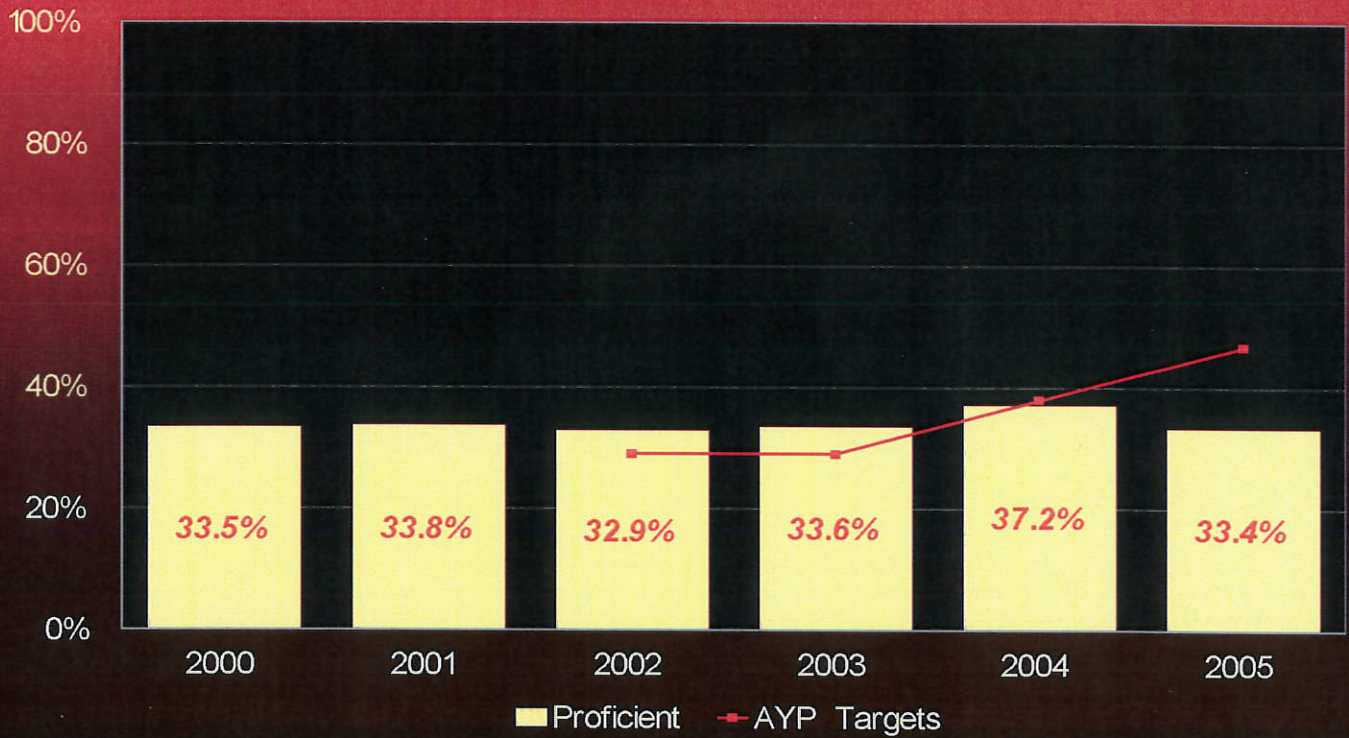
Performance on the State Reading Assessment at Grade 8

Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient or Better for the Past Six Years



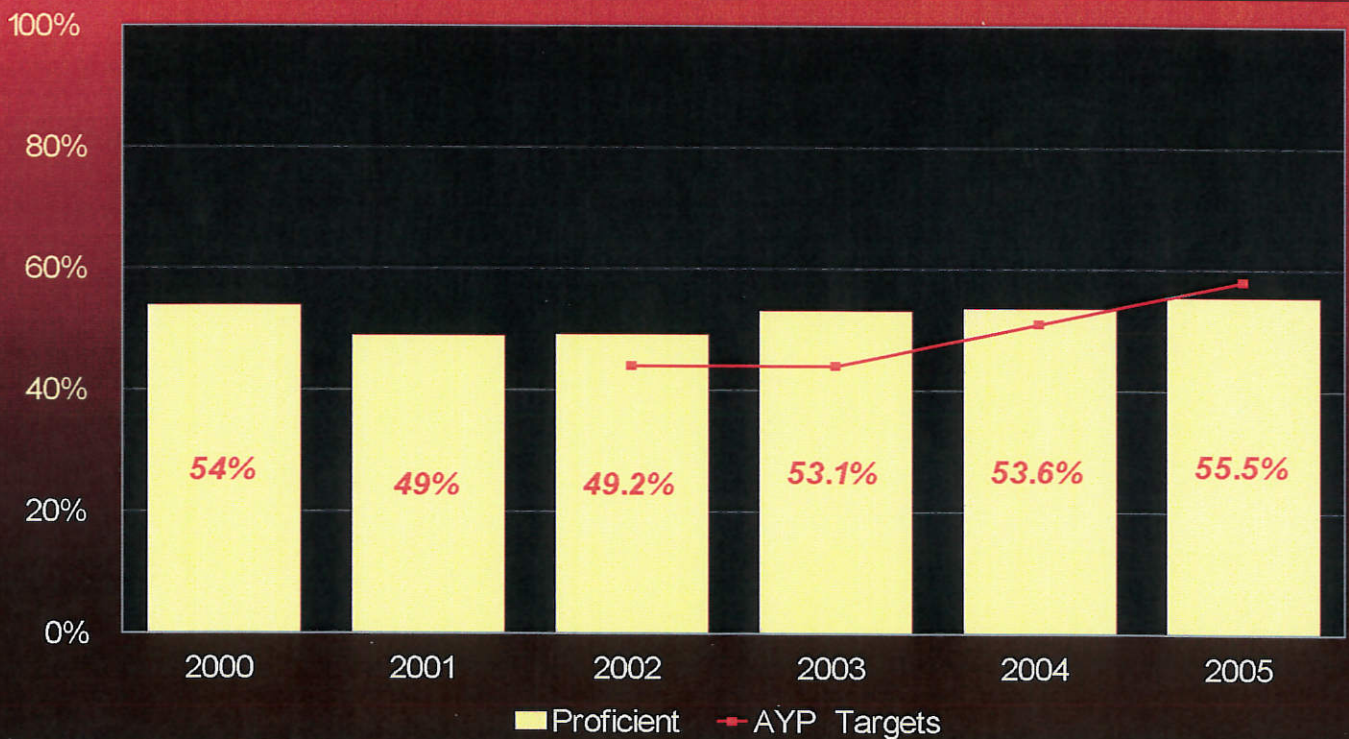
Performance on the State Math Assessment at Grade 10

Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient or Better for the Past Six Years



Performance on the State Reading Assessment at Grade 11

Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient or Better for the Past Six Years



Wichita's success

No Child Left Behind sets annual achievement targets (AYP). These targets are increasing at a rate of about 5% annually. Wichita has started well:

- Elementary schools: 53 out of 57 made AYP targets!!
- Middle schools: 7 out of 16 made AYP targets
- High schools: only 1 out of 11 made AYP targets (more later on high schools)

State Assessment Standards of Excellence – growth in school achievement

Number of schools making the standard of excellence

	2003	2004	2005
Elementary reading	2	3	7
Middle school reading	0	1	1
High school reading	1	0	2*
Elementary math	1	11	23
Middle school math	0	1	1
High school math	0	1	2*
			* special day schools

The standard of excellence designation is achieved when a pre-set number of students perform in the top two achievement categories of the state assessment and less than 10% of the students place in the bottom category.

