

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE EDUCATION BUDGET COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Joe McLeland at 3:30 p.m. on March 11, 2010, in Room 159-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Representative Clay Aurand- excused
Representative Bill Feuerborn- excused

Committee staff present:

Theresa Kiernan, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Reagan Cussimano, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Dee Heideman, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

Dan Bryan, Senior Auditor, Legislative Post Audit
Walt Chappell, Kansas State Board Member, District 8
Dave Trabert, President, Kansas Policy Institute
Mark Tallman, Assistant Executive Director, Kansas Association of School Boards
Linda Keene, Superintendent, USD 432, Victoria
Bill Bohne, Vice President School Board, USD 449, Easton
Kirk Schweitzer, School Board Member, USD 281

Others attending:

See attached list.

HB 2728 - School districts; reorganization

The meeting opened with a short presentation, K-12 Education: Reviewing the Potential for Cost Savings from Reorganization of Kansas School Districts, by Dan Bryan, Senior Auditor, Legislative Post Audit, ([Attachment 1](#))

A presentation outlining the salient points of HB 2728 was given by Theresa Kiernan, Office of the Revisor of Statutes. ([Attachment 2](#))

As a neutral party to **HB 2728**, Chris Steineger, Kansas Senator, District 6, says he supports school consolidation as a means to more effectively focus our resources and to gain more and better educational curriculum and opportunities for our next generation. While voluntary consolidation is commendable, it can be haphazard in the form it takes. We might be better served to adopt a more corporate like approach to local government with a more standardized methodology and formula to enhance success. ([Attachment 3](#))

The first proponent of the bill was Walt Chappell, Kansas State Board Member from District 8. He stated that the current budget shortfall makes it necessary for each of us as leaders to "Do More With Less." He continued by saying government costs too much in Kansas because there are too many taxing units with the authority to increase taxes and fees rather than operate efficiently. And this is especially true in Kansas K-12 school districts. Yearly, over \$300 million could be saved in Kansas by merging the 294 school districts into (+/- 40) administrative units of 10,000 students or more. ([Attachment 4](#))

Another proponent, Dave Trabert, President of Kansas Policy Institute, feels extremely small districts are not in students' best interest with more educational opportunities in reasonably-sized districts. Also, nine (9) Kansas counties are already operating in larger geographies, so it can be done. Considerable cost savings can be used to lower the tax burden and make Kansas more competitive for jobs. ([Attachment 5](#))

Written testimony in favor of **HB 2728** was submitted by:

Thomas Owens, Kansas Senator, District 8 ([Attachment 6](#))
Dr Gary Norris, Waterloo Community Schools, Waterloo, IA ([Attachment 7](#))
Morris L Reeves, Ed.D. ([Attachment 8](#))

CONTINUATION SHEET

Minutes of the House Education Budget Committee at 3:30 p.m. on March 11, 2010, in Room 159-S of the Capitol.

Mark Tallman, Assistant Executive Director, Kansas Association of School Boards, strongly opposes this bill because his association has a long-standing opposition to mandatory consolidation efforts. However, he also stated, a closer look at this bill leads us to believe this proposal would devastate the concept of local control of public education, lead to widespread school closings and job loss. It would undermine the positive results of our education system. For that reason, Kansas Association of School Boards is joined by United School Administrators of Kansas and Schools for Quality Education in opposition of **HB 2728**. (Attachment 9)

Linda Keene, Superintendent, USD 432, Victoria, as an opponent, stated that local control has been a hallmark of Kansas' education since we became a state in 1861. Local decisions are made by local people that affect their children and their friends. Family and neighbors' children have been the cornerstones of our system. **HB 2728** would forever alter that system. (Attachment 10)

Bill Bohne, Vice President School Board, USD 449, Easton, opposes **HB 2728** because he values the education his children have received, such as, small class size, the close teacher-administration-parent relationships, the near proximity to school facilities, the quality of teachers and the wide variety of extra-curricular activities that developed their talents. He believes **HB 2728** is detrimental to Kansas public education, and is about consolidation to save money, not improve education. (Attachment 11)

Kirk Schweitzer, a school board member from USD 281 says this bill is detrimental to the identity of our school districts and to the quality of educational services to our children. (Attachment 12)

Written testimony in opposition was submitted by James Runge, Superintendent, USD 393, Solomon.

The hearing on **HB 2728** was closed by the chairman.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 15, 2010.

The meeting was adjourned at 05:32 p.m.

EDUCATION BUDGET COMMITTEE GUEST LIST

DATE: March 11, 2010

NAME	REPRESENTING
BILL BOHNE	USD 449 EASTON, KS
Sandra Bohne	USD 449 Easton, KS,
Linda KANE	432 Victoria
John KANE	432 Victoria
Charles D. Cavent	USD 449 Easton
Karl Schmitt	USD 281
Kathy Schweitzer	USD 281
Mark Tallia	KASB
TERRY FONS YTT	KNEA
Doree Trabant	Kansas Policy Inst.
Gene Mlyler	KANSAS REPORTER
Shirley Palmer	4th Dist. Rep.
Rex Bruce	USD 374 Sublett
Darrel Finch	USD 456 Margis des Cygnos
Cheryl Grundel	USA/Kansas
Mark Wolter	USD 105 - Rawlins Co
Meyer Wolter	
Rob MENCH	KENTUCKY ASSOC.
Mark	
Walt Skappell	ETVC
Mark Desetti	KNEA
Tracy Russell	SQE
Dodie Weustear	USA/Kansas



Legislative Post Audit Performance Audit Report Highlights

K-12 Education: Reviewing the Potential for Cost Savings From Reorganization of Kansas School Districts

Report Highlights

February 2010 • 10PA07

Audit Concern

With recent budget shortfalls, legislative questions have been raised about the potential for cost savings if school district boundaries were configured differently.

Other Relevant Facts

Any potential for cost savings from consolidating districts should be viewed as a long-term investment. It would take time for districts to develop consolidation plans and assess the resources needed. Also, under current law districts that consolidate have their funding held constant for several years.

Larger school districts cost less to operate per student because economies of scale allow them to share resources and reduce overhead costs such as administration, utilities, and insurance.

Estimated Potential
For State Savings
(including the new offsetting
cost of State aid for new
buildings)

Scenario 1:
\$15 million per year

Scenario 2:
\$111 million per year

AUDIT QUESTION 1: *What opportunities exist to restructure Kansas school districts to more cost-efficiently educate students?*

AUDIT ANSWER and KEY FINDINGS:

- Identifying the potential for savings from consolidating school districts involved statistical analysis and numerous assumptions about how districts could be reorganized, and what the costs for those newly reorganized districts might be. We could not do a detailed analysis of each district.
- We developed two high-level scenarios to illustrate potential ways that school district might consolidate:
 - Scenario 1—Consolidate districts that don't meet the original consolidation requirements of the 1960s. This scenario would reduce the number of districts from 293 to 266.
 - Scenario 2—Consolidate districts with fewer than 1,600 students. This scenario would reduce the number of districts to 152.
- The estimated impact of each scenario is summarized in the figure on the next page. In sum:

Operating Expenditures

- We estimated the potential for cost savings under Scenario 1 was \$18 million, and would result from closing 50 schools and having 230 fewer teachers and administrators.
- The potential for cost savings under Scenario 2 was \$138 million, and would result from closing 304 schools and having 1,532 fewer teachers and administrators.
- The State's share of the potential cost savings was \$15 million under Scenario 1 and more than \$129 million under Scenario 2, primarily because the State would provide less low-enrollment funding.
- Under both scenarios, many districts would lose more money in State funding than they save by reducing their operating expenditures.
- In all, almost 900 more students would need to be transported under Scenario 1, and 7,000 under Scenario 2. To reduce students' time on buses, districts may have to consider adding more bus routes.

House Education Budget Committee

Date: 03-11-2010

Attachment #: 1

**Comparing the Changes in Operating and Capital Expenditures to the
Changes in Operating and Capital Aid Under Our Two Scenarios
(dollars in millions)**

	Scenario 1 Consolidate districts that don't meet the 1960s criteria	Scenario 2 Consolidate districts with fewer than 1,600 students
<i># of Districts Identified</i>	32	239
<i># of Consolidated Districts</i>	28	100
<i>Final # of districts</i>	266	152
OPERATING EXPENDITURES AND AID		
Change in Operating Expenditures	(\$17.9)	(\$138.4)
Change in Operating Aid		
State Funding		
<i>Basic Operating Aid (a)</i>	(\$13.5)	(\$111.3)
<i>Transportation Funding</i>	\$0.8	\$6.4
<i>KPERS Contribution</i>	(\$0.8)	(\$6.1)
<i>State Share of Local Option Budgets (b)</i>	(\$1.7)	(\$18.5)
Total State Funding	(\$15.2)	(\$129.4)
Districts' Share of Local Option Budgets	(\$2.1)	(\$13.0)
Total Change in Operating Aid	(\$17.3)	(\$142.4)
Net Savings or (Loss) to Districts (c)	\$0.6	(\$3.9)
<i># of Districts with a Net Savings</i>	15	56
<i># of Districts with a Net Loss</i>	13	44
CAPITAL EXPENDITURES AND AID		
Need for New/Expanded High School Buildings		
New Building	0	17
Expanded Building	10	37
No Construction	18	46
Total	28	100
Annual Cost of New/Expanded High School Buildings		
District Share	(\$1.3)	(\$45.5)
State Share	(\$0.4)	(\$18.2)
Total	(\$1.7)	(\$63.7)
Net Savings or (Loss) to Districts [Operating and Capital Expenditures Combined]		
Operating Expenditures (from above)	\$0.6	(\$3.9)
Capital Expenditures	(\$1.3)	(\$45.5)
Total (c)	(\$0.7)	(\$49.4)
<i># of Districts with a Net Savings</i>	12	38
<i># of Districts with a Net Loss</i>	16	62

(a) Includes Base State Aid Per Pupil (BSAPP), as well as low-enrollment and correlation weighting.

(b) Local option budgets allow districts to raise money locally for enhancing their education programs. To determine the local option budget we assumed that all districts were authorized up to 30%. The district share is generated by local taxpayer dollars, and the State share is equalization aid paid to "property poor" districts.

(c) A negative number indicates that districts as a whole will be financially worse off. While operating expenditures would decrease (saving the districts money), the amount of funding would decrease even more (creating a net loss for the districts).

Source: LPA analysis of Department of Education data.

AUDIT ANSWER and KEY FINDINGS (continued):

Capital Expenditures

- Some districts likely would need new or expanded buildings to accommodate a consolidated high school, costing districts an estimated \$1 million a year under Scenario 1, and almost \$46 million a year under Scenario 2. We didn't try to estimate the impact on elementary and middle schools.
- The State provides bond and interest aid to some "property poor" districts to help equalize the cost of building new facilities. We estimated the cost would be \$400,000 under Scenario 1 and about \$18 million under Scenario 2.
- We visited 8 districts to look at their facilities and locations and discuss the potential impacts of our consolidation scenarios with them. Among the issues they raised were:
 - whether smaller districts would have adequate representation on the new board
 - who would pay a district's existing bond debt
 - whether savings would be offset by increased transportation and facility costs
 - whether their students would go to the larger reorganized district or to another one
 - whether students' performance would suffer
 - the impact consolidation would have on mill levies
- Although these issues wouldn't preclude districts from merging, these are the types of issues that would need to be worked out if districts were consolidated.

We Recommended

- The Legislature should consider limiting or eliminating the provision allowing districts to enter into long-term inter-district contracts with another district to share entire grades.
- The Legislature should consider options for strengthening the incentives to encourage districts to voluntarily consolidate.

Agency Response: *The Department of Education didn't raise concerns about our findings. Three districts we visited for site visits chose to provide a response. Wathena/Elwood didn't raise concerns about our findings. Doniphan West and Skyline did raise issues about our findings and methodology which we address in the report.*

Other Relevant Facts

(continued)

Currently, Kansas relies in the voluntary consolidation of school districts at the local level. Since 1969, the number of districts has decreased from 311 to 293.

Kansas' primary incentive to encourage voluntary consolidation is to allow the districts to keep the current combined funding level of the original (smaller) districts for a certain number of years.

Potential incentives the State could offer include providing the combined budget based on funding from 2008-09 school year, temporarily reducing the mandatory property tax mill levy, and providing additional funding to help build new facilities. Most of these options would cost the State additional money.

State law allows districts to contract with one another for entire grades. We identified such contractual arrangements between six pairs of districts. This provision may be useful to districts to help address short-term needs, but there's no time limit on these arrangements, so the provision also may act as a disincentive for districts to consolidate.

For example, the Montezuma and Copeland school districts have had an inter-district agreement since 1992. Montezuma runs the high school, Copeland runs the middle school, and both districts have their own elementary schools. The districts also share a superintendent. Although they in essence have consolidated into a larger district, they receive an extra \$431,000 each year (more than \$1,300 per student) in low-enrollment funding, which they would lose if they merged.

**DO YOU HAVE AN IDEA FOR
IMPROVED GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY OR COST SAVINGS?**

If you have an idea to share with us, send it to ideas@lpa.ks.gov, or write to us at the address shown. We will pass along the best ones to the Legislative Post Audit Committee.

**LEGISLATIVE DIVISION OF
POST AUDIT**

800 SW Jackson
Suite 1200
Topeka, Kansas 66612-2212
Telephone (785) 296-3792
FAX (785) 296-4482
E-mail: LPA@lpa.ks.gov
Website:
<http://kslegislature.org/postaudit>

Barbara J. Hinton,
Legislative Post Auditor

For more information about this
audit report, please contact

DAN BRYAN
(785) 296-3792
Dan.Bryan.@lpa.ks.gov

MARY ANN TORRENCE, ATTORNEY
REVISOR OF STATUTES
JAMES A. WILSON III, ATTORNEY
FIRST ASSISTANT REVISOR
GORDON L. SELF, ATTORNEY
FIRST ASSISTANT REVISOR



OFFICE OF REVISOR OF STATUTES
KANSAS LEGISLATURE

Legal Consultation—
Legislative Committees and Legislators
Legislative Bill Drafting
Legislative Committee Staff
Secretary—
Legislative Coordinating Council
Kansas Commission on
Interstate Cooperation
Kansas Statutes Annotated
Editing and Publication
Legislative Information System

TO: House Education Budget Committee
FROM: Theresa Kiernan
RE: House Bill No. 2728
DATE: March 11, 2010

HB 2728 would enact the school district reorganization act. The bill establishes the school district reorganization commission (Commission) which is composed of 11 members appointed as follows: One each by the Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House and the State Board of Education; four by the United School Administrators; and three by the Kansas Association of School Boards. Appointments are required to be made within 60 days of the effective date of the act (September 30th). Members would serve at the pleasure of the appointing authority.

