

Approval: March 15, 2011

Date

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Clay Aurand at 9:00 a.m. On February 16, 2011, in Room 784 of the Docking State Office Building.

All members were present.

Committee staff present:

Sharon Wenger, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Reagan Cussimano, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Eunice C. Peters, Kansas Revisor of Statutes
Norm Furse, Kansas Revisor of Statutes
Dale Dennis, Deputy Commissioner, Kansas State Department of Education
Jan Johnston, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

Mark Tallman, Kansas Association of School Boards
Diane Gjerstad, USD 259
Bill Reardon, Kansas City Kansas Public Schools
Jennifer Crow, Topeka Public Schools
Cheryl Semmel, USA Kansas

Written testimony:

Tom Benoit, Schools for Quality Education
Jennifer Crow, Topeka Public Schools
Mark Tallman, Kansas Association of School Boards

Others attending, see attached sheet.

HB 2269 - School districts; finance; amendments to funding formula

Chairman Aurand opened the hearing on **HB 2269**.

Eunice Peters, Office of the Revisor of States, gave an explanation of the Bill to the Committee. **HB 2269** would change how foundation aid is computed. State level foundation aid would be 90 percent of base foundation aid and would be the base state aid per pupil supplied by the state to school districts. The remaining 10 percent of base foundation aid would be the first 10 percent of a district's local option budget. In addition, a district could levy an additional 17 percent of the base foundation funding without an election, and an additional one percent, with an election. (Attachment 1)

Mark Tallman, Kansas Association of School Boards, spoke to the Committee as an opponent on **HB 2269**. As we understand the purpose of the bill, it makes the first approximately 10 percent of the Local Option Budget mandatory. By adding this amount to the current general fund (base budget times weighted enrollment), the base budget per pupil becomes a higher amount. Under the bill, the statutory base per pupil would be \$4.991 beginning in FY 2012 (next year). The sponsor has indicated a belief this step might help the state defend the current system against school finance litigation. (Attachment 2)

A question and answer discussion followed the presentation.

Cheryl Semmel, USA Kansas, spoke to the Committee as an opponent on **HB 2269**. Current law establishes the BSAPP at \$4.492 in 2009-2010 and beyond. However, the BSAPP has been reduced several times over the past two years in response to the economic downturn the state has experienced. (Attachment 3)

A question and answer discussion followed the presentation.

Chairman Aurand closed the hearing on **HB 2269**.

CONTINUATION SHEET

Minutes of the House of Education Committee at 9:00 a.m. On February 16, 2011, in Room 784 of the Docking State Office Building.

Eunice Peters, Office of the Revisor of Statutes, gave an explanation of the Bill to the Committee. This bill would provide a mechanism for which a school district could fund nonproficient pupils at the same weighting as at-risk pupils by using a local tax levy. The school district's decision to implement the local nonproficient weighting would be discretionary.

A question and answer discuss followed the explanation.

HB 2270 - Funding costs of nonproficient pupils not covered by general state aid from local funds

Chairman Aurand opened the hearing on **HB 2270**.

Diane Gjerstad, Wichita Public Schools, spoke to the Committee as an opponent of **HB 2270**. HB 2270, if enacted, would create an additional local levy to fund students, who are not eligible for free lunches and are not scoring proficient as measured by the state assessment. We oppose the bill. (Attachment 4)

Chairman Aurand stated that we would have a question and answer session after all testimony on **HB 2270**.