Why Wichita has achieved success

We have done our 'curriculum homework'

- Aligned standards to the state assessments
- Teachers are now expected to teach to the standards
- Using data to inspect our work
- Providing staff development
- Monitoring our expectations through walk throughs and data

Planning

Campus Improvement Plan

Next steps: the work we still need to do

1. Professional Learning Communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Weekly team dialogue and common planning time b. Focus is student data and student work 	<i>All require an incredible amount of training. Costs money to get people to the table either during the work day (when students have to be taught) or outside of the work day</i>
2. Curriculum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Literacy – vocabulary and fluency b. Numeracy – sequenced standards c. Increased state requirements to integrate special education and ESOL students 	<i>Our extremely high mobility (see attachment) has lead us to demand consistency across the district to standardize when required elements are taught; requires training teachers to follow the 'pacing guides'.</i>

<p>3. Instruction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Engaging and motivating b. Effective instruction practices c. Three-tiered intervention program 	<p><i>Tier one: on grade level</i> <i>Tier two: not working on grade level</i> <i>Tier three: generally two years or more behind</i> <i>Use data to identify the specific areas a student is not proficient. Additional resources and people required to teach smaller groups of students.</i></p>
<p>4. Assessments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Data use <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Used to get to the root cause ii. Snapshot assessments given district wide iii. 'walk throughs' to observe classrooms and provide feedback b. Formative assessments 	<p><i>Need technology to track individual students. The principals need to be able to monitor electronically, along with the assistant superintendents. This requires servers in each building; formative assessments software; adequate computers for frequent 'dip stick' testing; and training for teachers and administrators to be able to analyze the data.</i></p>
<p>5. Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Learning together b. Leading for learning 	<p><i>Monthly principal meetings are more learning focused. Now require principals to meet in feeder patterns (so elementary is talking to middle, middle to high, etc). Need to develop a summer leadership training to help principals become 'teacher leaders' because its hard to lead work you don't understand (like literacy in high school).</i></p>

Central office support

We quickly learned schools are overwhelmed with their day to day work, huge increases in testing required for NCLB and leading staff to understand the new requirements of NCLB. We have changed the way downtown works with schools.

New teacher support Wichita provides:

Mentoring – provided to every new teacher. Cost = \$200,000

H. Wong: if new teachers do not receive mentoring, 39% will leave after one year.

Induction – targets College to Classroom (Step 1) core teachers (math, science, social studies, language arts, all elementary) to cover all state tested areas of instruction.

3 year program Cost \$50,000 for each group, total \$150,000

Urban poverty scares teachers – they need additional staff development and increased salary to support their efforts.

H. Wong's national research data: If teacher's receive no induction training, 41% will leave after one year.

Peer Consultant Program:

- One on one coaching for year one new teachers at elementary and tested core areas at secondary
- Case load is 15 teachers per peer consultant
- Wichita has experienced impressive retention results
- Need 6 more peer consultants just to serve all the Step 1 teachers.

New Staff Orientation:

- Three days for all district new hires (about 450)
- Introduces new staff to the culture of the district, our curriculum, provides time in model classrooms, and provides time in their own schools.

On going professional development:

- Instructional coaches – each Title building has its own coach but the rest share a coach among 4 or 5 schools
- Highly structured, focused building level in-service
- Assistant superintendents work with 98 principals monitoring and leading
 - Check for evidence that strategies are implemented in class rooms
 - Professional development calendar should reflect what was identified in the Campus Improvement Plan

Building level work:

The Campus Improvement Plan provides the data for discussion and builds the template for each building's work the next school year. It provides focus for all staff members; not only class room teachers, but all the support staff (librarians, PE, nurses) who teach while the teachers are planning. Data is dissected and analyzed at the student level by examining how each student performed on each element of the state assessments.

High School reform challenges:

Wichita's plan to improve high school teaching and opportunities for students to learn also fit the five steps found in "Next Steps: the work we still need to do".

Professional learning communities cost: \$5.5m

Need more planning time. Smaller learning communities. Limit the number of students high school teacher work with to 90 instead of the current 120 to 130. Limit teaching to 5 periods per day to allow for more planning and time to teach interventions for students not understanding materials (smaller class sizes required, 15:1).

Assessments: formative \$51,000; servers \$20,000; ACT explorer \$50,000

Curriculum: \$100,000 for algebra 3 week assessments and \$400,000 for KU Learning Strategies (covers only materials); additional formative assessments for other curricular subjects cost \$12.50 per pupil.

Leadership training: Leading the learning is a new part of the work for high school principals; and is a massive culture change.

How Wichita invested the new money :

The infusion of new money from the 2006 Regular and Special Session was greatly appreciated. The Board of Education invested the dollars in:

Salary increases

Additional teachers, support staff and para-educators

Lowered class sizes K – 3 in 15 lowest performing elementary schools

Expanded all day K to each elementary school
Expanded bi-lingual programs and services to a growing population
Added technician and custodial staff to support the investment in an additional 1.8m square feet of space and new heating/ air conditioning systems.

The challenges we continue to face closing the gap:

The next several pages provide the district's scores on state assessments, disaggregated by students who live in poverty and those who do not.

Elementary

Grade 4 math: both groups of students are moving upwards and the achievement gap has narrowed 3.3 points.

Grade 5 reading: both groups scores are going upwards and the gap has narrowed 10%.

Middle school

Grade 7 math: both groups show gains but the achievement gap has not narrowed

Grade 8 reading: both group sow gains and the gap has narrowed almost 7%

High school

Grade 10 math: scores are flat

Grade 11 reading: slight increase but the gap remains about the same

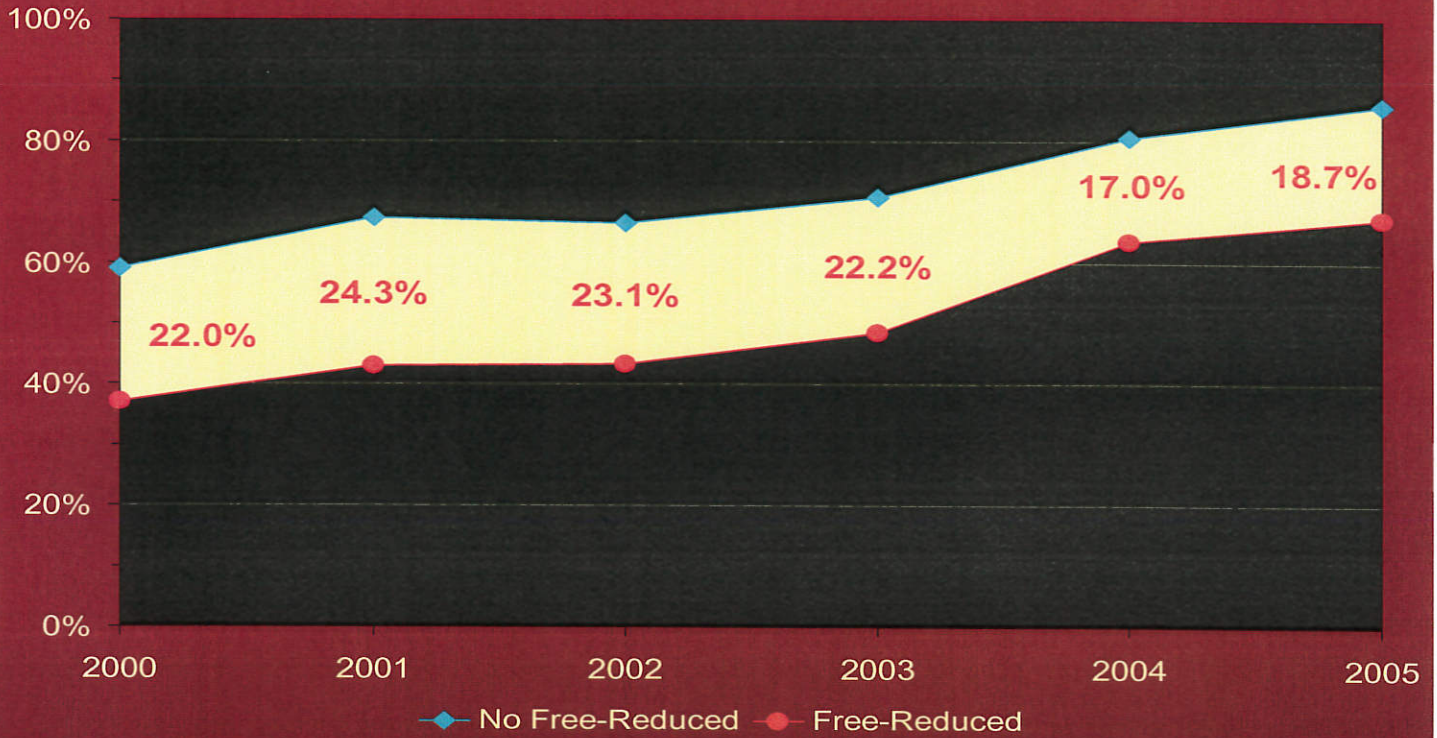
In conclusion:

Madame Chair and members of the committee, I would hope that you take away a few thoughts this morning. First, that Wichita has planned their work in a focused manner which will, eventually, provide the same increases we have seen in elementary in the high schools. Second, that the state's largest and most urban district has used the resources wisely as measured by progress on state assessments. And finally, that Wichita merits additional resources as outlined in the Legislative Post Audit report to reach the students who we serve.

Thank you for your time. I would be pleased to answer questions at the appropriate time.

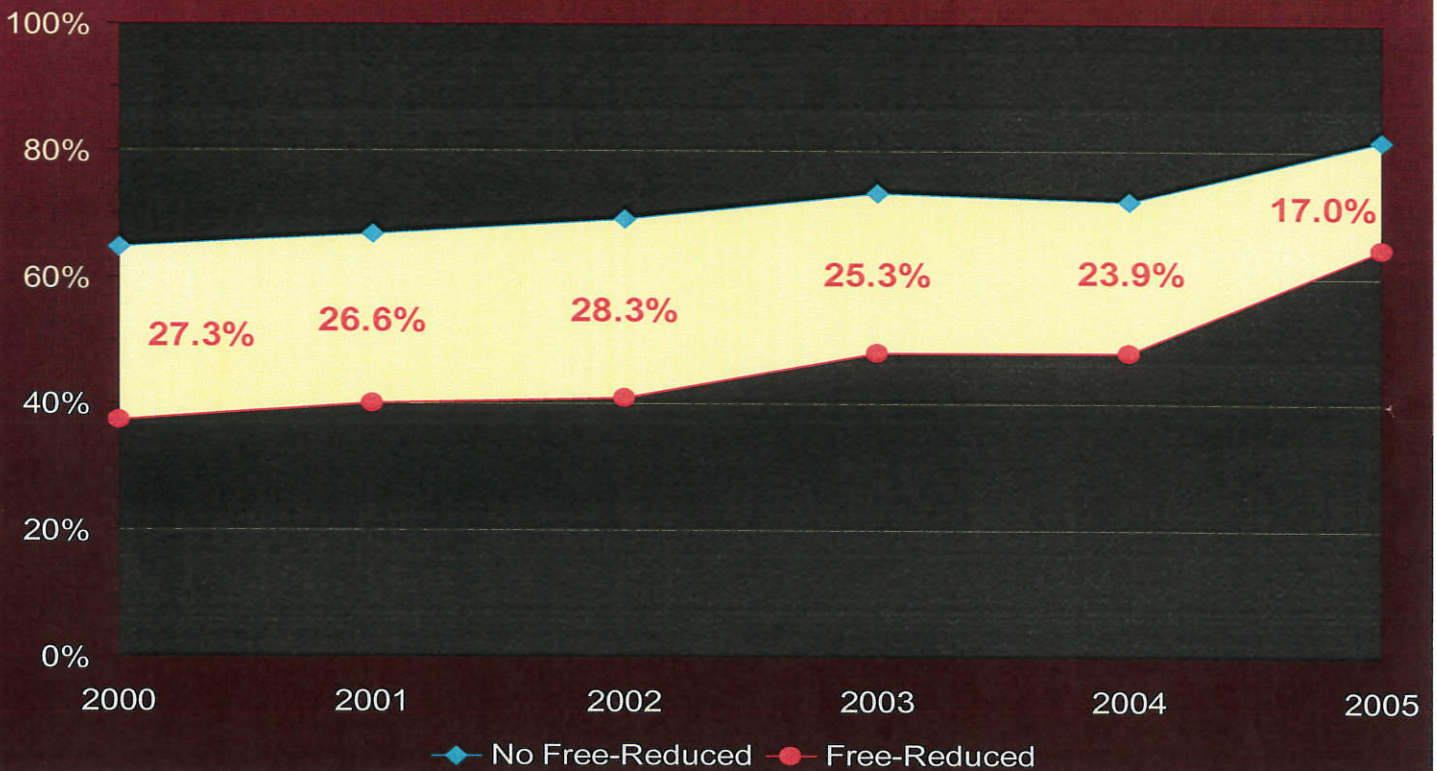
State Math Achievement Gap - Grade 4

Free-Reduced and Non-Free-Reduced Performance



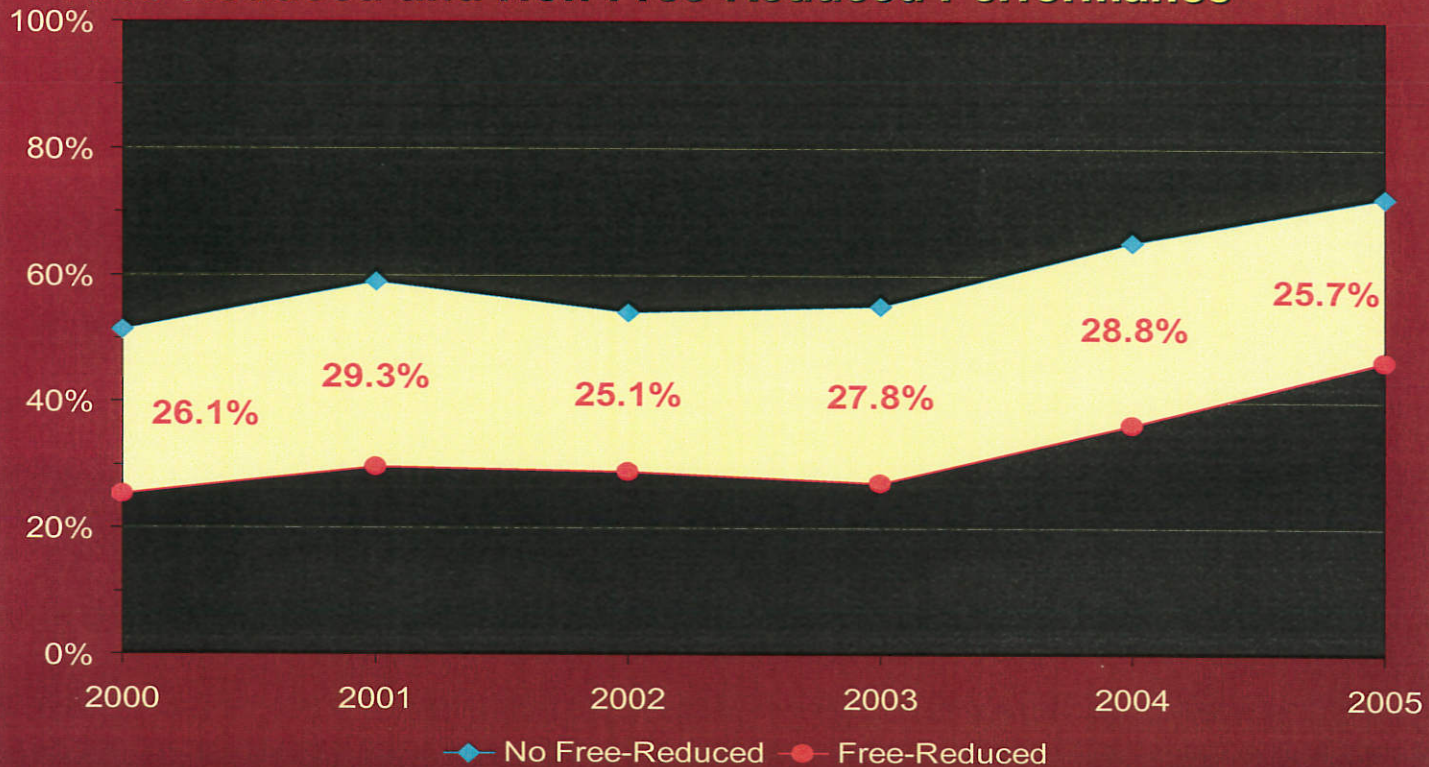
State Reading Achievement - Gap Grade 5

Free-Reduced and Non-Free-Reduced Performance



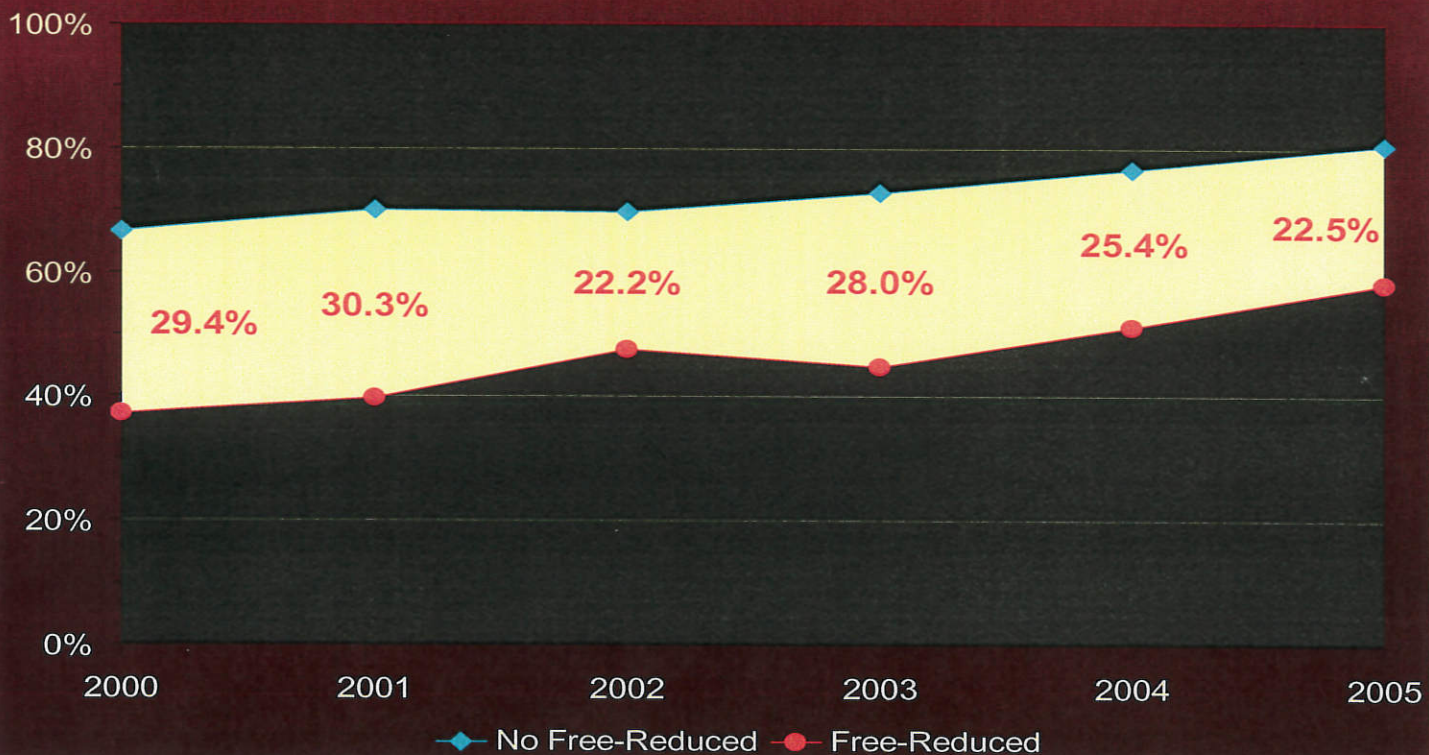
State Math Achievement Gap at Grade 7

Free-Reduced and Non-Free-Reduced Performance



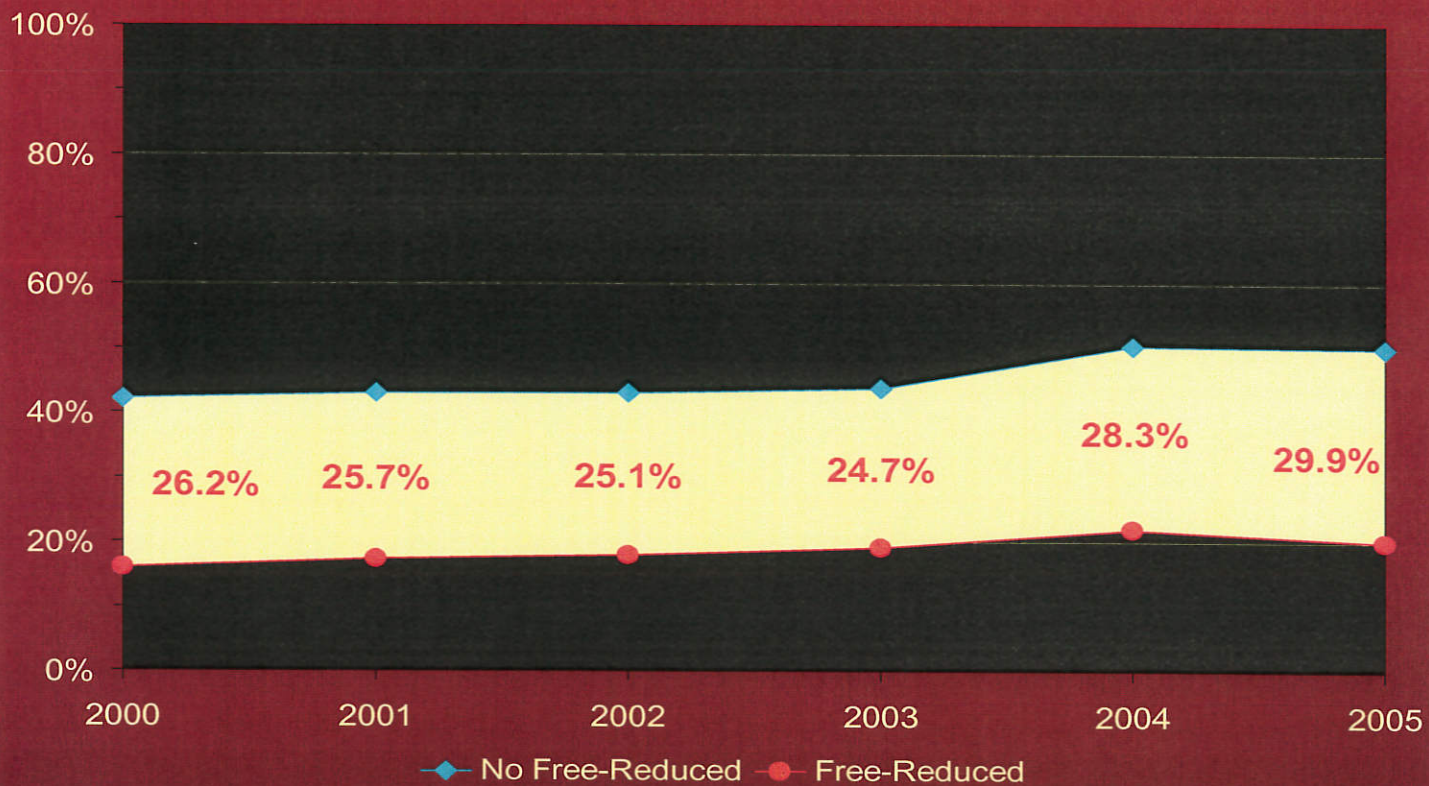
State Reading Achievement Gap at Grade 8