The bill requires that on or before January 1, 2011, and each 10 years thereafter, school districts would be reorganized so that each district has an enrollment of at least 10,000. Boundaries of school districts would be determined by the Commission.

Reorganized districts would be governed by a board of education composed of seven members; six elected from member-districts and one on an at-large basis. In order to stagger terms, at the first election after a reorganization, members elected from even-numbered member-districts would be elected for terms of two years; thereafter all members would be elected for terms of four years. The first election would be held on or before April 15, 2011.

Boards of education would be responsible for the adoption for the district's budget, policy review and development, strategic planning and oversight of the curriculum.

The superintendent of the district would be responsible for the administration and supervision of the instructional resources of the district.

The bill provides that the bonded indebtedness of former districts shall be assumed by the newly formed district unless the Commission determines the indebtedness should remain an obligation of the former district. All other indebtedness and the assets of the former districts are transferred to the newly formed district.

In order to reduce duplication of services and to reduce costs regional service centers would be required to serve all districts within the service center's region; service centers also may provide services to districts outside the region. The bill lists the powers and duties of services centers including: Purchasing of textbooks and supplies; development of tests and student evaluation tools; curriculum development, professional development; administration of special education, Title I programs and ELL programs; food service; maintenance; payroll services; health insurance negotiation; and any other power or duty prescribed by the State Board.

Boards of education would be required to develop plans to optimize the use of attendance centers, teachers and other resources of the district and to negotiate cooperative and administrative responsibility agreements with the regional service center.

The bill includes the provisions of 2010 HB 2239 relating to the recording and reporting of expenditures and expenditure transactions of school districts using the uniform chart of accounts prescribed by the State Board.

The effective date of some of the provisions of the bill are delayed until July 1, 2012. The committee should look at those carefully to make sure that those sections won't need to be in effect sooner.

At this time, a fiscal note was not available.

CHRIS STEINEGER
SENATOR, SIXTH DISTRICT
51 S. 64TH ST.
KANSAS CITY, KANSAS 66111
(913) 287-7636



TOPEKA

SENATE CHAMBER

STATE CAPITOL BLDG., ROOM 134-E
TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612-1504
(785) 296-7375
chris.steineger@senate.ks.gov

HB 2728

Testimony Presented by Senator Chris Steineger March 11, 2010

Kansas is a bottom heavy state in terms of local government. Our human and financial capital is spread too far and too thin trying to maintain so many county commissions, city councils, school boards, township boards, and various other local units. While small but numerous may have been a good business model in 1861, with today's highway system, mobile phones, and world wide web, we can be more effective and save money at the same time.

In the business world, mergers and consolidations happen every day as a means to make companies stronger, more competitive, and to increase shareholder value. Managing government and business are similar in many ways: it's about organizing and managing people and other resources to achieve specified goals and outcomes.

I support school consolidation as a means to more effectively focus our resources and to gain more and better educational curriculum and opportunities for our next generation. While voluntary consolidation is commendable, it can be haphazard in the form it takes. We might be better served to adopt a more corporate like approach to local government with a more standardized methodology and formula to enhance success.

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB2728
KANSAS SCHOOL DISTRICT REORGANIZATION ACT OF 2010

By
Dr. Walt Chappell, President, Educational Management Consultants

1) **PASSAGE OF HB2728 WILL SAVE \$300 MILLION OR MORE PER YEAR THROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT REORGANIZATION:**

The current State budget shortfall makes it necessary for each of us as leaders to **“Do More With Less”**. Government costs too much in Kansas because there are too many taxing units with the authority to increase taxes and fees rather than operate efficiently. This is especially true in Kansas K-12 school districts.

Each year, over \$300 million could be saved in Kansas by merging the 294 school districts into (+/- 40) administrative units of 10,000 students or more. Below are district enrollments showing that only 7 districts in Kansas have over 10,000 students. **There are 251 school districts or 85% which have less than 2,000 students. This is not cost-effective.**

Number of Kansas USDs by Enrollment Categories

< 100	100-499	500-999	1,000-1,999	2,000-9,999	3,000-9,999	> 10,000	Total
7	128	79	37	15	21	7	294

In addition to saving \$300 million per year in state general fund expenditures, by reorganizing districts, the tax base in each district will increase which will help equalize the educational opportunity for each Kansas student—no matter where they attend school. Increasing the tax base will also help districts raise local dollars through their LOB while lowering the amount of property tax paid by each taxpayer. Most of the savings will come from the elimination of duplicate transportation, administrative, operational and personnel costs.

2) **ARTICLE 6 (1) OF THE KANSAS CONSTITUTION GIVES THE LEGISLATURE THE SOLE RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY TO REORGANIZE SCHOOL DISTRICTS.** It states:

“Schools and related institutions and activities. The legislature shall provide for intellectual, educational, vocational and scientific improvement by establishing and maintaining public schools, educational institutions and related activities which may be organized and changed in such manner as may be provided by law.”

3) **HB2728 WILL ESTABLISH OPTIMAL SIZED SCHOOL DISTRICTS. IT IS NOT ABOUT CLOSING SCHOOLS OR SMALL KANSAS TOWNS.**

Instead, it is getting smart about how we use limited tax dollars by cutting millions of dollars of duplicate expenses. Rather than waste this \$300 million or more each year, we must use these savings to teach our kids employable skills and help fund other vital government services.

The savings and efficiencies are achieved—just like in any effective and viable business or organization—by eliminating duplicated administrative and non-instructional expenses. Teachers and school district administrators can then stay focused on preparing students for college or career while costs go down!!

4) **HB2728 WILL IMPLEMENT A WELL THOUGHT OUT REORGANIZATION PLAN:**

This Kansas School District Reorganization Plan has had years of analysis and development by current and former Kansas Superintendents and educational consultants. It is based on sound organizational, economic and management principals with the following steps.

House Education Budget Committee
 Date: 03-11-2010
 Attachment #: 4

- A) First, the 11 member Reorganization Commission establishes new school district boundaries by January 1, 2011. This non-political, appointed Commission will have full authority to make their decisions based on optimal use of existing and future need for instructional resources to teach a minimum of 10,000 students or more.
- B) Once the new school district boundaries are established, 7 school board members will be elected in each new District during the April, 2011 elections. They will take office on July 1, 2011.
- C) After hiring a Superintendent for each new school district, the local school boards will spend the next year optimizing the use of the attendance centers, teachers and non-instructional personnel and resources within their boundaries. They will also negotiate administrative and support services agreements with one or more existing Kansas Regional Education Service Center.
- D) The implementation of these new local school district decisions and transfer of resources will take place by July 1, 2012 in time to open schools that Fall.

5) **WHY 10,000 STUDENTS PER LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT?**

- A) Large enough area to have a sustainable tax base.
- B) Enough students, teachers and instructional resources to adequately prepare each student for college or career. The existing small school districts cannot provide a balanced, comprehensive curriculum.
- C) Optimal division-of-labor between the new school districts, the (7) existing Regional Education Service Centers and student attendance centers.
- D) Increased productivity and reduced duplication at each administrative level.
- E) The LPA plus Augenblick & Meyer consolidation studies only looked at combining small, nearby districts to form another small, unsustainable district. HB2728 allows full optimization of local, regional and state resources.

6) **WHY PASS SCHOOL DISTRICT REORGANIZATION THIS LEGISLATIVE SESSION:**

- A) Kansans must take full advantage of this **“Window-of-Opportunity”** before the Federal ARRA stimulus dollars for schools run out at the end of FY2011. New districts need to be organized and ready to open by Fall 2012 to keep most Kansas schools financially viable.
- B) Districts of 10,000 students or more will provide an **equal educational opportunity** for each student to become college or career ready—regardless of where they live in Kansas.
- C) Greater equality and curriculum offerings between school districts will meet the Constitutional and Supreme Court requirements of **“suitable funding” for “an appropriate education”**.
- D) By eliminating massive amounts of non-instructional duplication and waste, school districts become **financially sustainable** and make optimal use of both local and state tax dollars.
- E) With optimal use of instructional and non-instructional resources, the **cost-per-pupil will significantly decrease** while focusing resources on quality instruction and academic achievement.
- F) **Small and tiny school districts are no longer financially viable.** Without passage of this bill, small attendance centers which are geographically isolated will be forced to close.
- G) The assessed value of property within each new school district boundary will be sufficient to **equalize LOB funding across the State.**
- H) **Property taxes in most new school districts will go down plus the State General Fund will not waste \$300 per year in duplicated administrative and non-instructional costs needed to teach students. It is time to take strong, positive action for the future of all students in Kansas.**

For further information, contact Dr. Walt Chappell @ (316)838-7900 or educationalmanagers@cox.net

Kansas Superintendent's 2003 Rational for Regional Education Districts

From a January, 2003 report entitled Regionalization Concept For Reorganization of Kansas School Districts prepared by Dr. Sharol Little, Superintendent, Manhattan-Ogden U.S.D. 383 and Mr. Kenneth Kennedy, Superintendent, Pratt U.S.D. 382 with input from Dr. Morris L. Reeves, Retired Associate Superintendent for Business Services and Dr. Gary Norris, Superintendent, Salina U.S.D. 305

(Please read the 3/11/2010 written testimony from Dr. Gary Norris and Dr. Morris Reeves in support of passing HB2728 this Legislative Session.)

Regional Education Districts (R.E.D.)'s will be of sufficient size to take advantage of cost savings and educational enhancements based upon organizational decisions made by their governing boards. This will occur as the decision-makers strive for the expansion of educational opportunities for the students they serve. With the continued decline in enrollment in many of our school districts it is obvious that without restructuring educational opportunities will degrade. This is critical in small school districts at the secondary level.

It is time for the citizens of Kansas to set aside the emotional aspects of school consolidation and school closures. The need is to focus upon what is best for the students and for the state as a whole from both the fiscal and educational view. The state can no longer afford to fund the education of some of the students at 2+ times the rate of the statewide average funding. The financial considerations coupled with the difficulty of small high schools to provide a comprehensive educational program are sufficient reason to seriously consider regionalization and consolidation of K-12 education in Kansas.

The argument that the proposed reorganization will not save money cannot be sustained when examined even in light of the current finance structure. For example the four districts in one Kansas County during the 2001-2002 school year reported budgets for their general fund and supplemental general fund (LOB) that show a composite per pupil expenditure of \$8,907 based upon their FTE enrollment. The smallest district reported a cost of \$13,164 per pupil while the largest reported costs of \$6,924. If these districts were consolidated in FY 02, the state would have saved \$810,757. Comparing these expenditures with other school districts of like size and circumstance you will find that other districts have found the means and methods of delivering educational services at a lower cost.

For example, the Scott County School District reported an FTE enrollment of 964.7 with costs of \$6,825 per pupil. Riley County with 606 reported FTE provided their services at a cost of \$7,041 per pupil. Stanton County Schools with 543 FTE came in with a low cost of \$6,976. These data suggest that with the proper reorganization over time the State would realize savings of \$1,500 to \$2,000 per student in these districts. See below for data on additional districts.

The more significant savings realized by these school districts are found in their ability to offer reasonably sized classes at the elementary level and to reduce the number of very small high schools in the area. At the secondary level it should be noted that the four districts in the sample reported on their 2002-2003 staffing reports that they had 28.7 certified staff at the senior high level and 28.6 at the elementary level, which would imply that if there was one high school in the county considerable savings could be realized.

Other cost savings will include reductions in the extracurricular, athletic, food service, maintenance, and operations budgets if fewer facilities are used. The reduction in the number of administrators and support staff for central offices along with fewer boards of education will save additional funds.

Kansas Superintendent's Cooperative Service Concept

Many services could be provided in a cooperative method. This would reduce unnecessary duplication and result in both improved services and reduction in costs. Some services are best met when developed and delivered in the school or attendance center. Both cooperative services and locally provided services are listed.

Areas of Cooperative Services

Test Coordination
Curriculum Development
Staff Inservice
Special Education
Title I
English Language Learners
Budget Preparation and Administration
Transportation - Staff Commercial
Transportation - Student
Central Administration
Food Service Programming
Custodial Services
Maintenance Support - Specialty Areas
Payroll Processing
Grant Application Preparation and Administration
Charter and Diploma Completion School Operations
Staffing for Areas of Limited Enrollment
Equipment Sharing
Technical Education Support
State Reports
Legislative Lobbying
Vocational Program Administration and Reporting

Areas of Local Autonomy

Instructional Delivery
Sports and Activity Structure and Competition
Community Events
Staffing in all Areas where Assistance is not Needed
Building Administration
Day-to-Day Operations
Parent Teacher Organizations
Parent, Student, Teacher Conferences
Building Budget Management
Activity Fee Management
Routine Building Maintenance

Financial Advantage to Reorganization

It is estimated that with the proper reorganization of school districts and the sharing of services as outlined in the service concept section of this document, the state could realize a reduction in cost. This savings could be used by school districts in Kansas to enhance the educational opportunities for all Kansas students.

It is proposed the dollars saved could be used as follows:

- Meeting NCLB/QPA performance goals
- Increase teacher salaries to national average
- Provide quality affordable health care for employees
- Provide uniform and reasonable class sizes
- Enhance classroom supplies and materials
- Expand activity offerings
- Provide adequate maintenance and enhancement of facilities
- Provide for increased support from the Kansas State Dept. of Education to regional districts

EXAMPLES OF KANSAS SCHOOL DISTRICT REORGANIZATION COST SAVINGS

Item	Current	Proposed	Cost Each	Savings
Districts	17	1		\$0
School Boards	17	1	\$6,000	\$96,000
Superintendents	17	1	\$83,653	\$1,338,448
Deputy Superintendents	2	2	\$75,000	\$0
Board Clerks	17	1	\$30,000	\$480,000
Asst. Board Clerks	0	2	\$25,000	(\$50,000)
Payrolls	17	1	\$4,000	\$64,000
Payroll Clerks/Secretaries	17	1	\$30,000	\$480,000
Asst. Payroll Clerks	0	3	\$25,000	(\$75,000)
Central Administration Offices	17	1	\$25,000	\$400,000
* Elementary Attendance Centers	20	17	\$190,000	\$570,000
Total Students	7621	7621		\$0
Total Area in Sq. Miles	6846	6846		\$0
*** Total Instructors & Cert. Staff	722	722		\$0
Total Administrators	65	41	\$60,000	\$1,440,000
3A & 4A High Schools	4	4		\$0
** 1A & 2A High Schools	13	9	\$250,000	\$1,000,000
			Total Savings	\$5,743,448

* Savings estimate, avg of Hardtner, KS and Scott Co. -- Hutchinson News, April 7, 03

** Savings estimate from Supt. Jones at Mullinville -- Hutchinson News, Jan., 8, 03

*** May change with school reconfiguration

Not reflected are potential savings from other duplicated services such as food service and transportation.