Bill Reardon, Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools, spoke to the Committee as an opponent of **HB 2270**. A few years ago the Legislature added an At Risk provision to the school finance law which provides state funding to non- proficient students who do not qualify for free lunch. If the proponents of **HB 2270** believe that the current At Risk weight for these students is not sufficient, they should advocate for a weight increase within the formula. (Attachment 5)

Jennifer Crow of the Topeka Public Schools, spoke to the Committee as an opponent of **HB 2270**. USD 501 has 816 nonproficient students, which equates to approximately 25% of our student population, based upon the 09-10 state assessment results. We can raise about \$607, 000 per mill as certified by the County Treasurer. If this local property tax increase were approved, we are concerned that the burden on our local taxpayers would be much greater than that in other districts across the state. As a result, the cost of educating our nonproficient students would be far greater than in other districts. There are districts in this state that can raise as much as 5 times or more in local funding that USD 501 can raise, due to local property valuations. (Attachment 6)

Mark Tallman, Kansas Association of School Boards, provided written testimony to the Committee as an opponent regarding **HB 2270**. As we understand the bill, it would allow school districts to levy a local property tax to provide additional funding for the non-proficient weighting factor. Adoption of this tax would be subject to voter protest petition. No state equalization aid would be provided. The tax would be used to bring the funding provided for the non-proficient student weighting up to the level of "regular" at-risk funding. In determining KASB's position on this bill, we have to look at a number of policies adopted by our members. (Attachment 7)

Bill Brady, Schools, for Fair Funding, provided written testimony to the Committee as an opponent regarding **HB 2270**. Schools for Fair Funding opposed the creation of non-proficient weighting when it was added to the formula a handful of years ago. For the most part, our current finance formula is based on the actual costs involved in educating Kansas school children. It is an established fact that at risk students costs more money to educate. In the Montoy case, evidence was presented to show that when districts are given more resources that allow them to target their efforts toward at risk students through lower class sizes, after school programming and summer school they can increase student proficiency. (Attachment 8)

Tom Benoit, Schools for Quality Education, provided written testimony to the Committee as an opponent regarding **HB 2270**. As schools face a continued decline in base state aid funding, it seems that most of the solutions offered shift funding to local property taxpayers. **HB 2270** allowing local property tax increases to fund districts with non-proficient students. The measure would do little to

CONTINUATION SHEET

Minutes of the House Education Committee at 9:00 a.m. On February 16, 2011, in Room 784 of the Docking State Office Bulding.

help rural schools. The concern that rural schools have with this bill is in its current form it creates a disparity in funding because of the mechanism utilized to provide access to additional funding. (Attachment 9)

A question and answer session followed the presentation.

Chairman Aurand closed the hearing on **HB 2270**.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled for February 11, 2011.

DATE: 2/16/11

DATE: 2/16/11

[illegible]

HB 2269

Current Law	Proposed Plan	
1% Election	1% Election	
Local Option Budget 30%	Local Option Budget 17%	
General Fund + LOB = \$5,839.60	LFB + SLFA = \$5,839.47	
	Local Foundation Budget (LFB) 10% of Base	
General Fund \$4,492.00	State Level Foundation Aid (SLFA) 90% of Base \$4,492.00	\$4,991.00
Base State Aid Per Pupil	Base State Aid Per Pupil	



Testimony before the
House Committee on Education
on

HB 2269 – Requiring Local Option Budget as part of Foundation Aid

by
Mark Tallman, Associate Executive Director for Advocacy
Kansas Association of School Boards

February 16, 2011

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on **HB 2269**. As we understand the purpose of the bill, it makes the first approximately 10 percent of the Local Option Budget mandatory. By adding this amount to the current general fund (base budget times weighted enrollment), the base budget per pupil becomes a higher amount. Under the bill, the statutory base per pupil would be \$4,991 beginning in FY 2012 (next year). The sponsor has indicated a belief this step might help the state defend the current system against school finance litigation.

KASB appears in opposition to this bill based on several policies adopted by our membership. Our guiding school funding principles begin as follows:

Educational opportunity should be a function of the taxable wealth of the state, not the taxing ability of a local district. The state school finance system should provide comparable students in comparable districts with comparable educational expenditures at comparable tax efforts. Differences in educational expenditures should be based on the educational needs of each district's students.