Free-Reduced and Non-Free-Reduced Performance



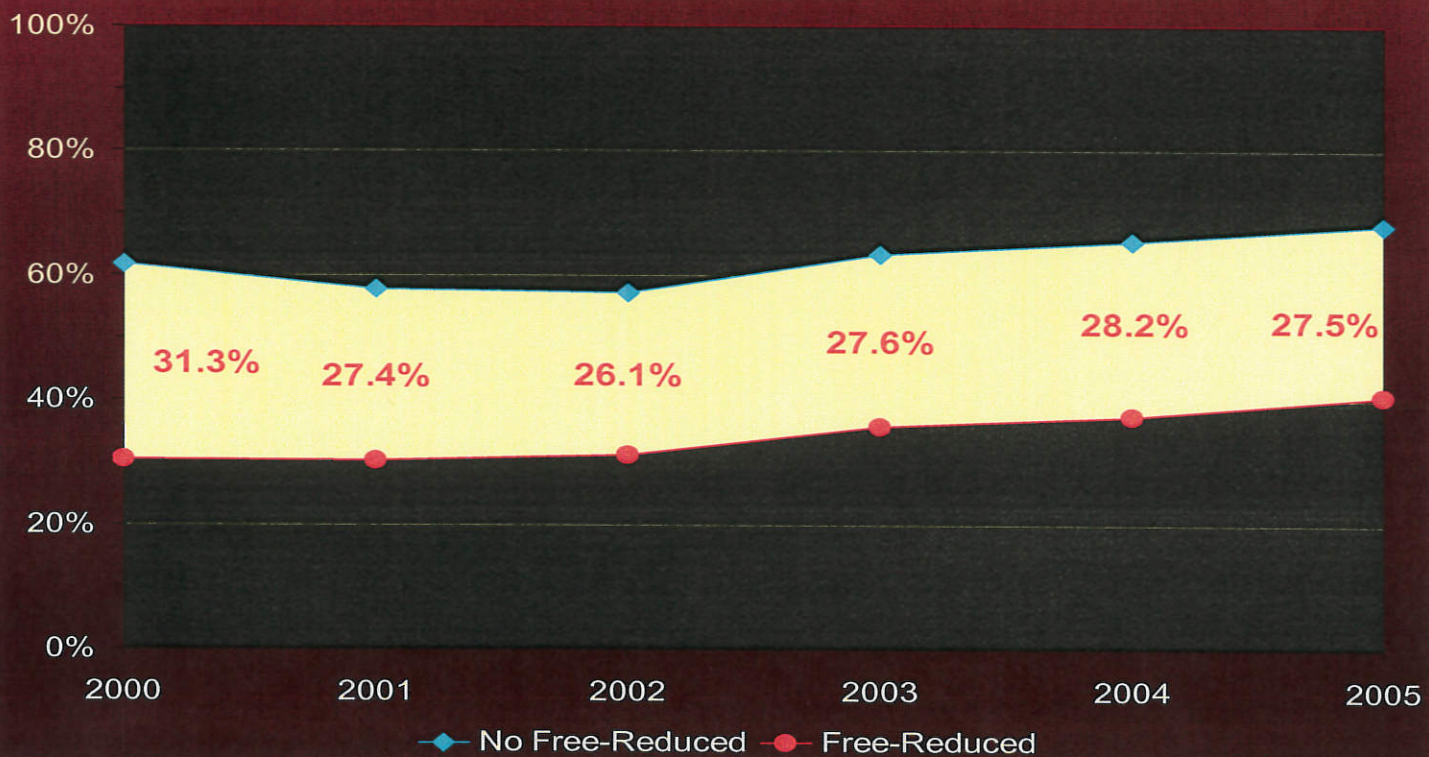
State Math Achievement Gap at Grade 10

Free-Reduced and Non-Free-Reduced Performance



State Reading Achievement Gap at Grade 11

Free-Reduced and Non-Free-Reduced Performance



USD 259 Mobility Rates Explanation

School	Site	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	
East High School	120	60%	70%	65%	72%	62%	
Metro-Midtown Alternative	140	150%	143%	158%	139%	190%	
Northeast Magnet	150	24%	39%	24%	27%	39%	
North High School	160	71%	73%	72%	68%	64%	
Northwest High School	165	52%	49%	47%	51%	42%	
South High School	170	64%	70%	64%	70%	64%	
Southeast High School	180	58%	72%	78%	75%	71%	
West High School	190	72%	87%	87%	89%	97%	
Heights High School	195	45%	46%	48%	54%	51%	
Metro-Boulevard Alternative	199	150%	126%	144%	139%	191%	
Allison Traditional Magnet	202	17%	15%	23%	20%	13%	
Brooks Magnet	210	25%	32%	31%	37%	33%	
Coleman Middle School	213	48%	56%	97%	59%	66%	
Curtis Middle School	214	73%	79%	105%	85%	81%	
Hadley Middle School	231	58%	61%	85%	62%	67%	
Hamilton Middle School	233	78%	86%	134%	104%	103%	
Horace Mann Complex	235	57%	65%	105%	72%	29%	
Jardine Magnet	242	63%	63%	n/a	131%	75%	
Marshall Middle School	252	73%	71%	89%	96%	87%	
Mayberry Magnet	255	34%	24%	44%	43%	64%	
Mead Middle School	256	77%	93%	133%	108%	97%	
Stucky Middle School	260	n/a	n/a	n/a	61%	56%	
Pleasant Valley Middle School	265	65%	63%	89%	75%	76%	
Robinson Middle School	273	39%	43%	61%	47%	46%	
Truesdell Middle School	287	58%	70%	104%	79%	74%	
Wilbur Middle School	291	39%	41%	59%	43%	48%	
Levy Special Ed Center	299	30%	28%	24%	35%	43%	
Adams Elementary	301	122%	106%	122%	100%	109%	
Allen Elementary	303	98%	94%	104%	80%	116%	
Black Traditional Magnet	305	69%	73%	77%	67%	67%	
Bryant Elementary	308	61%	74%	79%	68%	75%	
Caldwell Elementary	309	95%	102%	119%	81%	95%	
Chisholm Life Skills	311	56%	43%	50%	50%	81%	
Clark Elementary	312	119%	108%	146%	95%	114%	
Lewis Open Magnet	313	43%	43%	48%	37%	42%	
Cleaveland Traditional Magnet	314	45%	47%	55%	42%	54%	
Cloud Elementary	315	81%	78%	108%	80%	82%	
College Hill Elementary	316	69%	75%	90%	67%	73%	
Dodge Elementary	317	73%	66%	n/a	183%	76%	
Emerson Open Magnet	320	41%	27%	49%	40%	38%	
Franklin Elementary	326	93%	96%	106%	97%	89%	
Gardiner Elementary	327	105%	109%	142%	109%	100%	
Greiffenstein Special Ed Center	329	101%	74%	101%	85%	131%	
Harry Street Elementary	331	94%	102%	124%	93%	98%	
Hyde International Comm. Magnet	332	50%	45%	55%	44%	49%	
Spaght Accelerated Magnet	333	90%	113%	149%	73%	54%	
Irving Elementary	334	67%	80%	134%	108%	79%	
Isely Traditional Magnet	335	110%	111%	184%	81%	49%	
Jefferson Elementary	336	114%	105%	137%	124%	101%	
Kelly Liberal Arts Academy	338	72%	68%	104%	81%	77%	
Lawrence Elementary	340	95%	77%	106%	94%	96%	
Lincoln Elementary	342	116%	86%	132%	97%	98%	
Linwood Elementary	343	111%	136%	128%	136%	134%	
L'Ouverture Magnet	346	40%	36%	43%	46%	46%	
McLean Magnet	352	43%	54%	63%	36%	47%	
Metro-Meridian Alternative	353	155%	156%	149%	150%	195%	
Mueller Elementary	354	93%	75%	104%	97%	60%	
Gammon Elementary	355	69%	63%	80%	67%	95%	
Park Elementary	357	119%	112%	103%	104%	90%	
Payne Elementary	358	111%	95%	114%	101%	90%	
Price Communications Magnet	359	91%	97%	126%	93%	105%	
Riverside Cult'l Arts/Hist Magnet	360	45%	46%	48%	49%	60%	
Seltzer Elementary	362	80%	68%	93%	78%	69%	
Sowers Alternative	366	170%	160%	169%	152%	148%	
Stanley Elementary	367	93%	96%	106%	84%	86%	
Bostic Traditional Magnet	368	51%	40%	48%	43%	45%	
Washington Accelerated	371	115%	120%	112%	93%	129%	
Beech Elementary	372	89%	70%	95%	77%	77%	
Wells Alternative	373	99%	87%	115%	58%	105%	
Anderson Elementary	375	89%	99%	105%	86%	101%	
Woodland Health & Wellness Magnet	376	57%	65%	84%	71%	72%	
Woodman Elementary	377	71%	80%	98%	76%	81%	
Buckner Performing Arts Magnet	378	46%	54%	58%	50%	31%	
O K Elementary	379	58%	57%	76%	66%	72%	
Griffith Elementary	380	82%	93%	110%	101%	98%	
Benton Elementary	381	84%	76%	93%	70%	74%	
Kensler Elementary	382	67%	71%	74%	65%	75%	
McCullom Elementary	383	59%	51%	71%	51%	60%	
Peterson Elementary	384	51%	60%	75%	55%	65%	
Chisholm Trail Elementary	386	74%	78%	91%	75%	87%	
Enterprise Elementary	387	93%	93%	116%	93%	110%	
Cessna Elementary	388	83%	82%	117%	120%	111%	
Colvin Elementary	390	89%	89%	105%	92%	92%	
Earhart Environmental Magnet	392	49%	46%	48%	38%	34%	
Minneha Elementary	395	87%	71%	94%	78%	78%	
Pleasant Valley Elementary	397	90%	77%	62%	69%	77%	
Funston Elementary	398	78%	99%	111%	98%	n/a	
White Elementary	399	106%	113%	117%	111%	101%	
DISTRICT		80%	75%	90%	80%	80%	

Mobility is a function of incidences of movement, NOT the percent of students who have moved. The higher the mobility factor the more movement of students in and out of schools and the district. The formula adds all entries and exits over the school year and divides this sum by the total entries of students on September 20. The 9/20 figure represents enrollment since it counts all students enrolling in a school as one move. The final percentage is the mobility factor. The larger the percentage, the greater the movement, or mobility, of students.