**FY 2001-2002 ANALYSIS OF
PROPOSED
NORTHEAST REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL DISTRICT**

USD No.	District Name	Low Enrollment			FY 2001-2002 Funding	If Funded at or Above 1725 FTE Rate
		FTE	Weighting Factor	Adjusted FTE		
329	Mill Creek	534.0	0.493412	797.48	\$3,086,255	\$2,197,211
378	Riley	606.0	0.467405	889.25	\$3,441,388	\$2,493,464
384	Blue Valley	267.5	0.670934	446.97	\$1,729,793	\$1,100,663
323	Rock Creek	755.0	0.413584	1,067.26	\$4,130,280	\$3,106,543
320	Wamego	1,348.0	0.199387	1,616.77	\$6,256,914	\$5,546,517
321	Kaw Valley	1,089.0	0.292939	1,408.01	\$5,449,001	\$4,480,828
322	Onaga-Havensville	367.5	0.553733	571.00	\$2,209,758	\$1,512,125
379	Caly Center	1,607.0	0.105835	1,777.08	\$6,877,287	\$6,612,205
383	Manhattan-Ogden-Wheaton	5,242.5	0.063211	5,573.88	\$21,570,930	\$21,570,930
Northeast RED Area		11,816.5	0.063211	112,563.43	\$54,751,606	\$48,620,485

Note: If consolidated under current funding the State would save each year: **\$6,131,121 Savings**

Source: Kansas Department of Education S066 Headcount report as of 9/20/01

South Central Regional Area Cost Analysis

FY 2001-2002 ANALYSIS OF PROPOSED SOUTH CENTRAL REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL DISTRICT

USD No.	District Name	Low Enrollment Weighting Adjusted			If Funded at or Above 1725	
		FTE	Factor	FTE	FY 2001-2002 Funding	FTE Rate
301	Kinsley-Offerle	315.0	0.572516	495.3	\$1,916,976	\$1,296,107
351	Macksville	287.0	0.614571	463.4	\$1,793,288	\$1,180,898
502	Lewis	173.5	0.935841	335.9	\$1,299,811	\$ 713,888
350	St. John-Hudson	437.5	0.528447	668.7	\$2,587,852	\$1,800,149
349	Stafford	331.0	0.566737	518.6	\$2,006,943	\$1,361,941
254	Barber County North	629.5	0.459095	918.5	\$3,554,596	\$2,590,157
255	South Barber	319.5	0.571071	502.0	\$1,942,574	\$1,314,623
511	Attica	114.5	1.102110	240.7	\$ 931,476	\$ 471,125
361	Anthony-Harper	1,023.0	0.316781	1347.1	\$5,213,149	\$4,209,263
331	Kingman-Norwich	1,214.0	0.247790	1514.8	\$5,862,342	\$4,995,157
300	Comanche County	306.0	0.575768	482.2	\$1,866,056	\$1,259,076
332	Cunningham	298.0	0.583570	471.9	\$1,826,268	\$1,226,159
438	Skyline	392.0	0.544702	605.5	\$2,343,375	\$1,612,934
474	Haviland	178.5	0.921748	343.0	\$1,327,534	\$ 734,461
422	Greensburg	321.5	0.570347	504.9	\$1,953,834	\$1,322,852
424	Mullinville	88.0	1.141565	188.5	\$ 729,331	\$ 362,087
382	Pratt	1,160.0	0.267294	1470.1	\$5,689,136	\$4,772,967
South Central RED Area		7,588.5	0.063211	8068.2	\$42,844,541	\$31,223,844

Note: If consolidated under current funding the State would save each year: **\$11,620,697 Savings**

Source: Kansas Department of Education S066 Headcount report as of 9/20/01

Testimony in Support of HB 2728 School Consolidation

Primary Reasons for Support

- ▶ Consolidation of extremely small districts will create better education opportunities for students.
- ▶ LPA estimates at least \$129 million savings, which would help lower the tax burden and make Kansas more competitive with other states.

Support with Caveats

- ▶ Not convinced that 10,000 is the optimal size.
 - ▶ Kansas follows national trends on cost per-pupil. "J" curve has costs decline as districts grow in size to a certain point, then rise again.
- ▶ Reorganization commission should include private sector experts in consolidations, logistics (transportation), purchasing, warehousing, information systems, HR.

Kansas Ranks #42 Nationally

- ▶ U.S. Dept. of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2007-08):
 - ▶ Average enrollment nationwide = 3,531
 - ▶ Kansas average enrollment = 1,580

5-2

Studies Recommend Consolidation

- ▶ Legislative Post Audit – 1992
- ▶ Augenblick & Myers – 2001
- ▶ Little & Kennedy – 2003
- ▶ Legislative Post Audit – 2010

▶ No independent research recommends against consolidation.

Current Enrollment Levels

	# Districts	Total Enrolled
Less than 100 FTE	8	640
100 to 499	129	38,529
500 to 999	77	55,096
1,000 to 1,999	36	52,526
2,000 to 2,999	15	36,065
3,000 to 9,999	21	105,722
Over 10,000	7	159,037
total	293	447,615

92% of Kansas districts are below the national average

Kansas has Survived Consolidation

Year	Districts
1896	9,284
1947	5,438
1958	2,794
1969	311
1991	304
2003	303
2010	293

Source: Legislative Post Audit

Kansas has Survived Consolidation

- ▶ No evidence to support fear that small towns will disappear.
- ▶ Census Bureau ranks Kansas #49 in general purpose governments on residents-per-government basis.
 - 2,084 cities, townships and counties.
 - 1,332 residents per government vs. national average of 7,725.

Must Lower Tax Burden

- Jobs and taxpayers migrate to states with lower tax burdens.
- Kansas is uncompetitive and getting worse.
- South Carolina's House voted to eliminate corporate income tax and is targeting aviation companies. Missouri is trying to eliminate personal income taxes.
- Lower overall tax burden is preferred by employers and better tax policy than selective credits or exemptions.

The Right Policies Matter

	1997 – 2007 Growth Rate	
	Avg. Top 10	Kansas (24)
Gross state product	85.1%	62.8%
Personal income	87.9%	59.9%
Population	20.4%	5.3%
Net domestic in-migration (% of pop.)	5.3%	-2.7%
Non-farm employment	22.6%	8.6%

Source: 2009 Rich States, Poor States

Real-World Savings Examples

- Trumbull Co., Ohio (21 districts) compared to Kanawha Co., WV (1 district per county).
 - Very similar enrollment
 - Trumbull 600 sq. miles, Kanawha 920
 - Trumbull 272 buses, Kanawha 150
 - 35% less geography, 81% more buses.
- WV centralizes purchasing and warehousing in clusters of 4 to 6 counties and achieves much greater efficiencies.

Kansas 1 District per County

<u>County</u>	<u>Sq. Miles</u>
Chase	776
Comanche	788
Greeley	778
Hamilton	996
Morris	697
Osborne	892
Scott	718
Trego	888
Wichita	719

Source: Kansas Dept. of Education, U.S. Census Bureau

5-4

Kansas Small District Geographies

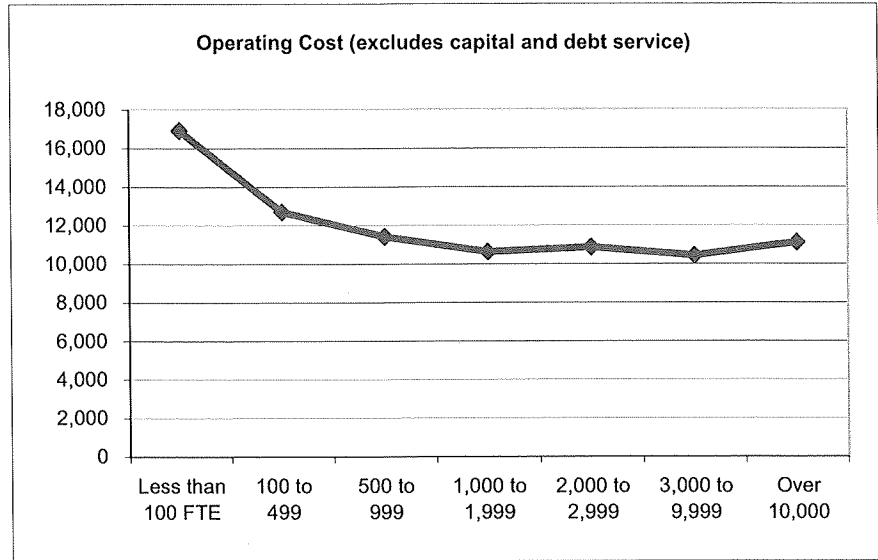
<u>County</u>	<u>Districts</u>	<u>Avg. Sq. Mi.</u>
		<u>Per Dist.</u>
Wyandotte	4	38
Leavenworth	6	77
Jefferson	6	89
Doniphan	4	98
Harvey	5	108
Shawnee	5	110
Crawford	5	119

Source: Kansas Dept. of Education, U.S. Census Bureau

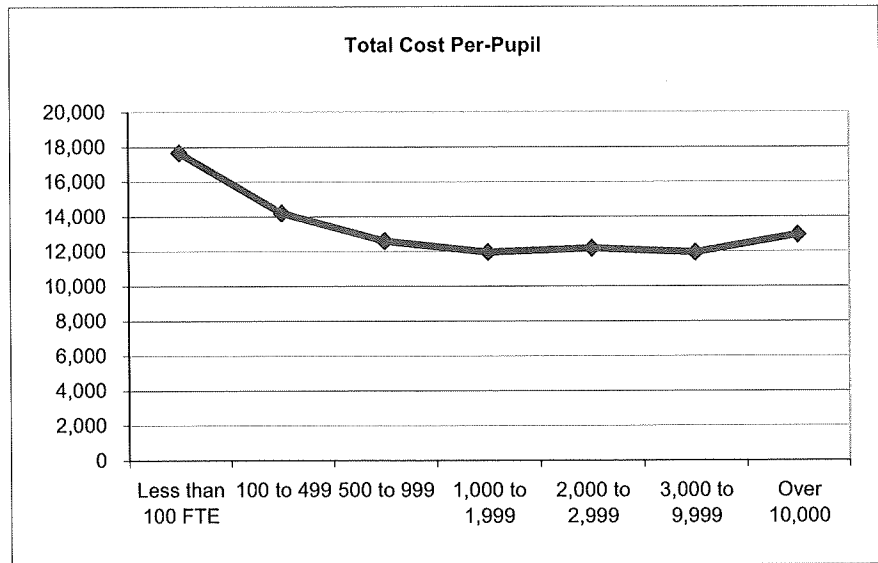
- ### Conclusions
- > Extremely small districts are not in students' best interest; more educational opportunities in reasonably-sized districts.
 - > 9 Kansas counties already operating in larger geographies...it can be done.
 - > Considerable cost savings can be used to lower tax burden and make Kansas more competitive for jobs.

Kansas K-12 Per-Pupil Expenditures 2008-09 School Year

	<u>Avg.</u>
Current Operating	
Less than 100 FTE	16,928
100 to 499	12,709
500 to 999	11,420
1,000 to 1,999	10,630
2,000 to 2,999	10,870
3,000 to 9,999	10,431
Over 10,000	<u>11,125</u>
All Districts	11,063



	<u>Avg.</u>
Total Spending	
Less than 100 FTE	17,674
100 to 499	14,201
500 to 999	12,600
1,000 to 1,999	11,960
2,000 to 2,999	12,186
3,000 to 9,999	11,950
Over 10,000	<u>12,964</u>
All Districts	12,591



Total Spending excludes USD 422 Greensburg (197 FTE) since it was rebuilding from tornado damage.

*Compiled by Kansas Policy Institute
Source: Kansas Dept. of Education*

Capital costs all shown in Capital Outlay. Non-current categories and Total Spending exclude USD 422 Greensburg, which was rebuilding from tornado damage

Average Enrollment Per School District

Jurisdiction	Students	School Districts	Average Enrollment	Rank
United States	48,183,858	13,645	3,531	
Hawaii	179,897	1	179,897	1
District of Columbia	58,191	1	58,191	2
Florida	2,645,680	67	39,488	3
Maryland	845,700	24	35,238	4
Nevada	429,362	18	23,853	5
Utah	556,314	40	13,908	6
North Carolina	1,425,076	115	12,392	7
Louisiana	651,377	69	9,440	8
Virginia	1,217,805	130	9,368	9
Georgia	1,646,010	180	9,145	10
South Carolina	710,982	86	8,267	11
Tennessee	963,264	136	7,083	12
California	6,264,831	1,025	6,112	13
Delaware	114,062	19	6,003	14
Alabama	743,349	133	5,589	15
West Virginia	281,735	55	5,122	16
Arizona	987,188	217	4,549	17
Colorado	796,824	178	4,477	18
Texas	4,581,008	1,031	4,443	19
Rhode Island	133,066	32	4,158	20
New York	2,730,427	696	3,923	21
Kentucky	666,019	174	3,828	22
New Mexico	329,045	89	3,697	23
Indiana	1,033,329	292	3,539	24
Washington	1,029,576	295	3,490	25
Pennsylvania	1,718,588	500	3,437	26
Massachusetts	799,227	244	3,276	27
Mississippi	493,302	152	3,245	28
Connecticut	548,428	169	3,245	29
Oregon	562,545	195	2,885	30
Michigan	1,576,637	551	2,861	31
Ohio	1,743,920	612	2,850	32
Alaska	130,624	53	2,465	33
Illinois	2,099,118	868	2,418	34
Minnesota	806,343	339	2,379	35
Idaho	265,844	115	2,312	36
New Jersey	1,359,949	591	2,301	37
Wisconsin	867,929	426	2,037	38
Arkansas	476,110	245	1,943	39
Wyoming	85,991	48	1,791	40
Missouri	900,195	523	1,721	41
Kansas	467,743	296	1,580	42
Iowa	485,114	364	1,333	43
New Hampshire	200,274	165	1,214	44
Oklahoma	641,682	539	1,191	45
Nebraska	290,912	254	1,145	46
South Dakota	121,606	160	760	47
Maine	194,953	287	679	48
North Dakota	94,959	187	508	49
Vermont	89,048	238	374	50
Montana	142,700	421	339	51