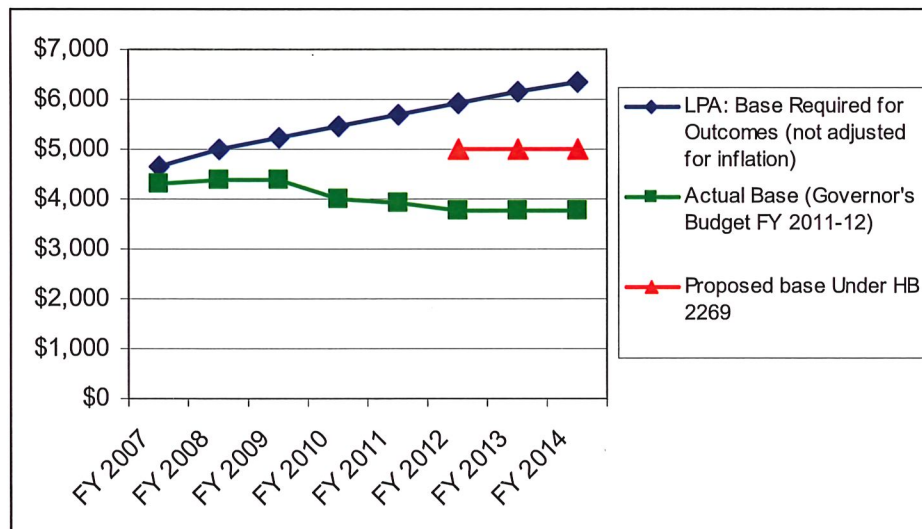
This bill would require districts adopt a 10 percent local option budget (which all districts have currently done) and thereby allow the state to argue this amount should be considered foundation aid for "suitable provision for finance" as required by the state constitution. However, even with the current level of LOB equalization, there are significant differences in the mill levy required to fund the first 10 percent LOB. We would ask (and believe the courts and taxpayers would also ask) what possible educational or other rational basis there is for requiring some districts to pay a much higher mill rate than others to provide the same level of educational opportunity guaranteed for all students.

Our second position concerns the base amount per pupil:

House Education Committee
Date 2/16/11
Attachment# 2-1

Base Budget. The state should determine a base or minimum budget per pupil, which should be adequate to provide a suitable level of funding for all students and districts to achieve expected outcomes, and adjusted annually to reflect changes in costs.

The best guidance the Legislature and the Courts have on what is necessary to meet that standard is the 2006 Legislative Post Audit outcomes cost study. Attached is a report from LPA showing the projected cost of meeting the Kansas State Board of Education's student performance standards, not adjusted for inflation. The chart below, shows the base state aid per pupil identified by LPA (top blue line) and the actual base budget from FY 2007 through FY 2012, the Governor's budget projections for FY 2011 and 2012, and extended that amount through 2014 (bottom green line). Finally, we added the base amount proposed in this bill, \$4,991 (middle red line).



As the chart shows, even if the Courts accept this definition of the state's foundational support, it still falls far short of educational costs identified by the Legislature's own study; in fact, this new base is still lower than the LPA base required for outcomes in FY 2008 (\$5,012).

However, our calculations suggest the base is likely to fall much lower. Multiplying a \$4,991 base by the projected weighted enrollment of about 780,000 students in FY 2012 (including the Governor's special education recommendation) would produce a total general fund budget of \$3,893.0 million. Multiplying that amount by 90 percent as directed by the bill to determine "state financial aid" produces \$3,503.7 million. But the Governor's budget for FY 2012 appears to provide less than \$2,950 million, leaving a shortfall of over \$500 million. If the base budget is prorated by that amount (\$500 million divided by a weighted enrollment of 666,000 [excluding special education] or \$751), the actual base (including the "mandatory" LOB) would be \$4,240. That is still less than the actual base in FY 2006, when the Supreme Court accepted the "three year plan" to increase funding based on the LPA study.