How can mobility be greater than 100%? Mobility is based on moves, not students. For example, a school has 500 students move (enroll) into the school in August. Over the year there are 265 entries and 254 exits. Adding entries and exits the sum is 519. Divide 519 by 500 and the mobility factor is 104%.

Testimony by USD 500
Before the House Select Committee on School Funding
January 2006

The Kansas City School District has demonstrated over the past several years that At-Risk children can achieve in the classroom and the improved scores for Kansas City students on State assessments reinforce that fact. And while District 500 has received national recognition for these achievements, the District has consistently maintained that these gains are insufficient and also not sustainable at current funding levels. These initial gains were funded with foundation dollars (which are no longer available) and by diverting dollars from textbook purchases, school bus replacements, delayed maintenance, and other such transfers.

District 500 has been painfully aware for years that substantially smaller class size, specialized training for teachers of At-Risk students, direct involvement with the students' families, and attention to the physical, emotional and medical needs of these students all contribute to dramatically increased costs to educate At-Risk children.

Select Comm. on School Finance
Date 1-31-06
Attachment # 3-1

Recognition of these realities in the Post Audit Report was a validation of the views expressed for over a decade by the Kansas City Board of Education, its teachers, and administrators.

We are also encouraged by the Audit recognition of the additional challenges large urban districts face with generational poverty, gang activity, violent crime and homelessness. (We educate over 800 homeless students in District 500!)

We implore the House Select Committee to endorse the provisions in the Post Audit Report regarding funding increases for At-Risk students including the recommendation of a new urban At-Risk weight.

Implementation of the Post Audit Report will result in thousands of Kansas kids who are currently at risk to be left behind, who will instead realize their individual potential. Disadvantaged children utilizing a quality education to lift themselves and their families from the cycle of poverty is a laudable goal that ultimately will benefit all Kansans. We hope the members of this Committee will not base their response to the Audit's recommendations regarding At-Risk funding on the numbers of these students who attend schools in your respective legislative districts, but rather on the fact that the State is currently not adequately meeting the educational needs of large numbers of Kansas children. Bill Reardon, Lobbyist USD 500

Testimony to House Select Committee on School Finance
Robert J. Vancrum, Government Affairs Specialist
Blue Valley Unified School District No. 229

Chairman Decker and Honorable Members of the Committee:

As you know I represent the Blue Valley Unified School District No. 229 and we have for years advocated a change in the definition of at-risk pupils. Your recent legislative post audit cost study claims that a substantial increase in at risk funding is needed to adequately meet the outcomes currently specified by the State Board of Education. They do not mention the definition of at-risk pupils, probably because current statutes mandate that only pupils who are eligible for free lunch under the National School Lunch Act meet the definition of at-risk pupils.

You may recall, however, that the State Board of Education for many years has used an entirely different set of criteria to determine what kind of pupil assistance plans will be approved for at-risk pupils. Many factors result in students being at risk of failing to proceed to graduation with their peers: chronic absenteeism; failure in two or more courses of study; pregnancy or parenthood, chemical or alcohol dependence and juvenile offender status all have as much to do with a student's ability to make adequate yearly progress as does the family income of the family of origin.

Certainly we wouldn't argue that there is some relationship between the figures, however, the principal reason we believe this school finance formula uses such a rough short hand definition is that it is fairly simple to audit and fairly simple to compute. It is never a sufficient reason to adopt the standard merely because it is easy to administer. The committee has gone to a great deal of trouble (and with the cost study a great deal of expense) to try to determine what it actually cost to meet the performance goals currently set in Kansas. We think this is a very appropriate time to decide that poverty is not the sole determinant of when Kansas students need the additional help that is needed by an at-risk population. In fact we would strongly maintain that no such increase in the amount of at risk funding should be made until this very unsatisfactory definition of at risk pupils is corrected. If the goal is for each student to achieve proficiency the definition should be "any pupil scoring ~~the low~~ ^{Below} proficiency on state math or reading tests".

