



Vermillion Unified School District 380

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HB2485
- Enrollment Calculation Timeline-
Joel Bickford
USD 380 Vermillion
January 22, 2024

HB 2485, updating KSEEA to require enrollment to be calculated using current or preceding school year and requiring districts who close a building to use current year enrollment
Proponent

Chairwoman Williams and Members of the House K-12 Education Budget Committee:

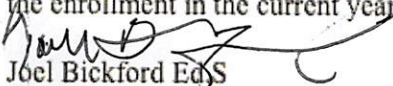
My name is Joel Bickford and I serve as the Superintendent of USD 380. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of HB 2485.

HB 2485, updating KSEEA to require enrollment to be calculated using current or preceding school year and requiring districts who close a building to use current year enrollment creates a fair distribution of state funding.

USD 380 is a small rural district. We are probably like many small districts in Kansas where every student we get matters a great deal to our budget. The simple increase of even a few students has a sizable impact on us, not only in the number of students calculated for student aid but the amount of staffing that even one child can create. We like to believe that we have a wonderful ratio of students to teachers with that being around 25 to 1. This gets pushed however some years when we begin to see the class sizes creep near 30, because we then add staff and split the class. Numbers of students in a grade or class, although small can create this change. With HB2485 we can possibly afford (or at a minimum offset the cost) of the new teacher required to educate the increased class size. This is not uncommon in our district. Under the current statute we would not have the funding for the new students immediately. We would need the teacher, and the funding would have to come from another source, for two years. As I mentioned we watch our small budgets very close and believe that we are responsible to the taxpayer to best use the tax dollars we are given. However, without HB2485 we must make immediate financial decisions based on previous situations. In fact, it would be financially advantageous for a school district to close an attendance center. They could give us their students, knowing that they will still get the funding for 2 years and not have the expense of the student or extra cost (the teacher). Yet the receiving district must swallow the cost of educating the new student. The losing district continues to get the aid and may spend this funding in any way they choose. I do not believe this is the intent of the current statute, but it has created this scenario.

We were affected by an attendance center closing in this very manner. We received 6 new students this school year from a neighboring school district. We were faced with some tough financial changes that were not funded by the student aid. The losing district however was able to keep the funding for those students, even though the students were in my district's classrooms.

HB2485 will make the situation fair for both districts. The losing district will not be able to gain the two years of base aid. They would be given aid based on the current year enrollment. The gaining district would be given aid based on the enrollment in the current year also. I can be reached at bickfordj@USD380.com


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"What's Best for Kids"