The simple fact is that the Legislature has failed to fund almost all of the major components agreed to in settling the *Montoy* case. If the case reaches the Supreme Court, the Court is either going to agree the economic crisis was justification for doing so, or it isn't. We don't see how this bill changes the facts the Court will use to decide. It simply changes an inadequate base funded by an equal mill levy to a slightly higher but still inadequate base funded by a unequal mill levy.

Thank you for your consideration.

Attachment: Estimated Cost of Meeting Future Performance Standards, Legislative Post Audit Division

Estimated Cost of Meeting Future Performance Standards In 2006-07 dollars (not adjusted for inflation)								
	STANDARDS							
	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
OUTCOMES-BASED								
Foundation-Level	\$3,151,289,271	\$3,349,417,195	\$3,476,962,046	\$3,604,506,896	\$3,732,670,897	\$3,860,215,747	\$3,983,426,550	\$4,108,494,802
Hold Harmless	\$9,351,874	\$295,583	---	---	---	---	---	---
Supplemental Aid	\$260,574,595	\$276,748,909	\$287,387,579	\$298,033,513	\$308,731,126	\$319,377,059	\$329,661,238	\$340,100,454
KPERS Contribution	\$198,941,334	\$209,869,264	\$217,200,749	\$224,547,832	\$231,930,580	\$239,277,663	\$246,375,088	\$253,579,510
TOTAL	\$3,620,157,075	\$3,836,330,951	\$3,981,550,373	\$4,127,088,241	\$4,273,332,603	\$4,418,870,470	\$4,559,462,876	\$4,702,174,765
BSAPP	\$4,659	\$5,012	\$5,239	\$5,466	\$5,695	\$5,922	\$6,142	\$6,365
CURRENT FORMULA								
Foundation-Level	\$2,752,015,150	\$2,752,015,150	\$2,752,015,150	\$2,752,015,150	\$2,752,015,150	\$2,752,015,150	\$2,752,015,150	\$2,752,015,150
Hold Harmless	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Supplemental Aid	\$222,186,876	\$222,186,876	\$222,186,876	\$222,186,876	\$222,186,876	\$222,186,876	\$222,186,876	\$222,186,876
KPERS Contribution	\$175,389,495	\$175,389,495	\$175,389,495	\$175,389,495	\$175,389,495	\$175,389,495	\$175,389,495	\$175,389,495
TOTAL	\$3,149,591,521	\$3,149,591,521	\$3,149,591,521	\$3,149,591,521	\$3,149,591,521	\$3,149,591,521	\$3,149,591,521	\$3,149,591,521
DIFFERENCE	\$470,565,554	\$686,739,430	\$831,958,852	\$977,496,720	\$1,123,741,082	\$1,269,278,949	\$1,409,871,355	\$1,552,583,244
STANDARDS	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Math								
4th Grade	67%	73%	78%	82%	87%	91%	96%	100%
7th Grade	67%	73%	78%	82%	87%	91%	96%	100%
10th Grade	56%	65%	70%	76%	82%	88%	94%	100%
Reading								
5th Grade	70%	76%	80%	84%	88%	92%	96%	100%
8th Grade	70%	76%	80%	84%	88%	92%	96%	100%
11th Grade	65%	72%	77%	81%	86%	91%	95%	100%
Graduation Rate	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%

Source: LPA cost study results.

**House Education Committee
Testimony on HB 2269**

February 16, 2011

Cheryl L. Semmel, Executive Director

The mission of United School Administrators of Kansas (USA|Kansas*), through collaboration of member associations, is to serve, support, and develop educational leaders and to establish USA|Kansas as a significant force to improve education.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 2699. HB 2699 seeks to significantly alter the school finance formula by changing how the Base State Aid Per Pupil (BSAPP) and Local Option Budget (LOB) authorities are calculated. As we understand it, HB 2699 would:

- **increase** the Base State Aid Per Pupil (BSAPP) to \$4,991 using a new foundational funding mechanism and
- **establish** a local foundation budget using the first ten (10) percent of a district's Local Option Budget

Base State Aid Per Pupil

Current law establishes the BSAPP at \$4,492 in 2009-2010 and beyond. However, the BSAPP has been reduced several times over the past two years in response to the economic downturn the state has experienced.