I will be happy to answer any questions.

Select Comm. on School Finance
Date 1-31-06
Attachment # 4



Testimony on **At-Risk Weighting Issues**
before the
Select Committee on School Finance

by

Mark Tallman, Assistant Executive Director/Advocacy
Kansas Association of School Boards

January 31, 2006

Madam Chair, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the issue of at-risk funding, especially in the context of the Post Audit Study. I have attached a copy of the School Finance resolution adopted by the KASB Delegate Assembly meeting in Overland Park on December 3. One section of this resolution addresses the following goal: "To help all students meet or exceed high standards," with the following points:

- Fund voluntary all day kindergarten.
- Increase support for at-risk students by raising the at-risk weighting to at least 25 percent and broadening the criteria for at-risk funding to include children in addition to those who are eligible for free lunch.
- Fully fund Bilingual and Special Education. This committee will discuss bilingual education tomorrow and KASB has already testified on special education.

KASB believes at-risk funding should be increased because state and local performance data show too many students are not mastering important academic skills, and that these children are disproportionately from lower-income, minority or immigrant families, or have disabilities. Failure to meet academic standards is not simply a matter of having a "bad school." These problems usually result from a child's circumstances that are more difficult to address in a traditional school setting.

While the school will never be able to address all of the issues that can impair a student's ability to learn, we know we can make progress. State assessments show that schools have begun narrowing the achievement gap. We believe this is because over the past five years, Congress, the Legislature and local school boards have all focused more funding on children with special needs. This included substantially higher federal funding for Title I and related programs under No Child Left Behind; increasing the state's at-risk weighting factor and funding at-risk preschool; and expansion of preschool, all day kindergarten,

Select Comm. on School Finance

Date 1-31-06

Attachment # 5-1

and alternative education programs at the local level. Additional funding has clearly made a difference, but much more remains to be done.

Therefore, KASB agrees with the Post Audit Study's finding that significantly higher funding must be provided for at-risk programs if disadvantaged children are to reach the same achievement levels as more advantaged students. KASB has not previously considered the issue of a separate "urban poverty weighting," but schools with high concentrations of economically disadvantaged students will likely face greater challenges. Given the scope of problems faced by some students and the results of other studies, the LPA cost study's estimate that \$200 to \$250 million should be added for these programs seems reasonable.

In light of the clear evidence of student needs, we ask the committee to consider the following:

- *Include funding for all day kindergarten in the school finance formula.* As noted in our resolution, there is widespread agreement that this is an appropriate step – so widespread it has been unanimously endorsed by the State Board of Education.
- *Broaden the criteria for providing at-risk funding.* This would help districts assist students who do not qualify for free lunch, but face other learning challenges. The formula could include criteria used by the State Board to determine which students can be served by at-risk programs.
- *Allow greater flexibility for districts in how they use at-risk funding, as long as they demonstrate acceptable outcomes.* For example, a district may believe the most effective and practical way to help at-risk students is to maintain small schools and small class sizes. Another may want to increase salaries to help keep the very best teachers in schools with a high percentage of at-risk students. A third may want to focus on professional development. None of these may fit the traditional definition of an "at-risk program," but each may be effective in meeting student needs.

What options does the Legislature have? One is to ignore this latest report. We believe that would fly in the face of the Kansas Supreme Court and invite additional judicial intervention. The second is to address the needs of children who are not successful in school by reallocating funds within the system: in effect, reducing support for students who are doing well. We strongly oppose that approach, and hope the Court, which has noted a constitutional standard for educational *improvement*, would reject it as well. The third approach is a "multi-year" plan. However, the needs of Kansas students are right now. This year's high school freshmen may well be graduated – or dropped out – before a multi-year plan is completed – if it ever *is* completed.

Instead, we believe the people of Kansas will support raising the additional tax revenue to maintain and expand educational excellence. School boards across Kansas have been raising taxes for years because they understand this issue. In fact, the House last year insisted on giving schools the ability to raise more revenue at the local level. If we can do it at the local level, we can certainly do it at the state level.

A recent report noted that over the past two decades, income for the poorest one-fifth of Kansas families increased \$100 per year after inflation, while the middle fifth increased by \$580 and the top fifth by \$2,260 year. The poorest 20 percent of Kansans are most likely those with the least education. The "achievement gap" affects between 20 and 40 percent of our students. The best way to give those students a chance at the American Dream is ensure they have a real chance for a high quality education.

Thank you for your consideration.

2006 Legislative Resolutions

Adopted by the KASB Delegate Assembly, December 3, 2005.

Resolution 1: School Finance

KASB supports the finding of the Kansas Supreme Court that state funding for public education remains \$568 million short of the constitutional requirement for suitable funding. We support the definition of suitable education adopted by the KASB Delegate Assembly in 2004, and support the Supreme Court's ruling that the Kansas Constitution requires a standard of continuous improvement. Significantly higher standards for school accreditation took effect this year.

While the Legislature may need to make adjustments in the distribution of those funds based on an additional cost analysis, we propose the following recommendations for the 2007 budget.

A. To provide adequate, equitable funding for every district:

- **Establish a new base budget that incorporates existing Local Option Budgets.** Districts are now using approximately 95 percent of current LOB authority. These funds are being used for costs required to provide a suitable education, not "extras" or "enhancements." By setting a new base budget that reflects actual costs, including current LOB use, all districts should be able to provide a constitutionally suitable education without using ANY local option budget. Once that is accomplished, an equalized LOB should continue to be available for districts that wish to go beyond this level.

B. To help all students meet or exceed high standards:

- **Fund all day kindergarten.** There is widespread agreement that voluntary all day kindergarten helps start students on a more

successful academic path. An increasing number of districts provide all day kindergarten. Without state aid, the cost of this program must be shifted from other areas of the budget.

- **Increase support for at-risk students.** The at-risk pupil weighting should be at least 0.25, and the definition broadened to include at-risk children in addition to those who are eligible for the free lunch program.
- **Fully fund Bilingual and Special Education.** The state should fund 100 percent of the additional cost of these programs. Concerns about over-identification should be addressed by auditing, not under-funding.

C. To recruit, prepare, support and retain highly qualified teachers and administrators:

- **Increase support for educators.** A higher base budget per pupil will allow districts to provide competitive salaries and benefits for teachers, administrators and school staff. In addition, the state should assist districts in providing health insurance to district employees.
- **Fully fund the state professional development program.** Professional development and continuing education is required for teachers and school leaders.

These recommendations should be adopted in a way that does not reduce per pupil funding for any district and will provide increased funding for all districts. Kansas ranks among the highest-performing states, and spends below the national average. We need to invest to be the best, or our children, schools, educators and communities will be left behind.



Schools for Quality Education

Bluemont Hall Manhattan, KS 66506 (785) 532-5886

At-Risk Concerns for Small Schools January 31, 2006

As the legislature has infused more money into our schools, the focus has been on targeted student populations. Understandably, along with these dollars policymakers expect academic success for those on the far side of the achievement gap. This is the right approach to reaching an appropriate goal. However the sharpness of the focus of those dollars combined with the reduction of funding in other areas and an continual decrease of students in rural Kansas has created hardships in many small school districts.

Although additional funds flowed into rural Kansas districts for at-risk and bilingual students, these increases have been off set by the decrease in low enrollment weighting dollars and a steady decline in kindergarteners compared to the number of graduating seniors. At the same time, state wide publicity regarding an infusion of new dollars into public education, has left patrons of rural districts with the misperception that their district and therefore all their children are destine to benefit from these new monies. The fact is many rural districts saw a trade off of dollars that could be spent on all children narrowed down to money that could be spent for only those with greatest need.