Compiled by Kansas Policy Institute

*Source: U.S. Dept. of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data
"Local Education Agency Universe Survey," 2007-08, Table B-3*

Local Governments by Type and State: 2007

Geographic area	General purpose					July 2007 Pop. Est.	Residents Per Entity	Rank
	Total	County ¹	Subcounty					
			Total	Municipal	Town or township			
United States	39,044	3,033	36,011	19,492	16,519	301,621,157	7,725	
District of Columbia	1	-	1	1	-	588,292	588,292	1
Hawaii	4	3	1	1	-	1,283,388	320,847	2
Nevada	35	16	19	19	-	2,565,382	73,297	3
California	535	57	478	478	-	36,553,215	68,324	4
Arizona	105	15	90	90	-	6,338,755	60,369	5
Florida	477	66	411	411	-	18,251,243	38,263	6
Maryland	180	23	157	157	-	5,618,344	31,213	7
Rhode Island	39	-	39	8	31	1,057,832	27,124	8
Virginia	324	95	229	229	-	7,712,091	23,803	9
Washington	320	39	281	281	-	6,468,424	20,214	10
Connecticut	179	-	179	30	149	3,502,309	19,566	11
Massachusetts	356	5	351	45	306	6,449,755	18,117	12
Texas	1,463	254	1,209	1,209	-	23,904,380	16,339	13
New Jersey	587	21	566	324	242	8,685,920	14,797	14
New Mexico	134	33	101	101	-	1,969,915	14,701	15
Colorado	332	62	270	270	-	4,861,515	14,643	16
Delaware	60	3	57	57	-	864,764	14,413	17
South Carolina	314	46	268	268	-	4,407,709	14,037	18
Tennessee	439	92	347	347	-	6,156,719	14,024	19
North Carolina	648	100	548	548	-	9,061,032	13,983	20
Georgia	689	154	535	535	-	9,544,750	13,853	21
Oregon	278	36	242	242	-	3,747,455	13,480	22
New York	1,604	57	1,547	618	929	19,297,729	12,031	23
Louisiana	363	60	303	303	-	4,293,204	11,827	24
Utah	271	29	242	242	-	2,645,330	9,761	25
Alabama	525	67	458	458	-	4,627,851	8,815	26
Kentucky	537	118	419	419	-	4,241,474	7,898	27
Mississippi	378	82	296	296	-	2,918,785	7,722	28
West Virginia	287	55	232	232	-	1,812,035	6,314	29
Idaho	244	44	200	200	-	1,499,402	6,145	30
Michigan	1,858	83	1,775	533	1,242	10,071,822	5,421	31
New Hampshire	244	10	234	13	221	1,315,828	5,393	32
Oklahoma	671	77	594	594	-	3,617,316	5,391	33
Montana	183	54	129	129	-	957,861	5,234	34
Arkansas	577	75	502	502	-	2,834,797	4,913	35
Ohio	2,334	88	2,246	938	1,308	11,466,917	4,913	36
Pennsylvania	2,628	66	2,562	1,016	1,546	12,432,792	4,731	37
Illinois	2,833	102	2,731	1,299	1,432	12,852,548	4,537	38
Wyoming	122	23	99	99	-	522,830	4,285	39
Missouri	1,378	114	1,264	952	312	5,878,415	4,266	40
Alaska	162	14	148	148	-	683,478	4,219	41
Indiana	1,666	91	1,575	567	1,008	6,345,289	3,809	42
Wisconsin	1,923	72	1,851	592	1,259	5,601,640	2,913	43
Iowa	1,046	99	947	947	-	2,988,046	2,857	44
Maine	504	16	488	22	466	1,317,207	2,614	45
Vermont	296	14	282	45	237	621,254	2,099	46
Minnesota	2,729	87	2,642	854	1,788	5,197,621	1,905	47
Nebraska	1,077	93	984	530	454	1,774,571	1,648	48
Kansas	2,084	104	1,980	627	1,353	2,775,997	1,332	49
South Dakota	1,291	66	1,225	309	916	796,214	617	50
North Dakota	1,730	53	1,677	357	1,320	639,715	370	51

- Represents zero.

¹ Excludes areas corresponding to counties but having no organized governments.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007 Census of Governments and July, 2007 Population Estimate

One County, One School District – Part 1

Air date: May 15, 2006

Tonight we begin a week long series of Steel to Scholars special reports.

We all know that most of our schools are struggling financially, and every year it gets a little worse. When you look at spending over the last four years, you get a good look at where the money is going. Instructional spending in the Mahoning Valley and Ohio grew at about the same rate as total spending, but other spending has grown more, with the biggest gains in staff and administration.

If you put it into dollars, spending on staff support in Ohio was \$465 million, while spending on administration was \$1.8 billion. That's up 21% over the last four years, yet over the same period of time enrollment dropped by 4% in the Mahoning Valley and 1% in Ohio.

So is consolidation a possible solution?

In a WYTV-Survey USA poll, we asked 800 adults in Mahoning, Trumbull and Columbiana Counties this question. In order to eliminate duplicated costs and possibly reduce taxes, what would your opinion be on consolidating into one district per county for administrative purposes, leaving individual schools intact?

36% strongly supported the concept. 27% somewhat supported it. 18% were neutral. 6% were somewhat opposed, only 9% strongly opposed the idea, and 3% were not sure.

One-county, one school district. It is the way some states operate their educational system now. So we're taking you a few hundred miles to our south, to Charleston, West Virginia, where only a few dozen administrators oversee roughly the same number of students as in all of Trumbull County schools.

Amy Radinovic shows us the division of power in a county wide school system.

Downtown Charleston sits between the hills of Kanawha County. The children from these city streets, and these affluent suburbs, and these mountainous country areas, all share the same school superintendent. Here in West Virginia, all the districts are county-wide, and in Kanawha, it's the biggest one with 28,500 students.

At home in the valley, people would ask how can you run one district that size with only one superintendent, and one treasurer? Here, they say it can be done. Kanawha County Superintendent Dr. Ron Duerring says, "Even though it's large, we still have a close contact. I may not know every service personnel, I may not know every teacher by name, but I do know every administrator and a lot of teachers by name."

It's almost business-like. Duerring, the CEO, with a handful of assistant superintendents. One oversees 45 elementary schools, another in charge of 14 middle schools, and the third oversees 8 high schools and 2 technical career centers. The principals report directly to them. Elementary principal Dr. Sharon Martin says, "It works very well. Of course there's not much hierarchy for a principal... you have curriculum people but you would have that anyway no matter the size of district."

On the financial side, one treasurer has two assistants: a controller, and an auditor. One administrator oversees the massive busing system. The county spans 920 square miles. And two lawyers to keep track of ever-changing state and federal mandates.

But even here, where they've pared down the administration, they face similar struggles to our valley: declining student enrollment, aging buildings, forcing even this single-county district to close 22 buildings.

One County, One School District – Part 2

Air date: May 16, 2006

All this week we're bringing you a series of Steel to Scholars special reports. The focus is a possible solution to the financial problems schools are facing. The 45 school districts in Mahoning, Trumbull, and Columbiana Counties spend \$85 million dollars on administration. But what if each county had just one school district?

That's how the educational system is built in West Virginia, a system we're taking a close look at this week. Last night we looked at how a single administration in Kanawha County oversees some 29,000 students. Tonight, we look at how purchasing works.

Toilet paper, paper towels, crayons and textbooks, just a few of the things schools must buy. In West Virginia's one-county system, the purchasing of supplies is a centralized operation that they insist saves them money. Amy Radinovic shows us how it works.

Every county school district in West Virginia participates in co-op buys, 4 or 5 counties buying together in bulk to save money. This warehouse in Charleston, supplies Kanawha County's nearly 30,000 students, as well as 3 surrounding counties, with everything from textbooks to toilet paper.

"Last year, I think we saved \$3.6 million." Purchasing director Tim Easterday says besides saving from better pricing, West Virginia counties also save money by finding operating efficiencies. "We standardize mop heads. They're color coded; we use 2 different types, these mop heads are sent back and recycled, rewashed and sent back out so you just don't use a \$4 mop head, and throw it away."

At the school level it may mean a little less influence over what brand of crayon, or how the floor cleaner smells, but Easterday insists his bulk buying decisions are based on health and safety overall. "Anti bacterial hand soap, controlling quality, because there are some products that don't work out on the kids' hands." And with crates of cleaners, and heaps of envelopes, it's an on-line operation where hundreds of individual schools place their order.

All of this may be overwhelming for smaller school districts who don't buy on such a large scale. They did a physical inventory here. They do it once a year, and found that only \$7,600 out of \$2 million budget actually walked away on its own. They keep track of every item. In fact, they even find ways to track supplies like garbage bags, after they leave the warehouse. "We have our liners printed, which eliminates some pilferage. You wouldn't want one of these to show up on your lawn with leaves in it 'Property of the county schools.'

And while the printing costs a penny extra per case, "We found out it was well worth it. The bags don't walk away. They don't grow a leg." Aside from supplies, they also have bargaining power on contracts. For instance, they say they saved \$20,000 by contracting out their 117 copy machines, instead of owning them outright.

For a dollar and cent comparison, we looked at the price of paper towels here and in Kanawha. Quality may differ slightly, but for an 800 foot roll, Kanawha County paid \$1.03, Warren City Schools paid \$2.90, and Bristol Schools paid \$5.29 a roll.

So what do our lawmakers think about the one county-one school district concept? Congressman and gubernatorial candidate Ted Strickland says he believes consolidation can be done without jeopardizing individual schools. "Just because you have combined services and combined administration does not mean that you necessarily have to give up the identity of the school that means so much to the student, and the community as a matter of fact."

One County, One School District – Part 3

Air date: May 17, 2006

In a recent WYTV/Survey USA poll, 63% of the some 800 people polled in the tri-county area said they either strongly or somewhat agreed with the idea of a one county school district for the purpose of consolidating administration. All this week, our Steel to Scholars reports are breaking down the one-county, one school district system that has been the norm in West Virginia for years. Tonight, we look at school busing.

How do you cover an entire county, with thousands of students, and get them to school and back home efficiently? Amy Radinovic talks to the one man in charge of transportation who says he does it everyday.

Let's take a ride on a Kanawha County school bus. Out the window, there are many miles of country roads, some windy and very narrow. The same school system might find a bus tied up in morning traffic. All in a days work for transportation director George Beckett. "We have 28,000 kids. We transport 20,000 students, and we run probably a little more than 3 million miles on our buses every year, so it's a pretty large operation."

152 buses, each with a full-time bus driver, cover 920 square miles of hills and valleys. That's 52 miles from one end of the county to the other. And while they cover many miles, they try to stick with time guidelines. They don't want elementary students on a bus for any more than 30 minutes one way. For middle school it's 45 minutes, and for high school up to an hour.

Beckett says they meet those guidelines about 98% of the time. "To be efficient, you gotta fill the buses up. And if you fill the buses at the same time, it extends the bus ride. So we have to have a compromise between the distance a student lives from the school versus the number of kids on the bus."

And here, where they've recently closed 22 schools because of declining enrollment, school mergers can create a busing headache for the 72 schools left. "Many times consolidation may increase transportation costs. To some extent we may have to add buses where we had walkers before. Now we're transporting them."

State law says buses must pick children up, no farther than 2 miles from their home. They stagger school start times so each bus covers 3 schools in the morning, 3 in the afternoon. But Beckett insists it all works, the kids always here in time for the morning breakfast program.

In Charleston, WV, Amy Radinovic, 33 News.

Amy also found that Kanawha has not one, but four bus garages, strategically located across the county, to keep the bus route manageable. Trumbull covers 616 square miles, while Kanawha is bigger with 920 square miles. In Trumbull, the 20 school districts together use a total of 272 buses, while Kanawha County uses 152 for its 1 county district.

We asked Youngstown mayor Jay Williams what he felt about school district consolidation. He said it's all about what's best for the entire valley. "We have to understand what are priorities are. We are not doing ourselves a favor in this valley by having school districts that are struggling significantly. We have to have at minimum an effective school district in the city of Youngstown and our ultimate goal should be a district that is beyond effective so if there are ways to do that that maybe challenge the status quo so be it."

One County, One School District – Part 4

Air date: May 18, 2006

All this week we have been exploring the one-county, one school district system that is currently in place in West Virginia. Is it something Ohio should consider to cut administrative costs? Some of you have asked what effect the size of a district has on proficiency testing. In Ohio, 32% of the schools with enrollment greater than 2,500 students were ranked Excellent. That's compared to 13% for those with a student population under 2,500. And that leads us to tonight's report on curriculum.

How do you take children with different life experience, different advantages and disadvantages, and come up with one educational curriculum? When you look at a county-wide system like Charleston, West Virginia, the challenge seems greater, since it includes rural, inner city and suburban kids all under one district. Amy Radinovic shows us how they try to keep it all equal, while maintaining individual school identity.

Welcome to George Washington High School, with 1,000 students, the majority of whom are from Charleston's affluent neighborhoods. Only 6% are minorities. Just a few miles across town is Capital, also a Kanawha County high school with 1,300 students, an inner-city school. Capital High School principal Clinton Giles says, "It is a very diverse student population. We have every racial, ethnic, socio-economic, and religious background that you can imagine...Within Kanawha County, all the schools are essentially the same, funded the same, so on and so forth, but we all have our different identities. For instance, we are the magnet school for the performing arts."

There, they specialize in music, art, and dance. Students here would use the same calculus or algebra book as they would at GW, but GW's specialty is advance placement classes. They offer 16 AP courses. "We've had students in Harvard, Yale and Stanford, many of the Ivy League schools." GW's principal admits each school may offer different extras, but the core curriculum is the same county-wide.

But you can't say the same about the extras like new buildings or athletic upgrades. This year, levy money will buy new bleachers and a walking track at Capital and several other schools. But when the more affluent GW asked for this new field house, the county said no. Jim Vickers, GW High School principal says, "There was a need for a field house, and our parents worked together and built a \$330,000 field house because it was needed." Private fundraising, not the county, also paid for \$40,000 worth of new guidance office computers, evidence that community support, and school identity is still strong, even in a one-county system.