The FY 2011 spending bill currently working its way through the Legislature would decrease the current BSAPP from \$4,012 in FY 2011 to \$3,937. In FY 2012, the Governor has proposed decreasing the BSAPP by an additional \$157, down to \$3,780 or **\$712 below current law**.

This bill actually seeks to raise the BSAPP from the \$4,492 in current law to \$4,991. What administrators do know, given the current financial outlook, is that the BSAPP will not likely be either \$4,492 or \$4,991 next year.

"Foundational Funding" and the Local Option Budget

HB 2699 further changes the formula by establishing a "foundational funding" mechanism to meet the newly defined BSAPP. As we understand it, this mechanism is funded by the first ten (10) percent of a district's Local Option Budget (LOB).

House Education Committee
Date 2/16/11
Attachment# 3-1

Finally, this bill, if enacted and fully funded, would increase funding by nearly \$490 million. Administrators do not believe that such an increase will be funded; therefore, the question remains, what purpose do these changes serve?

Although we believe the current funding formula is sound, we recognize that there is a lot of interest in discussing how education is funded. Administrators across the state are willing to talk with you...but, more importantly, we are committed to working with you.

On behalf of education administrators, I would like to thank you for your continued support of education and for realizing the importance of investing in education. Preparing our children requires a shared commitment, collaboration, and open dialogue among all stakeholders.



House Education Committee
Rep. Aurand, Chair

H.B. 2270 – New levy for non-proficient students

*Submitted by Diane Gjerstad
Wichita Public Schools*

February 16, 2011

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

H.B. 2270, if enacted, would create an additional local levy to fund students, who are not eligible for free lunches and are not scoring proficient as measured by the state assessment. We oppose the bill.

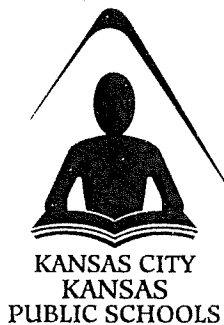
The Kansas formula sets a foundational amount, called the base per pupil, which is augmented for specific student groups by setting weightings. The weightings for at risk, urban at risk, and non-English speaking students were recommendations from the 2006 Legislative Post Audit analysis of the cost to educate these specific groups of students to proficiency standards. The base per pupil was to cover the cost of educating the “regular education” student to proficiency standards. Since then a fixed amount was added to the education appropriation which is divided by the number of students (who are not free lunch eligible) not proficient.

This bill would circumvent state funded weightings by allowing districts to create a local mill levy, subject to protest. This bill, if enacted, would simply allow a few districts to generate funds while other districts would not.

We believe **all** schools need additional funding to pay for increasing costs and the costs of increasing achievement to meet the demands of No Child Left Behind. We disagree with this bill permitting a few districts to locally generate additional funds.

Thank you for your consideration. We encourage the committee to reject this proposal.

House Education Committee
Date 2/16/11
Attachment# 4



Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools

Unified School District No. 500

HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

HB 2270

February 16, 2011

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

A few years ago the Legislature added an At Risk provision to the school finance law which provides state funding to non proficient students who do not qualify for free lunch. If the proponents of HB 2270 believe that the current At Risk weight for these students is not sufficient, they should advocate for a weight increase within the formula.

HB 2270, however, bypasses the weighting formula and morphs into a defacto LOB increase. This increase is to be paid by local property taxpayers and is not equalized!

Suitable funding for public education is a state responsibility and should not be subject to the wealth of the individual school districts.

For these reasons, the Kansas City Public Schools opposes the passage of HB 2270.

Bill Reardon, KCKPS Lobbyist



February 16, 2011

Chairman Aurand
House Education Committee
HB 2270

Chairman Aurand and Members of the House Education Committee:

I appear on behalf of Topeka Public Schools, USD 501. Thank you for the opportunity to respond to HB 2270.

