

House Appropriations Committee

Testimony on HB 2014

January 24, 2011

Presented by:
Mike Mathes, Superintendent, Seaman USD 345
on behalf of
United School Administrators of Kansas and
The Kansas School Superintendents Association

My name is Mike Mathes and I am the superintendent of schools from Seaman USD 345. The Seaman school district is a suburban district located in northern Topeka and Shawnee County. We have 3,730 students enrolled in pre-K through 12th grade. The Seaman public schools have long been a source of pride for our community.

First, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am here today to speak to HB 2014, the FY 2011 spending bill. Specifically, I would like to speak to you about the provisions for K-12 public education. It is unfortunate that the economic downturn and subsequent budget cuts have impacted us in such a way that this bill is necessary; however, we find ourselves in uncharted territory as we attempt to address the budget.

The 2011 Legislative Session promises to be challenging as we continue to deal with this unprecedented economic downturn. As those charged with leading our state through the budget and revenue crisis, I know you will be called upon to make some of the most weighty decisions of your legislative service.

Special Education Funding Maintenance of Effort

Administrators were pleased to see special education funding will be increased from \$367.5 million in the current fiscal years to \$427.7 million in FY 2012. Unfortunately, the current year's funding is about \$16.7 million short of meeting the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) maintenance of effort requirement. The Department of Education has advised administrators that if the maintenance of effort requirement is not met, the state will be financially penalized in FY 2013. This penalty is expected to be 16-percent or more of our federal funding.

We are imploring the legislature to fund the FY 2011 \$16.7 million shortfall in special education to ensure that our students with special learning needs are not impacted by future penalties.

Appropriations Committee

Date January 24, 2011

Attachment 6

JOBS funding

Last year, Congress passed the JOBS bill, which appropriated \$92 million for Kansas in K-12 education funds for Kansas. HB 2014, however, does not direct the JOBS funding to K-12 education spending. Instead, it uses \$86 million of the federal Education Jobs Funding to replace \$86 million in State General Fund (SGF).

HB 2014 also does not fund the \$50 million supplemental requested for FY 2011 -- to cover the loss in property valuations, higher enrollment, and the increase in at-risk students.

The cumulative effective of these actions is that the Base State Aid Per Pupil (BSAPP) is reduced from \$4,012 to \$3,937 or \$75 per pupil.

How the Seaman School District is impacted

The Seaman school district has done an excellent job managing the district's finances and ensuring that students have access to programs and services they need. Unfortunately, in the absence of a multi-year budget and the uncertainty of our economic circumstances, advanced planning is extraordinarily challenging. The Seaman school district has already eliminated and/or reduced programs and personnel, but we anticipate additional reductions may be necessary.

The FY 2011 budget proposal reduces the Base State Aid Per Pupil (BSAPP) from \$4,012 to \$3,937 or \$75. For the Seaman school district, that reduction will result in a \$338,000 cut, to be made before the end of this year.

The investment our state has made in schools has been critical to the success we have seen in student achievement and in preparing students for entry into the workforce. The Seaman school district has done an excellent job managing the district's finances and ensuring that each student receives a quality education. In response to the funding reductions enacted this past year, the Seaman school district:

- Used all of the money saved through the consolidation of four elementary schools to two elementary schools
- Transferred money saved by consolidating two middle schools into the contingency fund to pay bills and payroll when state aid payments were delayed
- Eliminated 31.5 positions (including 3 administrative, 5.5 teachers, 23 classified)
- Reduced the special education and administrative staff development budgets

The Seaman school district remains committed to operating a quality, efficient and effective school district. Over the past 3 to 4 years, we have reduced operating expenses by nearly \$1.9 million each year. As a percentage of our cuts thus far 32% have been at the administrative level, 34% teachers, and 44% at the classified level.

Appropriations Committee

Date January 24, 2011

Attachment 6-2

Our local option budget and cash reserves have allowed us to maintain programs, instructional support and make payroll on time. Additional reductions to K-12 education funding may result in:

- Deeper cuts to instructional, professional development and library budgets
- Eliminating field trips
- Eliminating many middle school extracurricular activities
- Eliminating some sports, including non-varsity sports, at the high school level
- Eliminating almost all non-special education paraprofessionals
- Eliminating 10 to 20 teaching positions
- Increasing class size
- Eliminating after school programs
- Reducing the number of elective courses offered
- Increasing the local option mill levy

As you see, any further cuts will significantly impact our students, our workforce and our community. Kansans have been called upon to compromise and work together for the common good of the State. As education and community leaders, we remain committed to working with you during this legislative session.

Appropriations Committee

Date January 24, 2011

Attachment 6-3