And sports rivalry is still fierce. GW and Capital often play, head to head. "We are the monsters of the Midway. This is our 17th year; we have 18 different state championships."

Open enrollment is the policy here. You can attend outside your community school, but you have to find your own transportation.

The bottom line is they try to keep opportunities equal, with more help for the poorer, more rural schools. Cindy Daniel, the assistant superintendent of curriculum says, "And that means additional resources and staff, after school programs, summer school programs, to enrich what's already happening."

So how does Kanawha County stack up on test scores? Looking at the Scholastic Aptitude Tests taken by college bound students, Kanawha ranks above the national average in both math and verbal scores. Ohio's statewide numbers are close in line, a little higher in math than Kanawha, and a little behind in verbal scores. If you look at the entire state of West Virginia, you see the scores drop, taking into account that includes many smaller, and extremely rural county districts.

One County, One School District – Part 5

Air date: May 19, 2006

Back to Charleston, West Virginia, where county school systems have been the norm for years. Administrators there, just like their colleague's in Ohio, say there never seems to be enough money to run the perfect system. Amy Radinovic talks with the treasurer in charge of finances for Kanawha County's 29 thousand students.

"I would say there's probably always a struggle for money for any school district throughout the United States....but the question is...how efficiently you're spending your money." Harry Reustle has never known anything other than a county wide district and as Kanawha County School Treasurer, he can't imagine his job cut into 20 different positions as it is in the similarly sized Trumbull County. He guesses 20 treasurers would mean duplication: "They have to complete a lot of forms and paperwork so that the state entities..... so you're saying they're doing the same paper work 20 times...well...in essence yes."

West Virginia schools, just like Ohio, get most of their money from the state based on a funding level, so much per pupil. And school districts in both states can add levies when they can't meet their budget. But unlike Ohio, where taxpayers may wonder if levy will pay teacher or administrator salaries, West Virginia levies must spell out specifically where the money goes. Kanawha County Superintendent Dr. Ron Duerring: "We just passed one 2 years ago, in which we want to renovate all the older schools' auditoriums, which we want to bring them up to the 21st century, and also replace all the bleachers at our football fields."

Dr. Duerring believes most of his levies pass on the first try because they are so specific. And he says bond issues used for big projects like building new schools are also more successful because money is eventually spread across the entire county: "Everybody knows somewhere along the line, they'll get their turn ..and they support each other."

In West Virginia the counties don't negotiate health care with their teachers; they're covered under a state health insurance plan but every county can add excess levies for extras like eye and dental, even disability insurance to try to attract better teachers. For West Virginia Counties smaller and poorer than Kanawha that might not be an option. In fact the buzz at the state capital is that some smaller counties are considering merging their systems to make their tax money go further.

In Charleston, West Virginia. Amy Radinovic, 33 News.

If you think West Virginia is unique, it's not. Several other states including Maryland, Florida and North Carolina have single county districts. On the funding front Ohio spends more per-pupil on instructional and administration dollars than West Virginia.

We talked to State Representative Randy Law who said while it might not be done all at once, he would support consolidating to a one county school district. "It might be prudent to take some small steps, but we definitely need to move in the direction of a county like Trumbull County looking at one overall school system, with keeping as many schools as close to the children as possible. We have far too many school districts, we have duplicated costs, soaring health care, and we need to bring these folks together, and I think it would benefit the education system, also safeguarding and spending the taxpayer dollars in a prudent way."

State of Kansas

Senate Chamber



THOMAS C. (TIM) OWENS
STATE SENATOR, 8TH DISTRICT
JOHNSON COUNTY

HOME ADDRESS:
7804 W. 100TH STREET
OVERLAND PARK, KANSAS 66212
(913) 381-8711

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS
CHAIRMAN: JUDICIARY
MEMBER: FEDERAL AND STATE AFFAIRS
EDUCATION
CONFIRMATIONS OVERSIGHT
JOINT COMMITTEE ON KANSAS SECURITY
JOINT COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS
AND JUVENILE JUSTICE OVERSIGHT

ROOM 559-S, STATE CAPITOL
TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612
(785) 296-7353
1-800-432-3924
tim.owens@senate.ks.gov
towens10@all.net

SENATOR TIM OWENS

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2728 BEFORE THE HOUSE EDUCATION BUDGET COMMITTEE

Good afternoon Mister Chairman and Committee. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2728. You will hear from other conferees with more detailed data and statistics in support of this bill. I simply want to indicate my support for the bill which I would describe as a transparencies and uniformity approach to fiscal reporting as well as a bill that moves in a fiscally responsible direction encouraging consolidation of resources which in the long run will benefit taxpayers and government at all levels in our state.

While I have generally been a local control advocate from my years as a city council member, I realize the need for consistency in certain areas, particularly where it comes to financial reporting and that is what this bill does in part. Government today is moving toward electronic measures to save the cost of paper and implement additional efficiencies in both preparation and reporting of business transactions between governmental entities.

Of perhaps more significance than the issues addressed in the bill regarding financial reporting and electronic measures, are the issues of governmental consolidation, primarily with regard to reorganization of school districts. The bill would reorganize the districts into seven regions and 40 school districts at a savings to the State of \$300 million dollars.

I have served on the Kansas Advisory Committee for Intergovernmental Relations for several years and it has been the direction of that committee to find ways of consolidation of governmental entities to effect more efficiency in government. This bill follows that same trend of thought. It is the direction that this state needs to go for its fiscal security. Thank you Mr. Chairman and Committee, I will be happy to stand for questions.

Thomas C. Owens

Senator Owens

House Education Budget Committee
Date: 03-11-2010
Attachment #: 6

3/11/2010

Testimony of Dr. Gary W. Norris, Superintendent

Waterloo Community Schools, Waterloo, IA 2008-present

Salina Public Schools, Salina, KS 1994-2004

Satanta Public Schools, Satanta, KS 1982-1985

RE: HB 2728 Regional Education Service Centers

Thank you Mr. Chairman. Thanks to Dr. Walt Chappell and to Representative Joe McLeland for the opportunity to provide my testimony on HB 2728. Kansas children deserve a 21st Century Education! Unfortunately, not all children are getting one. An education that will prepare them for success in a changing economy, with uncertain job functions.

In addition, the State of Kansas clearly needs to have an economic development strategy that will position the state as a leader in the Midwest. In his gripping book, Caught in the Middle, author Richard C. Longworth deals with that question by suggesting that "of all of the biggest problems facing the Midwest today, education may be the biggest and most intractable." He goes on to say that "the Midwest is shortchanging its schools and its children!" Powerful words!

Our country has been slow to embrace school reform and the courage to forge ahead for a myriad of reasons, not the least of which is a common vision. Frankly, that is why most American High Schools are still clearly in the 20th Century. Speaking to the National Governor's Association Meeting on High School Summit in February of 2005, Chairman of Microsoft Bill Gates concluded,

"When we looked at the millions of students that our high schools are **not** preparing for higher education – and we looked at the damaging impact that has on their lives – we came to a painful conclusion:

America's high schools are obsolete.

By obsolete, I don't just mean that our high schools are broken, flawed, and under-funded – though a case could be made for every one of those points.

By obsolete, I mean that our high schools – even when they're working exactly as designed – cannot teach our kids what they need to know today.

Training the workforce of tomorrow with the high schools of today is like trying to teach kids about today's computers on a 50-year-old mainframe. It's the wrong tool for the times.

House Education Budget Committee

Date: 03-11-2010

Attachment #: 7

Gates is not placing blame on teachers or on students, but blames the system we have developed and perfected over years. It is the system that worked so well for the industrial period and allowed our country to flourish. But it is the system that is holding us back at the present time. It is the system where we demanded that 60% to 70% do average work and receive a grade of C. It was those very men and women who filled our factories and our farms with a strong work ethic. It is the system today that puts our country at risk.

Policy makers in our country evidentially knew in April of 1983 what we know today, yet a quarter of a century passed—and high schools remain largely the same as when our parents and grandparents attended. In 1982 sounding an ominous tone the Nation at Risk Report stated:

"Our Nation is at risk. Our once unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science, and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world. This report is concerned with only one of the many causes and dimensions of the problem, but it is the one that undergirds American prosperity, security, and civility. We report to the American people that while we can take justifiable pride in what our schools and colleges have historically accomplished and contributed to the United States and the well-being of its people, the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a **rising tide of mediocrity** that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people. What was unimaginable a generation ago has begun to occur--others are matching and surpassing our educational attainments.

If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war. As it stands, we have allowed this to happen to ourselves. We have even squandered the gains in student achievement made in the wake of the Sputnik challenge. Moreover, we have dismantled essential support systems which helped make those gains possible. **We have, in effect, been committing an act of unthinking, unilateral educational disarmament."**

Bill Gates has recently been pushing for smaller, more personalized high schools. But NOT TOO SMALL! Research would suggest that too small of a high school may be as bad or worse than too large of a high school for many students. Kansas should work toward providing exactly what the Gates Foundation has established as a desirable model. Speaking specifically about his push for high schools (around 500-600) Gates addressed high schools and sports:

"in many schools you need radical institutional change," he went on. "Any radical change is going to upset people. If you look, most of the pushback is not really against small," he said. He suggested it comes from those who run big sports programs, who are "asking why you're trying to change the status quo."

I am not in any way discouraging strong extracurricular programs in Kansas, a huge source of pride. In fact, I am a former music teacher who (as a student) was very active in high school music classes and activities. However, students clearly need more academic rigor and more relevant educational experiences.

Extracurricular activities can and should play a vital role in the maturation process and in learning to work together, but when a community allows extracurricular activities to drive the

size of the high school, the schedule, the course load, teaching and learning, it is only adults that that will be to blame when America loses further competitiveness in the world.

We must make productive changes to our high schools by thinking out of the box and keeping our minds open. With today's online environment, outstanding learning experiences are available at a student's fingertips. I personally challenge the Kansas Legislature and Kansas educators and citizens to begin the discussion today, looking for alternatives for a stronger, more relevant education for the sake of our youth and our country.

I would suggest that the committee focus on three things as it wrestles with the concept of **Regional Education Service Centers**:

1. **Quality of the instruction program:** Public Policy needs to be enacted in the state that will insure delivery of a quality Regents level education. Every student needs and deserves an education that will prepare them to enter a Kansas Regents Institution, should they choose. That same quality education is needed for a technical education as well. I do not believe that is possible in a high school of 100-200 students. Smaller Kansas high schools should be merged geographically or electronically to a minimum size of 500 to 600 students. **Regional Education Service Centers** will facilitate that merger. Unless and until the legislature is willing to consider the student's exposure to a comprehensive high school education as defined and anticipated by the Regents Institutions as an essential, there is no need to go any farther.
2. **Governmental Efficiency:** There are currently nearly 300 school districts in Kansas. That reality has not changed a great deal in the past thirty years. There is an incredible duplication of services that actually focuses money away from instruction. Eliminating a payroll clerk and a secretary, would allow that district to hire an additional science teacher or pay all teachers higher. Running 200 copies rather than 20,000 copies costs too much. Floor wax is cheaper by the barrel than by the bottle. Utility rates can be negotiated in large quantities. Those are all economic realities!

Having a regional transportation system that accommodates 8,000 to 10,000 students will be more economical than operating 15 transportation systems transporting 800 students. We know all of these things, but we are often paralyzed to act on them. Of course, Kansas Service Centers are doing some of these things now, but the mere fact that we still have nearly 300 districts, proves that we are not efficient as we can be, and that we have failed as policy makers to make the tough decisions.

Money saved by utilizing the model of **Regional Education Service Centers** can and should be used for improving teacher's salaries and promoting a 21st century education.

3. **Career and Technical Education:** Regional Education Service Districts can ensure that a nearby technical college education is available to all students. In addition, our high schools should provide quality technical education programs. Some current teaching positions can be diverted to CTE courses at our high schools such as: graphics design rather than 2-D art, cad drafting rather than shop, culinary arts rather than family and consumer science, computer network technician rather than a more general computer course, Web Design and medical assisting rather than more traditional electives.

Until Kansas aligns high school courses in a seamless fashion with community college and technical colleges programs allowing student to matriculate at various times beginning with their junior year, we will continue to fall short of providing our employers with the skilled workforce needed to insure that Kansas is a leader in the transformation of the Midwest.

Among all of the compelling reasons to look at a major reorganization of Kansas School Districts, the most critical is our children. Pretending that we are doing that now is just that, pretending.

Today, we see too many students aimlessly coming to school. As educators, we are not making the connection between the curriculum, their interests and the world of work. Some students clearly feel boredom, apathy and disinterest while other students continue to excel. What causes these dramatic differences? More and more students across the country are beginning ignite interests and learning through hands on education. We need to do that for all students through opportunities such as internships at local business and industry.

This can be accomplished this by making learning relevant to the workplace and building relationships among students and teachers in our high schools. Some courses might be organized in groups centered around an area of interest, such as visual and performing arts, environmental sciences or leadership. The connection between the lessons taught and real-world experiences will become apparent in an environment where teachers facilitate their students' individual interests and aspirations.

This means dramatic change for many of our educators and support staff. These changes cannot be accomplished under our present 20th century of school district organization.

Mr. Chairman, thank you sincerely for this opportunity.

Morris L. Reeves Ed.D.
511 Runyan Ave
Dodge City, KS 67801
March 5, 2010

Members
Education Budget Committee
Capitol Building
Topeka, KS 66606

Dear Members:

I am writing in support of HB 2728 which is before you. This measure is very similar to the proposal for reorganization of Kansas School Districts which was presented to the House Education Committee on February 6, 2003 by a group of concerned educators. The primary authors of our proposal were Dr. Sharol Little, superintendent of USD 383 (Manhattan) and Mr. Ken Kennedy, superintendent of USD 382 (Pratt). Associates were Dr. Gary Norris, superintendent USD 305 (Salina) and Dr. Morris Reeves retired business manager for USD 443 (Dodge City).

I applaud the authors of HB 2728 for their efforts to address this problem in a scholarly and deliberate manner. The potential for cost savings is significant. I support the establishment of the reorganization commission as the only rational manner to deal with the emotional issues that are bound to arise. I believe that with some adjustment of the timelines in the bill a rational process can be developed to transition the school districts in Kansas to a more efficient and productive enterprise.