USD 501 has 816 nonproficient students, which equates to approximately 25% of our student population, based upon the 09-10 state assessment results. We can raise about \$607,000 per mill as certified by the County Treasurer. If this local property tax increase were approved, we are concerned that the burden on our local taxpayers would be much greater than that in other districts across the state. As a result, the cost of educating our nonproficient students would be far greater than in other districts. There are districts in this state that can raise as much as 5 times or more in local funding than USD 501 can raise, due to local property valuations.

In order to properly assess this bill, we need to know what the local property tax increase would be for our district and in comparison to all other school districts statewide, per mill. Additionally, we would need to compare our nonproficient student density with that of other districts. We cannot support a bill that will put greater burden on our taxpayers for the education costs related to nonproficient students simply because our property values are lower.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jennifer J. Crow
USD 501



Testimony before the
House Committee on Education
on

HB 2270 – Local Tax Levy for Non-Proficient Weighting

by

Mark Tallman, Associate Executive Director for Advocacy
Kansas Association of School Boards

February 16, 2011

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on **HB 2270**. As we understand the bill, it would allow school districts to levy a local property tax to provide additional funding for the non-proficient weighting factor. Adoption of this tax would be subject to voter protest petition. No state equalization aid would be provided. The tax would be used to bring the funding provided for the non-proficient student weighting up to the level of “regular” at-risk funding. In determining KASB’s position on this bill, we have to look at a number of policies adopted by our members.

Background. Since the 1992 School Finance Act was adopted, most funding earmarked for helping students who are “at-risk” of academic problems, failing to meet standards or dropping out of school has been based on the number of free lunch students, which is in turn based on family income. Our members have agreed with considerable educational research and apparently most other states that low income students are much more likely to experience academic difficulties; that income is one of the best “proxies” for being at-risk. As the committee has been told, not every free lunch student will have academic difficulties; but in general, the more low income students a district serves, the more students will be academically at-risk and require additional support.

We therefore have supported use of free lunch as the major component for at-risk funding, but because we know that even districts with very few low income students will have those with academic difficulties, KASB has also supported alternative criteria for at-risk funding, including the non-proficient weighting. The regular and high-density weighting factors are based on the 2006 Legislative Post Audit cost study. The non-proficient factor was, frankly, a political “add on” not based on cost studies.

The biggest draw-back to the non-proficient weighting, in our view, is that students have to fail before the district receives funding to help them. The regular formula gives districts funding to help students get to proficiency and keep them there. If districts use the non-proficient funding to help students meet standards, they lose the money that provided the assistance when the students succeed. With the loss of funding, support services are cut and more students may begin to fall below proficiency again.

House Education Committee
Date 2/16/11
Attachment# 7-1

The resolution on school finance adopted in December by our Delegate Assembly specifically supports funding “to increase both poverty- and non-poverty-based programs and services to help students succeed.” **HB 2270** would provide such funding, which is consistent with our position. Unfortunately, the mechanism for this funding is an un-equalized local property tax. We have previously shared with the committee the inherent inequity of using local property taxes. KASB policies oppose any local funding mechanisms that are not equalized.

Funding to get all students to state-determined proficiency levels on state reading and math tests is certainly part of the state’s responsibility; not a local option. If the Legislature determines that the cost of getting non-proficient students to proficiency is more than the current weighting provides, it should raise the weighting. At a minimum, the ability to raise these revenues should be determined by the local board. Funding for a suitable education should not be subject to protest petition.

As we presented to the committee in earlier testimony on the Local Activities Budget bill, KASB convened a special committee of school board members and superintendents to develop recommendations on school funding issues. Among other proposals, the committee agreed to support an increase in local funding authority, provided it was equalized to a higher degree than the current LOB state level and not subject to additional protest or election requirements. We believe that approach would give districts additional funding not only to assist non-proficient students, but other student needs as well.