Our concern is that this trend will become an even bigger problem as we look at factors in the Post Audits Cost Analysis Study. The decrease in low enrollment weighting, vocational education and transportation are off set to some extent by at-risk and other funding streams intended to serve special populations. Yet economy of scale that often exit in large and mid size districts is harder to find in small school districts. The need to serve these children is very real. And rural educators strive quite successfully, in many cases, to do just that. However an approach that limits the amount of overall dollars, while at the same time targeting new money, severely handicaps our small districts.

In most cases, small schools do have the advantage of a low student teacher ratio. Helping children who are at-risk may not mean extending their school day, as they must ride the bus a great distant to get home and there is no later bus. At times getting children beyond a variety of personal problems must be accomplished before meaningful learning can occur. Small schools and perhaps all schools need the ability to interpret the child's needs and then address them. We would ask for more flexibility in how at-risk dollars can be spent. We would also asked that the legislature look more fully at the affect of decreasing funding levels for dollars that affect all children in our Kansas schools. The cost of transporting children in our very rural state is not diminishing. The need for vocational education is not decreasing. We can educate children unless they make it to our attendance centers. We can not prepare children for vocations if we don't have programs available to them.

"Rural is Quality"

Select Comm. on School Finance
Date 1-31-06
Attachment # 6



**Mark Desetti, Testimony
House Select Committee
School Finance
January 31, 2006**

At-Risk weighting

Madame Chair, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to share our thoughts on at-risk funding issues raised in the LPA cost study.

We believe that the Legislative Post Audit report has correctly identified a critical shortfall in funding for at-risk students and programs. The Legislature also has noted this in the last few years and you have made adjustments to the weighting beginning with a small increase proposed by Senator Kerr several years ago through the 2005 legislative session when you nearly doubled the weighting.

This committee and others have seen evidence that the current weighting does not provide enough funds to cover the expenses incurred even in school districts where the free lunch population generates the most money. A significant amount of money is being transferred from the general education program to at-risk programs.

Despite the funding level, our schools are making genuine progress in closing the achievement gaps in our system. You can see the evidence of this on page 12 of the report. In nearly all cases the gaps have narrowed, sometimes significantly. But we still have a long way to go if we are to meet the requirements established by the State Board of Education. The proposed weighting in the LPA study would go a long way to addressing this issue.

Legislative discussion for a number of years has also focused on the method of distributing funds. As you know, funds are distributed based on the number of free lunch students in a district – the poverty level. Legislative proposals and committee discussions often examine the possibility of changing the distribution method from free lunch to some other set of indicators. Most recently we have heard using students below grade level in math or reading on a standardized test.

KNEA has supported expanding the ways that the students can generate funding but not eliminating free lunch as one of those. There is a strong correlation between poverty and at-risk status. But poverty is not the only indicator that a student is at-risk of not completing an education.

The difficulty is identification in an efficient way. When, for example, a student is found to be failing several classes mid-semester, the student will be deemed at-risk and get services. Would a change in fund distribution allow that student to generate the funds beginning mid-semester? That is the difficulty. Use of free lunch is an efficiency standard for distribution.

A reliance on test scores in reading and math would indeed identify some students in need of at-risk services. But it would not help a number of other students. As an example, consider the on grade-level pregnant teen. Dealing with pregnancy, child birth, and child rearing can put even the best of students in danger of dropping out – they would be “at risk.”

KNEA supports an increase in at-risk weight that better reflects the cost of offering services to all at-risk students. The proposal in the Post Audit report would do that.

Select Comm. on School Finance
Date 1-31-06
Attachment # 7

January 31, 2006

To: House Select Committee on At-Risk
From: Kathie Sparks, Principal Analyst
Re: At-Risk Assistance Program

Per your request, the following information regarding the At-Risk Assistance Program is provided:

1. What is the purpose of the Kansas At-Risk Assistance Program?

The purpose of the Kansas At-Risk Pupil Assistance Program is to provide at-risk students with additional educational opportunities and instructional services to increase their academic achievement. These opportunities or instructional services must be in addition to the services currently offered to the general population. Some examples of an at-risk program include the following:

- Extended year;
- Extended day;
- Alternative schools;
- Drop-out prevention;
- Tutorial assistance.

2. Which students are identified as at-risk?

An at-risk student is defined as a student who meets one or more of the following:

- A student who is not meeting the requirements necessary for promotion to the next grade level or graduation from high school;
- A student whose educational attainment is below other students of their age or grade level;
- A student who is a potential drop-out;
- A student who is failing two or more courses of study;
- A student who has been retained;
- A student who is not reading on grade level.

Many districts add additional factors in identifying at-risk students to ensure that the resources are serving those students most in need. Examples of additional indicators are students not meeting local indicators, doing poorly on standardized tests or state assessments, being limited in English proficiency, or not completing homework assignments.

This definition does not include a student who has been identified for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

Select Comm. on School Finance
Date 1-31-06
Attachment # 8-1

3. Who selects the criteria for identifying students who are at-risk?

Districts will determine the criteria that will be used to identify at-risk students who are eligible to participate in the program. Districts must document the criteria used to select at-risk students and maintain this information.

Criteria that could be used include, but are not limited to, the following:

- State assessments scores;
- Local assessments;
- Performance based assessments;
- Norm reference tests;
- Records of academic performance;
- Second grade diagnostic.

4. How is at-risk funding determined?

Only those students eligible for free lunch as associated with the National School Lunch Act generate funding to support the at-risk programs. The following formula provides the basis of how the Local Education Agency (LEA) determines its at-risk funding:

Number of Free Lunch Students X .193 (weighting factor for FY 2006) = weighted FTE

Weighted FTE X General State Aid Amount = Funding for At-Risk Program

Example

500 students X .193 = 96.5 Weighted FTE

96.5 X \$4,257 = \$410,800

5. How may At-Risk funds be used?

The district must be able to verify that the funds accessed through the At-Risk program are actually spent on students identified as being at-risk. A line item budget is included on the Local Consolidated Plan (LCP).

- Equipment purchases cannot exceed 25 percent of the total At-Risk allocation.
- Administrative salaries cannot be funded with At-Risk funds unless it is provided beyond their regular contract duties. (If an At-Risk Saturday program is started; the principal could be compensated for their work in the program. Documentation of time and effort must be maintained to support the expenditure.)
- Each district designs its at-risk program(s) based on the needs of its at-risk students and available resources. Districts decide whether the program(s) should be K-12 or focus on one particular level, such as elementary only.

g-2

6. Are districts required to spend part of At-Risk funds on K-3 literacy instruction?

Yes.

7. How much At-Risk funding is required on K-3 literacy instruction?

10 percent of At-Risk funding is to be used to support early literacy instruction. Funds must be used to assist K-3 students in achieving mastery of basic reading skills by the completion of the third grade. Funds may be used for the following:

- Hiring of instructional staff to support reading in the primary grades;
- Professional development to support reading in the primary grades;
- Supplies and materials to support reading in the primary grades.

8. May a Local Education Agency receive a waiver from this requirement?

Yes, if at least 85 percent of the third graders are reading on grade level.

9. How does a Local Education Agency request a waiver?

Through the Local Consolidated Plan application.

10. How many children qualify for free lunch statewide?

134,901 children are eligible for free lunches for school year 2004-05.

11. What percent of the total school-age children are on the free lunch program?

30.7 percent for school year 2004-2005.

12. What percent of school age children receive services from At-Risk weighting?

30.7 percent or 135,064 students.

13. What are the statistics for At-Risk Program(s)?

- 31 districts provide preschool services to at-risk students with at-risk funding;
- 136 districts offer at-risk summer school;
- 189 districts had after school programs;
- 256 districts provide at-risk programs during the regular school day; and

- 15 districts provide Saturday programs.

Many of the districts provide more than one type of program.

8-4