To address the issue of costs in the schools we must come to the realization that the classroom is the "cost center" in education. If one would calculate the cost of operating a classroom in Kansas by dividing the total expenditures in the state by the number of certified teachers carrying a roster of students we will find that the state spends about \$140,000 per classroom. Then do the same calculation in each district and the result will be nearly the same in small districts as well as large districts. The difference between large and small districts is class size. Large districts will have 20 to 25 average class size and the small districts will have much smaller classes. The question becomes; how can Kansas afford to continue to fund small class sizes in those districts which are small by choice rather than by necessity? The solution is to identify those schools (not districts) that are small due to geographical or man made barriers and fund them adequately. The remainder of the schools in the state should be consolidated to achieve average class size.

At the time we made the presentation to the committee we submitted evidence that consolidation reduced costs to the state by forcing districts to operate more efficiently with larger class size. For example, in the 2001-02 school year the four districts in one county showed a composite expenditure of \$8,907 per pupil with total FTE at 569.8. If

House Education Budget Committee
Date: 03-11-2010
Attachment #: 8

the four districts were consolidated the savings to the state would have been \$810,757 for that year.

In addition to the cost savings realized in bringing the small class sizes up to the average, the additional savings realized from consolidating direct and indirect support costs is significant and should be pursued vigorously by the commission. Support includes areas such as the board of education, central administration, site administration, technology, testing, accounting, payroll, risk management, maintenance, operations, transportation and procurement. All of these functions will lend themselves to cost savings in reorganized school districts.

Thank you for allowing me to share my thoughts with you.

Sincerely,

Morris L. Reeves Ed.D

KANSAS
ASSOCIATION



OF
SCHOOL
BOARDS

1420 SW Arrowhead Road • Topeka, Kansas 66604-4024
785-273-3600

Testimony before the
House Education Budget Committee
on
HB 2728 – School District Reorganization

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

March 11, 2010

Also representing United School Administrators, Schools for Quality Education

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on **HB 2728**. The core provision of this bill is to require that Kansas school districts have a minimum enrollment of 10,000 students. We oppose this bill because our association has a long-standing opposition to mandatory consolidation efforts. However, a closer look at this bill leads us to believe this proposal would devastate the concept of local control of public education, lead to widespread school closings and job loss, and undermine the positive results of our education system. For that reason, we are joined today by United School Administrators of Kansas and Schools for Quality Education.

Let me begin by stating our belief that school districts are not merely administrative units. They are part of the fabric of our democracy. Literally from statehood and before, Kansans chose their friends and neighbors to serve on boards of education to oversee the public schools in their communities. The idea that government is best when it is closest to the people has been a core value for Kansans for generations. Over the years, many communities have come to be defined by their school district more than any other geographic or political boundaries. When the school board meets, it is usually in your town, or close by. You read about it in your local paper. You see your board members in church, the grocery store and at the game every week. You know many of them personally. School board members spend little money on campaigns because they know their voters and the voters know them. They hire administrators and faculty who live in the community. This system has produced decades of improvement in educational attainment and some of the best academic results in the nation.

House Education Budget Committee

Date: 03-11-2010

Attachment #: 9

HB 2728 would sweep this system away, replacing your local school board with election units the size of state Senate districts. Board meetings could be counties away. Elections would become expensive, advertising-based campaigns. The connection between school governance and community; the responsiveness to community needs, would be weakened.

Rather than determining school district boundaries locally, this bill gives that responsibility to an 11-member school district reorganization commission. While we appreciate that the bill allows our association to name three of those members, we disagree with the premise that a handful of appointees know better what works in local communities than the people of those communities. This bill really reflects a deeper philosophical question: do we put our trust in the local political process or the so-called independent experts?

Next, consider the impact of this bill on school finance and the organization of schools. To provide an example of what would happen, we have created a hypothetical school district based on the counties in the 40th State Senate District in northwest Kansas. It would be spread across 18 counties and yet, if every school district were included, it would still not have enough students as required by this bill. As attachment 1 shows, this new district would have 9,554 students, 16,490 square miles, and currently operates 63 school buildings.

The new district would immediately lose \$21.2 million in low enrollment weighting under the bill. What kind of savings could be achieved to absorb that loss? Those 31 current districts spend about \$8.3 million in total for central administrative costs. Lawrence USD 497, which at 10,376.9 students is the current district closest in size to the new target, spends \$4.4 million for central office administration. Of course, the new district would be almost 100 times larger.

Next, these 31 districts spend \$6.3 million on administrative costs at the school building level. Lawrence spends \$5.6 million – although it operates only one-third as many buildings. (It should also be noted that in over half of the current districts, the superintendent is ALSO a school building principal.) However, let us assume the new district could operate at the same central office and school administrative costs as Lawrence. The savings would be \$4.6 million. But the new district has had its funding reduced \$21.2 million

Left unaddressed in this bill is what teachers would be paid. The new district would have to collectively bargain with all of the teachers for a new salary schedule. One thing we know is that no teacher is going to want to take a pay cut. Assume the new district pays its teachers the same rate as Lawrence, because we know there is a very strong correlation between district size and teacher pay. That would require nearly \$4 million MORE than districts are currently spending – even though teachers in four of the existing districts would earn less. The new teacher salaries would nearly eliminate the savings in “administrative” costs. We still need to find \$20 million in savings.

What this exercise demonstrates is that there is no way for this proposal to take effect without substantial reductions in the number of school buildings and non-administrative staff. This situation would be repeated in districts all over Kansas.

Perhaps the radical shift in governance and finance proposed in this bill would be justified if there was clear evidence it would either improve student achievement or even maintain student achievement at a lower cost. We have seen no such evidence. In fact, the bulk of the research seems to be that smaller schools and districts may have a slight advantage in terms of achievement. To give just one example, I have attached a page from a Legislative Post Audit report released in June 2008 showing the larger districts in the state do not have better results on state tests, attachment 2. It is hard to see how closing local schools, increasing class sizes and spending more time on the bus and going to schools farther away from families would improve the quality of education – but that is exactly what this bill would do in many cases.

My final attachment, attachment 3, looks at the national picture. We have calculated an average school district size for each state, and ranked them in descending order, then provided information on educational outcomes and spending per pupil. Several things jump out immediately.

First, only four states have larger average district size than this bill would require, and one of those (Hawaii) has a single statewide district. Second, among our neighboring and regional states, only Colorado has an average size even approaching half of what this bill would require for Kansas. In fact, Kansas is quite average in terms of other Plains states.

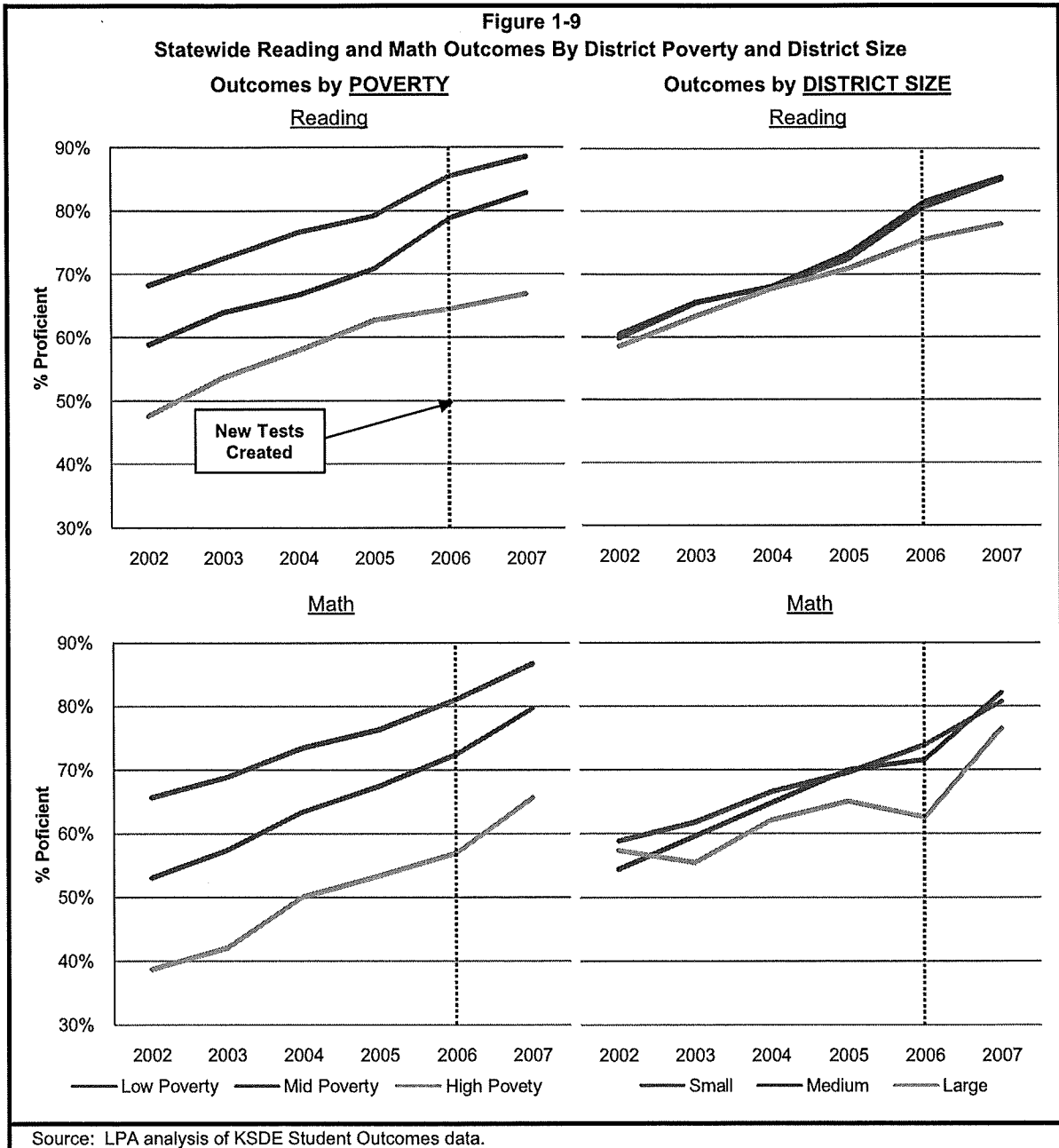
Third, and most important, the 10 states with the largest school districts have the worse academic results, measured either broadly by six educational indicators, or narrowly by the percent of student's proficient on the National Assessments of Education Progress math and reading scores. However, the 10 states with the smallest districts (which Kansas just misses, ranking 11th "smallest") have the best average rankings on these two measures. Let me emphasize that: states with the biggest average districts have the worse results and states with the smallest districts get the best results. This bill would move Kansas from just outside the best achieving category into the middle of the worst achievement category.

It is true the largest-district states spend about \$900 per pupil less than Kansas. We acknowledge that if this bill were to pass, Kansas spending per pupil would likely decline, because state funding would be reduced. But is saving money through school consolidation really worth it if our student achievement also declines? We certainly think not, and therefore urge you to oppose passage of this bill.

9-4

USD	USDName	2008-09 FTE Enr	Area Sq Miles	School Buildings Operated	New CUSD Teachers paid same as Lawrence?	State Saves LEW	Total Local Central Office Admin costs	School Admin Costs	Supts who are also Principals?
103	Cheylin	130.5	688.0	2	\$142,727	(\$566,720)	\$279,328	\$90,622	K-12 Principal
105	Rawlins County	317.5	740.1	2	\$59,216	(\$667,920)	\$206,906	\$204,426	Elementary Principal
106	Western Plains	160.2	601.2	2	\$210,527	(\$621,720)	\$273,481	\$123,975	
200	Greeley County	210.5	780.0	1	\$204,544	(\$678,480)	\$195,145	\$173,184	Elementary Principal
208	WaKeeney	443.0	706.7	2	\$104,674	(\$849,200)	\$243,833	\$241,644	
211	Norton Community	684.0	378.0	3	\$170,630	(\$1,064,360)	\$387,141	\$391,153	Director of Food Service
212	Northern Valley	205.0	263.0	2	\$124,475	(\$665,280)	\$222,053	\$139,821	Secondary Principal
213	West Solomon Valley	37.7	300.0	1	\$24,143	(\$207,680)	\$94,461	\$18,712	Elementary Principal
241	Wallace County	193.5	681.5	1	\$316,000	(\$669,680)	\$188,574	\$212,505	Elementary Principal
242	Weskan	98.0	243.0	1	\$218,208	(\$487,080)	\$204,754	\$20,946	K-12 Principal
269	Palco	161.5	248.6	2	\$254,289	(\$609,400)	\$178,107	\$190,303	Secondary Principal
270	Plainville	381.9	275.8	2	\$151,538	(\$766,920)	\$297,889	\$238,714	
271	Stockton	294.1	444.8	2	\$117,612	(\$656,480)	\$311,342	\$217,976	
274	Oakley	411.7	637.0	3	\$84,249	(\$808,280)	\$255,469	\$198,453	
275	Triplains	86.5	662.0	1	\$153,691	(\$392,480)	\$183,190	\$36,965	K-12 Principal
281	Hill City	365.6	728.3	2	(\$115,551)	(\$766,480)	\$237,676	\$262,042	
291	Grinnell	80.5	267.8	2	\$119,514	(\$429,880)	\$118,240	\$43,199	Elementary Principal
292	Wheatland	111.5	437.0	2	\$147,932	(\$543,840)	\$117,362	\$81,922	K-12 Principal
293	Quinter	258.0	400.8	2	\$272,888	(\$647,680)	\$209,728	\$242,353	
294	Oberlin	366.2	828.0	2	\$87,113	(\$783,200)	\$185,426	\$260,293	Elementary Principal
297	St. Francis	297.5	640.0	2	\$63,526	(\$651,640)	\$208,765	\$121,392	
303	Ness City	274.5	517.8	2	\$180,198	(\$666,600)	\$243,359	\$170,469	Elementary Principal
314	Brewster	91.5	372.8	1	\$195,839	(\$443,080)	\$99,674	\$77,181	K-12 Principal
315	Colby	926.4	463.0	4	\$143,286	(\$1,101,320)	\$984,870	\$500,942	
316	Golden Plains	185.9	242.0	2	\$149,138	(\$647,680)	\$228,634	\$112,853	K-12 Principal
352	Goodland	906.4	914.2	5	(\$50,716)	(\$1,103,520)	\$484,057	\$588,569	
412	Hoxie Community	292.9	674.0	2	\$56,420	(\$648,560)	\$332,058	\$181,153	Elementary Principal
466	Scott County	843.4	756.0	3	\$185,689	(\$1,111,880)	\$554,334	\$556,034	
467	Leoti	415.1	776.3	2	(\$2,178)	(\$843,040)	\$387,249	\$273,270	
468	Healy	73.5	203.3	1	(\$27,455)	(\$388,080)	\$167,834	\$59,005	K-12 Principal
482	Dighton	249.5	619.5	2	\$248,920	(\$677,600)	\$246,592	\$228,978	
New Consolidated USD		9,554.0	16,490.5	63	\$3,991,083	(\$21,165,760)	\$8,327,534	\$6,259,053	
497	Lawrence	10,376.9	175.2	22	\$0	\$0	\$4,434,323	\$5,556,478	

districts with high poverty always have scored much lower on math and reading, and continue to do so. As the graphs in the figure show, larger districts (those with more than 1,725 students) generally have scored lower on math and reading, although the differences aren't as pronounced as when districts are grouped by poverty.