Thank you for your consideration.

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HB 2270

BILL BRADY on behalf of SFFF

(WRITTEN ONLY)

February 16, 2011

We are opposed to HB 2270. Schools For Fair Funding opposed the creation of non-proficient weighting when it was added to the formula a handful of years ago. For the most part, our current finance formula is based on the actual costs involved in educating Kansas school children. It is established fact that at risk students costs more money to educate. In the Montoy case, evidence was presented to show that when districts are given more resources that allow them to target their efforts toward at risk students through lower class sizes, after school programming and summer school they can increase student proficiency. Test scores continue to validate that fact. Unfortunately the current finance formula does not fund at risk to the level determined appropriate by the Legislature's own study. SFFF believes the most effective way to deal with non-proficiency is to fully fund at risk costs. Once the Legislature fully funds at risk costs SFFF would be willing to support further Legislative study designed to focus on the needs of non-proficient students who might remain.

HB 2270 is one of a myriad of bills introduced this session designed to increase the Local Option Budget Authority for Kansas school districts. Already this session, bills have been proposed to expand the LOB; by maintaining the base aid amount for the LOB calculation at \$4,433 despite the fact that the base state aid amount has been cut to under \$4,000, increase the level to \$4,492 because that is the current statutory level, to expand LOB to include KPERs funding, to provide additional LOB Authority for a "Local Activities Budget". The problem with all of these proposals, including HB 2270, is that not all districts have access to the same amount of local money to help fund these various proposals. Recently you received a document prepared by KASB which illustrates the value of one mill of property taxes in every Kansas school district. As you may recall the level of funding varies greatly. Using HB 2270 as an example, if you were to vote to allow for separate LOB authority for non-proficient students, some districts would have 20-30 times the amount of funding per student to spend on these students as other districts. The alternative for some districts would be to raise mill levies 20-30 times higher or to simply do without the resources.

We ask you to reject HB 2270 and any further efforts to provide piece meal funding that does not rely on the cost data available to fund Kansas public schools.

Schools For Fair Funding is a coalition of 62 school districts representing 152,499 students. SFFF is compromised of all enrollment size districts from each corner of the state

House Education Committee
Date 2/16/11
Attachment# 8



Testimony in Opposition to HB 2270 (written only)

Tom Benoit, President, Schools for Quality Education

President, Palco School Board

February 15, 2011

Chairman Aurand and Members of the House Education Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony today on HB 2270. I submit this as the President of Schools for Quality Education (SQE), an organization of more than 100 small, rural school districts across Kansas. Our membership includes district superintendents and school board presidents.

As schools face a continued decline in base state aid funding, it seems that most of the solutions offered shift funding to local property taxpayers. HB 2270, allowing local property tax increases to fund districts with non-proficient students. The measure would do little to help rural schools. The concern that rural schools have with this bill is in its current form it creates a disparity in funding because of the mechanism utilized to provide access to additional funding. Allowing local property tax increases rewards high valuation, high density areas, leaving many small communities without sufficient resources to provide much relief. In addition, the legislation appears to reward districts that are not performing well, while not allowing additional revenue for those districts that are excelling.

The Kansas legislature continually emphasizes and practices the belief that all Kansas children should have access to an excellent public education that begins with a base state aid amount that invests equally in each child, regardless of geography. I ask that you continue that tradition with sufficient state investment by at least equalizing any funding shifts to local property taxpayers and optimally funding base state aid so that more Kansas students might benefit.

In these difficult budgeting times, I applaud your efforts to provide other sources of revenue. It is my hope that this local option remains an alternative only for the extraordinarily difficult budget circumstances in which we find ourselves in and does not become a disproportionately relied upon funding mechanism. It is my belief that funding public education needs to remain a primary obligation of the state.

Thank you for your consideration of my remarks today.

House Education Committee
Date 2/16/11
Attachment# 9