State Name	2008 population estimate	School "districts"	Enrollment 2007-08	Average Enrollment per District	Rank on Six Education Measures	Rank on NAEP Proficient	2006 Spending Per Pupil
Hawaii	1,288,198	1	179,897	179,897	20	44	\$9,876
Maryland	5,633,597	24	845,700	35,238	10	20	\$10,670
Florida	18,328,340	76	2,666,811	35,090	33	31	\$7,759
Nevada	2,600,167	18	429,362	23,853	48	45	\$7,345
Virginia	7,769,089	132	1,230,809	9,324	9	13	\$9,447
Georgia	9,685,744	185	1,649,589	8,917	37	39	\$8,565
South Carolina	4,479,800	88	712,319	8,095	42	36	\$8,091
Tennessee	6,214,888	140	963,839	6,885	44	41	\$6,883
North Carolina	9,222,414	215	1,458,035	6,782	35	28	\$7,388
Louisiana	4,410,796	104	680,911	6,547	47	48	\$8,402
					33	35	\$8,443
Utah	2,736,424	99	576,244	5,821	12	26	\$5,437
California	36,756,666	1,049	6,070,428	5,787	36	46	\$8,486
West Virginia	1,814,468	57	282,512	4,956	45	43	\$9,352
Alabama	4,661,900	153	743,778	4,861	49	47	\$7,646
Colorado	4,939,456	183	801,867	4,382	11	17	\$8,057
Kentucky	4,269,245	176	666,225	3,785	42	36	\$7,662
Texas	24,326,974	1,243	4,673,455	3,760	39	27	\$7,561
New Mexico	1,984,356	95	327,670	3,449	40	48	\$8,086
Washington	6,549,224	301	1,030,247	3,423	13	15	\$7,830
Delaware	873,092	36	122,574	3,405	27	25	\$11,633
					31	33	\$8,175
New York	19,490,297	830	2,765,435	3,332	19	23	\$14,884
Indiana	6,376,792	338	1,045,927	3,094	34	21	\$8,793
Rhode Island	1,050,788	48	146,228	3,046	28	35	\$11,769
Mississippi	2,938,618	163	494,122	3,031	50	50	\$7,221
Connecticut	3,501,252	193	568,405	2,945	6	9	\$12,323
Oregon	3,790,060	200	558,791	2,794	26	28	\$8,545
Pennsylvania	12,448,279	649	1,787,813	2,755	16	7	\$11,028
Massachusetts	6,497,967	391	962,806	2,462	2	1	\$11,981
Alaska	686,293	54	131,029	2,426	29	33	\$11,460
Illinois	12,901,563	960	2,112,805	2,201	24	31	\$9,149
					23	24	\$10,715
New Jersey	8,682,661	651	1,379,853	2,120	5	2	\$14,630
Idaho	1,523,816	130	271,976	2,092	31	23	\$6,440
Michigan	10,003,422	829	1,665,742	2,009	30	33	\$9,572
Wisconsin	5,627,967	445	874,478	1,965	17	11	\$9,970
Ohio	11,485,910	936	1,821,635	1,946	26	11	\$9,598
Arizona	6,500,180	567	1,087,263	1,918	38	41	\$6,472
Arkansas	2,855,390	257	479,016	1,864	46	38	\$7,927
Missouri	5,911,605	555	917,188	1,653	32	30	\$8,107
Minnesota	5,220,393	516	837,578	1,623	4	4	\$9,138
Kansas	2,802,134	302	468,295	1,551	7	6	\$8,392
					24	20	\$9,025
Wyoming	532,668	58	86,364	1,489	22	17	\$11,197
Iowa	3,002,555	364	482,204	1,325	21	15	\$8,360
Oklahoma	3,642,361	542	642,065	1,185	41	40	\$6,961
New Hampshire	1,315,809	175	200,772	1,147	3	4	\$10,079
Nebraska	1,783,432	258	291,244	1,129	18	22	\$8,736
Maine	1,316,456	231	190,737	826	15	17	\$10,586
South Dakota	804,194	160	120,271	752	23	12	\$7,651
North Dakota	641,481	189	95,052	503	14	10	\$8,603
Vermont	621,270	243	91,728	377	1	3	\$12,614
Montana	967,440	423	142,823	338	8	8	\$8,581
					17	15	\$9,337
	304,059,724	16,087	48,910,025	3,040			

Testimony before the House Education Budget Committee, March 11, 2010

When we talk about school budgets and the money education takes from the overall Kansas State Budget, we are talking about children. In this legislation, if you replace the word school district with the word children the bill takes on a whole new connotation. In point of fact, the word child is never mentioned in this bill. Whereas, the words audit, finance and consolidation are mentioned over and over again.

Local control has been a hallmark of Kansas's education since we became a state in 1861. Local decisions made by local people affecting their children and their friends, family and neighbor's children have been the cornerstones of our system. This bill will forever alter that system.

When Kansas became a state in 1861 we came together as a diverse group of people with the purpose of providing services to one another. In exchange for those services we agreed to pay taxes. Since 1861 the state has changed and evolved from an agrarian society to a much more diverse society. Nonetheless, we are still a state and we still have the obligation to continue to provide the services we agreed to 150 years ago. Our number one priority in 1861 was educating our children because we knew that they were our most important asset. It is still our most important priority. Education is not an expense it is an investment.

Some points that this legislation brings up that concerns my local Board of Education are:

- Do we continue to tax our local people 8 mills for Capital Outlay if it is just going to go to the Regional Education Service Center? Why not drop our local levy to 0, if we can't keep it local? The same with LOB. Or will the Regional Education Service Center decide for us how many mills we will assess for Capital Outlay?
- If the Regional Education Service Center will be directing food service personnel, transportation schedules, Special Education services, etc., will they also develop our own local calendars?
- Will local people have a vote when the Regional Education Service Center decides to close a building, when they decide to turn a high school building into a middle school building or when they decide to reconfigure the students who attend a building?

You each have varied priorities and constituents to represent, but each of you have one thing in common. Each of you are representing the youth of your district, of our great State! It is an easy choice to stand up for those who can't stand up for themselves here today - the children of Kansas.

Vote no on HB 2728

U.S.D. #432 Victoria

Linda Kenne

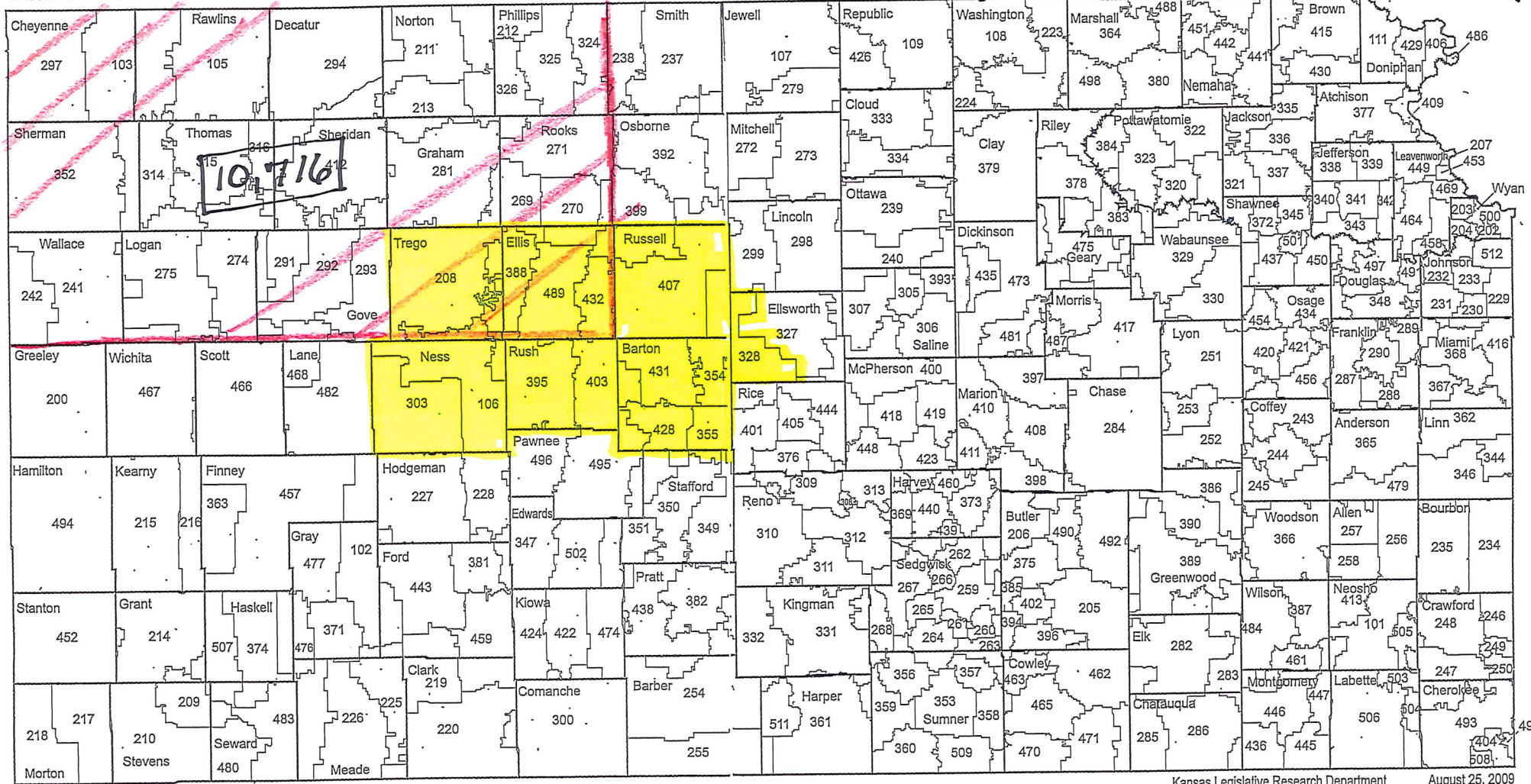
*U.S.D. 432 Superintendent &
Elementary Principal*

P.O. Box 157
Victoria, KS 67

House Education Budget Committee
Date: 03-11-2010
Attachment #: 10

Kansas Unified School Districts

10-2



Boundaries as of August 2009.

Kansas Legislative Research Department August 25, 2009

Students	USD #	USD Name	Students	USD #	USD Name
164	106	Western Plains	962	407	Russell
435	208	WaKeeney	624	428	Ellsworth
2949	328	Great Bend	645	431	Hoisington
230	354	Claffin	270	432	Victoria
480	355	Ellinwood	2953	489	Hays
392	388	Ellis	10,104		Total

6+ Counties
Land area: 4,739 sq. miles

Good Afternoon. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to address you today.

My name is Bill Bohne. I live in Leavenworth County and serve as the Vice-President of the USD 449 School Board. I have lived in Kansas for the past 20 years. I am a retired Infantry Army officer who has commanded on three different occasions. I have two Bachelor degrees and a Masters in an education related field. I have taught at the university level and had the pleasure of sitting on between 400-500 college level scholarship boards. I have also completed all requirements to receive a Kansas Teaching Certificate.

I am the father of four children. When my youngest graduates this May, all my children will have completed their secondary education in Kansas public schools.

I value the education my children received for many reasons. Some are: the small class size, the close teacher-administration-parent relationships, the near proximity to school facilities, the quality of teachers, and the wide variety of extra-curricular activities that developed their talents.

I believe that HB 2728 threatens these very things I value in our school system.

I am here to testify that I believe that House Bill 2728 is detrimental to Kansas Public Education. The points I wish to cover are: the base reason for the bill, the regional education service center, the district board of education, the violation of due process, the accounting system, the number and composition of districts, and the basic quality of education. It is the combination of these factors which will lower the education quality our children will receive.

First is the main reason for this bill. HB 2728 is about consolidation to save money, not improving education. Any action we take should be about improving education. The purpose of the consolidation done in the 1960s was to improve education and not just reduce the number of districts. The point of proof is that a sales tax was passed and dedicated to raise more money for education. Additionally, HB 2728 does not really specify

how money is to be saved. It assumes that consolidated activities will result in savings. This is not necessarily true. What is true is that consolidation does cost money.

Jim Hayes, Director of Research for Kansas Association of School Boards said (quote)" What saves money? Closing buildings and firing staff. However, when districts consolidate and attempt to blend the several organizations, they adopt the standards of the district that has the highest standards. No one will agree to lower standards. All teacher pay moves to the level of the highest district. Standards for curriculum and textbooks all rise, no one wanting to lower their standards." (unquote) While teacher pay is obvious, not all schools use the same books. New books for some number of students are now required. Saving may occur in some areas, but the hope of greater savings or total savings without in-depth scrutiny is reckless. To me this bill fits that definition as reckless.

Second is the regional education service center. HB 2728 does not address how these organizations are to be created and organized. The powers, duties, and responsibilities of the service center come only by taking those same powers, duties, and responsibilities from the local school board. In fact this makes the bill unconstitutional. The Kansas State Constitution Article 6 Section 5 states: "Local public schools under the general supervision of the state board of education shall be maintained, developed and operated by locally elected boards." HB 2728 moves the operation of schools to the service center. The next sentence of that same section shows the intent. "When authorized by law, such boards may make and carry out agreements for cooperative operation and administration of educational programs under the general supervision of the state board of education, but such agreements shall be subject to limitation, change or termination by the legislature." No where does it say that the legislature has the authority to impose a non-elected body between the local and the state board. Further, I must state that the creation of several regional service centers has a price of its own. To me, giving the school board's power to plan, direct and

administer to a service center is on the same level as allowing the legislature to vote on laws but not having the authority or means to write bills.

Third is the district board of education. The power and influence of the local boards is minimized. The true power and authority would reside at the regional education service center. The most telling point is that the centers may impose fees. The centers can stipulate the curriculum, the books to use, and even who will ride what bus each day. There is no option for the board but to comply and pay nor does HB 2728 offer any chain of authority above the center for appellate purposes. As a military man, I can recognize an organization that has been given all the responsibility and very little of the authority to do a job, a sure solution for failure. In short, HB 2728 makes the local school board a sham by removing all of its educational and policy duties and leaving the house keeping duties. Please note that no accountability has been assigned to the service centers. Our present ratio of board members to students is 1 to 100. With these larger districts that ratio would be 1 to

1426 at a minimum. Every teacher knows who I am, and I know most of them personally. There are very few classrooms I have not visited. This is true local control not a regional education service center.

Fourth is the violation of due process. Of the six districts nearest to USD 449, all have outstanding bond issues. The most recent is Leavenworth USD 453 2009 issue for \$50,000,000.00. Not one person in USD 449 voted on that bond issue. Yet, HB 2728 will raise our taxes by making us responsible for their debt should we be forced to consolidate with them. The same holds true for any other district. The key point here is that their construction plan may not be suitable for a new and larger district. Who is to say that new construction will not be required? The question becomes will the upset electorate pass the bond issue?

Fifth is the accounting system. The Kansas Accounting Handbook for Unified School Districts already exists and has been in use since 2007. It has hundreds, if not

thousands of function, sub-function, and object definition codes for reporting revenues and expenditures. The provision within HB 2728 I particularly object to on page 6 line 35-37 states:” Such system may be designed so that school districts may input directly the district’s financial performance data in lieu of reporting data to the state board.” In effect, you have removed us from the general supervision of the state board. This is also a violation of the Kansas State Constitution Article 6 Section 5 as previously stated. HB 2728 is an attempt to achieve more legislative influence at the expense of the state board.

Sixth is the number and composition of the new districts. There are 293 school districts in Kansas. Kansas has between 290,000 and 300,000 students outside of the seven districts that already exceed 10,000. 286 districts are potentially affected by this bill. Some might argue that even the big seven are affected. All things being equal, this number translates out to a maximum of 37 districts. This map shows 18 counties in NW Kansas covering over 15,000 square miles. The student

population of this area if all districts were combined is just over 10,000. I would not like to be the superintendent of that district, nor would I like to ride the bus. The true total number of districts is unknown because the reorganization committee is the deciding authority. It would not surprise me in the least, to see Ft Riley and Ft Leavenworth districts remain as they currently exist. What is the realistic objective this bill? What does it hope to achieve as an end number of districts?

Lastly is the quality of education. I said that I sat on several hundred scholarship boards. How do you discriminate between two students with a 4.0 GPA? I tell you that involvement in extra-curricular activities is among the best indicators of a well-rounded student. USD 449 Middle School has 101 of 114 7th and 8th graders involved in extra-curricular activities. Our High School has 197 of 255 students involved. Larger districts cannot match these levels of student involvement. Each one of our students is and will continue to be a better

student, citizen, and person because of their experiences.

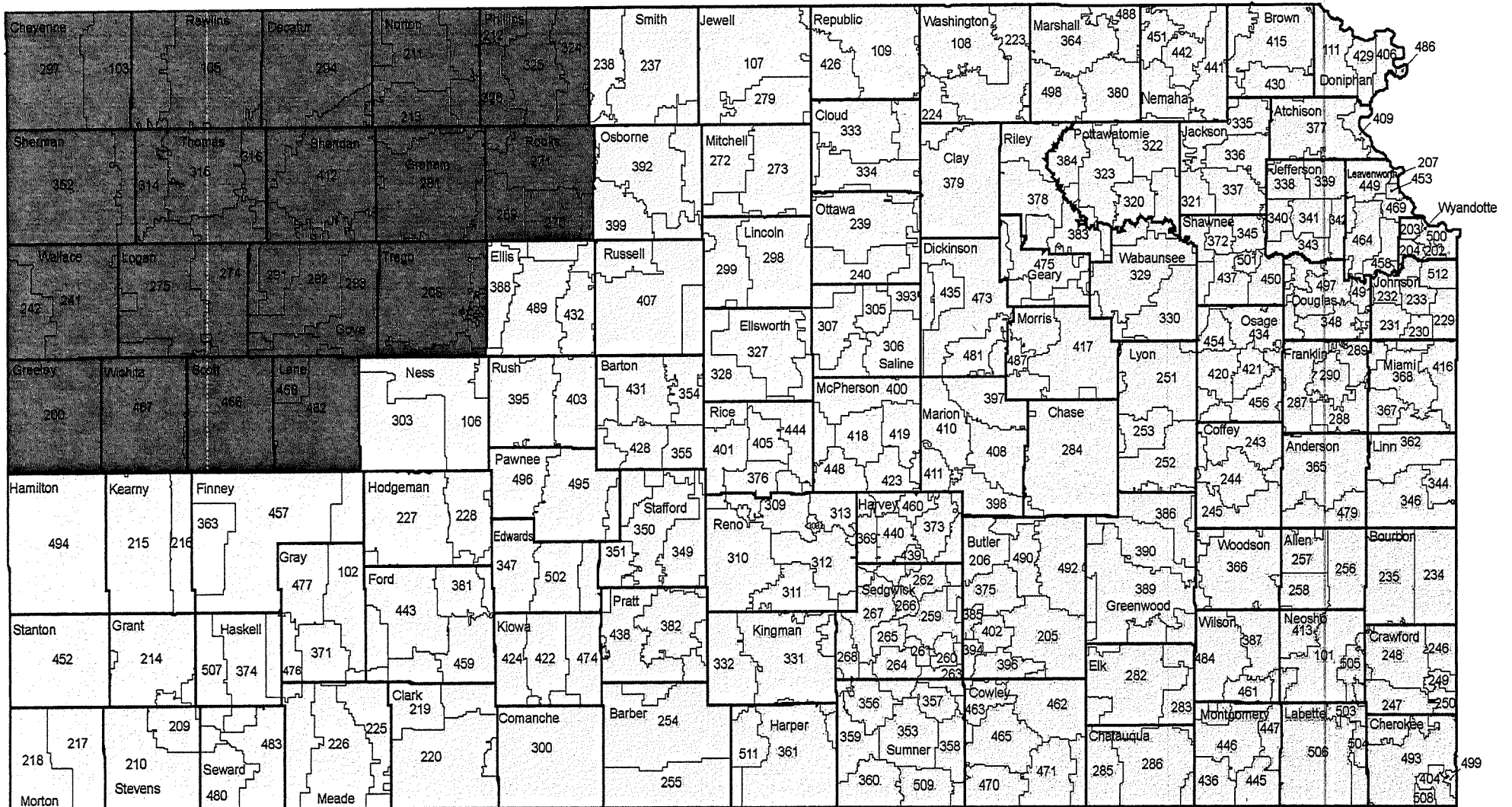
USD 449 has always met AYP and received State Building of Excellence Awards for all attendance centers last year. I represent my district. I tell you now, with no fear of contradiction, that we have no desire to join with Leavenworth USD 453. It has 10 attendance centers. Last year only four of the 10 met AYP standards. The district overall also failed to meet standards. Since school year 2003-2004, USD 453 attendance centers have failed to meet standards 26 times! One middle school has yet to make standard. The district itself for the past four years has not met standard. In contrast USD 449 has met AYP standards every year in all attendance centers and as a district. Which school district do you think provides a better education, and is this not the true means of defining effective? I have here a petition signed by 507 people who say to you, vote no on HB 2728.

In conclusion, Kansas public education has a national ranking many other states are envious of; 7th National Assessment of Educational Progress (NEAP). If compared

internationally, Kansas ranked 6th in the world for 4th grade math and 8th for 8th grade math. We as Kansans have reason to be proud of the quality education our children receive. 10 to 15 years from now would you rather a tax base of “burger flippers” or a base with incomes at or above the national average?

Do not sacrifice our future by a less than thought out and inappropriate knee-jerk reaction to our present economic crisis. This bill is not right for Kansas. The voters of Kansas will hold you responsible.

KANSAS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICTS



Boundaries as of August 2009.

Bill Bohne
 Vice President of School Board
 Easton USD #44
 March 11, 2009

County	Name	USD#	FTE
DeWeyenne	Cheylin	103	136.5
	St. Francis	297	286.3
Rawlins	Rawlins	105	313.5
Decatur	Oberlin	294	358
Norton	Norton	211	689.3
	Northern Valley	212	196.5
	West Soloman	213	38
Sherman	Goodland	352	900
Thomas	Brewster	314	97
	Colby	315	919.1
	Golden Plains	316	204.5
Sheridan	Hoxie	412	288
Graham	Graham	281	372.5
	Phillips	Phillipsburg	325
Rooks	Thunder Ridge	110	235.5
	Logan	326	180.5
	Palco	269	147.5
Wallace	Plainville	270	368.2
	Stockton	271	288
	Wallace	241	200
Logan	Weskan	242	111.6
	Oakley	274	413.8
	Triplains	275	82.5
Gove	Grillnell	291	74.8
	Wheatland	292	99.5
	Quinter	293	266.5
Trego	Wakeeny	208	411.2
Greeley	Greely	214	200
Wichita	Leoti	467	426.5
Scott	Scott	466	869.7
Lane	Healy	468	94.4
	Dighton	482	244.5
			10139

Leavenworth County Schools

	2003 - 2004	2004 - 2005	2005 - 2006	2006 - 2007	2007 - 2008	2008 - 2009
USD 207 Ft Leavenworth 2037	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Bradley Elementary	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Eisenhower Elementary	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
MacArthur Elementary	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Patton Jr. High	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
USD 449 Easton 699	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Pleasant Ridge Elementary	na	na	Y	Y	Y	Y
Salt Creek Valley Intermediate	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Pleasant Ridge Middle School	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Pleasant Ridge High School	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
USD 453 Leavenworth 447	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
Anthony Elementary	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
David Brewer Elementary	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N
Earl M Lawson Elementary	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Howard Wilson Elementary	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Muncie Elementary	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
Nettie Hartnett/Ben Day Elementary	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y
Richard W. Warren Middle School	N	N	N	N	N	N
Leavenworth West Middle School	N	Y	N	N	N	Y
Leavenworth Sr. High	N	N	N	Y	N	N
Leavenworth Virtual School	na	na	na	Y	N	N
USD 458 Basehor-Linwood 2171	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Basehor Elementary	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Glenwood Ridge Elementary	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Linwood Elementary	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Basehor-Linwood Middle School	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Basehor-Linwood High School	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
USD 464 Tonganoxie 181	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y
Tonganoxie Elementary	na	na	na	Y	Y	Y
Tonganoxie Middle School	na	na	na	Y	Y	Y
Tonganoxie High	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
USD 469 Lansing 300	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Lansing Elementary	na	na	na	na	na	Y
Lansing Middle	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Lansing High	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Atchison County

USD 377 Atchison County Community Schools	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Cummings Elementary	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Effingham Elementary	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Lancaster Elementary	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Atchison County Community Middle	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Atchison County Community High	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
USD 409 Atchison Public Schools	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Atchison Elementary	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Atchison Middle School	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Atchison High School	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Atchison Alternative School	na	na	na	na	Y	Y

Consideration testimony HB 2728 March 11, 2010

Kirk Schweitzer
Board Member Graham USD 281
224 West Main
Hill City, Kansas 67642

I am opposed to HB 2728 as it would be detrimental to the identity of our district and to the quality of educational services to our children.

1. The bill would serve to distance any local political or community involvement. By setting a district to a minimum of 10,000 students, those districts in the western and other rural areas will have a "Regional education service center" a great distance from most of their "attendance centers". This distance would mean an administration that will not share the community identity of those they serve.
2. Centralized administration will be less responsive to issues and problems that may need an immediate decision/action.
3. For most of western Kansas, the attraction for people moving in to those communities is the strength and quality of education. Without this local drive to keep the schools strong, the school will take on a level of complacency that is often associated with centralized services. Population numbers have been in slow decline or static at best, this would have very negative economic impact and service to accelerate the declining population numbers.
4. This bill would not provide sufficient savings to warrant such a drastic change to our way of life. Additional cuts to the education budget will now be in the hands of board members that are not from the immediate area they oversee. The chance for undo attention and favor of more political influential schools is great and will always be present.
5. More time is needed for voluntary consolidations and local district adjustments. The recent cuts and limited incentives to promote consolidations need time for action and determination on the local level. This gives "buy-in" to voters and property owners to the processes and decisions that have to be made. The bill would eliminate this by giving a remote administration the ability to simply consolidate with out considering other cost saving methods first
6. Schools would lose those programs that excel the standard and be brought down to a uniform level.
7. This takes away a very basic process of democracy, electing local officials to address local issues.
8. Any negative impact on schools will also serve to reduce property value.
9. To help balance the overall budget increases to the revenue side need more consideration

House Education Budget Committee
Date: 03-11-2010
Attachment #: 12

*Solomon USD #393
113 East Seventh Street
Solomon, Kansas 67480
(785) 655-2541
James Runge, Superintendent*

March 11, 2010

To the House Education Budget Committee:

Testimony in Opposition to HB2728

Please oppose HB2728.

- Districts of 10,000 students will not create cost savings. There is no credible evidence to support that assertion. All historical evidence shows that merging, consolidating, or unifying districts adds costs. Large bureaucratic organizations are not efficient entities. Duties become segregated, assistant staffing grows and costs go up. That is the reality. (Study the work of Max Weber on bureaucracy.)
- Large districts do not enhance student achievement. Educational quality is not improved. In fact the smaller districts in Kansas outperform large districts by all measures. Check the data on graduation rates, state assessment scores, attendance, school violence, student discipline measures and student/parent satisfaction surveys.
- In education bigger is not better.
- Please consider the culture of Kansas. The state has a long history of local involvement in education. This is a good thing. Community members know their school board members. They are able to effectively express their concerns. This creates accountability for school administration. Which in turn ensures a quality educational experience for our children. Big, bureaucratic school districts will permanently alter the culture of Kansas. Education will suffer as administrative accountability is diminished because communities have been disenfranchised. I don't believe the people of Kansas want this. You are taking a political risk with no upside gain, if you endorse this model for Kansas education.

Respectfully,

James Runge
Superintendent
USD 393 Solomon

House Education Budget Committee
Date: 03-11-2010
Attachment #: 13