



6 February 2012

Senate Education Committee

1:30PM

Re: Opposition to Senate Bill #361

Chairperson Schodorf and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in opposition to House Bill #2016 – Excellence in Education Act. I am here on behalf of the Board of Education and the 7,289 students of Salina USD 305.

Salina USD 305 is the tenth largest school district in Kansas and encompasses the city of Salina and some rural areas of Saline County. Salina USD 305 is a progressive, learner-focused school district. The school district is the sponsoring agency for the following educational programs:

- Central Kansas Cooperative in Education: CKCIE is a special education cooperative of 12 school districts providing special education support services to public schools.
- Heartland Head Start: This multi-county program serves preschool students and their parents and partners with other social service agencies to provide support services for these families.
- Salina Adult Learning Center: This program provides adult basic education, English as a second language support and GED preparation for people 16 or older and out of school.

Academic rigor remains the hallmark of Salina USD 305. Salina students continue to exceed the national reading and math targets for the NCLB. We believe our entire school community is responsible for the success of our students and we each share in the responsibility.

- In math our students continue to excel with an 86.4 percent of students scoring at the proficient and above mark. The federal NCLB math target is 76.4.
- Our students outperformed the current reading target last year with 88.2 percent of students scoring at the proficient and above mark. No Child Left Behind requires a minimum of 81.3 percent of students attain that score.

Salina Public Schools

Unified School District No. 305 P.O. Box 797 Salina, Kansas 67402
(785) 309-4700 Fax: 785-309-4737

The student population of Salina USD 305 has changed dramatically in the past ten years. Since 2000-2001, USD 305 has experienced a decrease in student enrollment of 534.4 FTE. This in and of itself presented a difficult funding challenge for our school district. Additionally, 58 percent of our student population currently qualifies for free or reduced lunches, a dramatic increase over that same time period. The Salina school district is also becoming more ethnically diverse. Currently 28 percent of our students represent an ethnic subgroup and the largest growing ethnic population, Hispanic students, is increasing at a rate of 2 percent per year. Many of our Hispanic students come to us without the requisite English skills that will allow them to be successful in the classroom. Simply stated, we have fewer numbers of students overall, but a higher percentage of our students with greater academic challenges. Yet, as you can see from the enclosed legislative platform, we are achieving success with our students!

USD 305 has reduced funding in the past three years in staffing, employee salaries, and classroom resources in the amount of \$5.5 million. We have accepted the fiscal responsibility of the downturn in our economy and have worked to assist our local taxpayers by keeping mill levies stable, yet providing a quality education for Salina students. We look forward to a time when adequate funding will once again return to Kansas schools under the current formula. SB #361, if approved in its current form, will be counterproductive to our efforts to maintain fiscal integrity at the local level.

Senate Bill #361, the Excellence in Education Act, will not provide for adequate funding to meet the needs of the Salina students now, or even more importantly, in the future. SB #361 does not connect school funding to the cost of educating a child. Under the current school finance formula adopted in 1992, the weighted enrollment categories provide additional funding to meet the needs of many of our students. SB #361 implies that the cost of educating each child is the same, \$4,492. Both research and practical experience indicates that this is simply not the case. We are concerned that with the loss of resources specifically earmarked for our high needs students, and without the promise of future funding from the state, many of the academic accomplishments that we have gained in USD 305 over the past five years will be lost.

SB #361, by removing the cap on the Local Option Budget and authorizing local Boards of Education to increase the LOB subject to a vote of local taxpayers is nothing more than transferring the constitutional responsibility for funding public education from the state to the local level. Salina USD 305 has an assessed valuation of approximately \$430,000,000, the ninth largest in the state. However, our assessed valuation per pupil is approximately \$62,000 per student which is 136th in the state. The Salina community does not have the taxing base necessary to sustain even a 3 percent inflationary increase in the cost of funding public education. Under SB #361 it is estimated that a 3 percent annual increase (for cost of inflation) over the next 10 years would expand the mill levy from 58.9 mills (current) to 104.73 mills. This would be contingent upon taxpayers' approval. Without guarantees of any future support from the state of Kansas, SB #361 is disqualifying to all Kansas school districts and will not provide the long term educational funding necessary to meet the needs of students of Salina USD 305.

We are at a critical crossroads for public education in the state of Kansas. Students in Salina USD 305 have made tremendous gains in light of declining revenues in the past three years. The current system provides for equity for all students in Kansas and is not

based on geography. As such, I am here today on behalf of the USD 305 Board of Education to encourage you to undertake the following actions:

1. Adequately fund the school finance formula.
2. Perform a comprehensive review of state and local tax policy, including the adverse impact of tax exemptions.
3. Reinstate capital outlay equalization statewide.
4. Mandate sustainability for the Kansas Public Employees Retirement System.
5. Appropriate dollars to fund the Local Option Budget under the law.
6. Fund all day kindergarten at 1.0 FTE.
7. Maintain the existing LOB authority and equalize it at 100 percent.

Thank you for your time and attention to this very important issue and we urge you to do what's best for ALL Kansas students. It takes everyone - working cooperatively - to reach our common goal: *Learning for all, Whatever it takes!*

Respectfully,



William D. Hall
Superintendent of Schools
Salina USD 305

As a remedy for current and projected public school budget shortfalls, the Kansas Legislature should undertake the following actions:

1. Adequately fund the school finance formula.
2. Perform a comprehensive review of state and local tax policy, including the appropriate balance among tax sources and the adverse impact of tax exemptions.
3. Reinstate capital outlay equalization statewide. Capital outlay equalization aid was eliminated for budget years FY10 - FY12. The loss of this funding has created a significant negative impact on essential infrastructure upkeep.

The current funding formula is sound and does not merit substantive changes.
-USD 305 Board of Education

4. Mandate sustainability for the existing Kansas Public Employees Retirement System. Public sector retirement benefits provide a reliable source of post-retirement income for government workers, and they help public employers retain qualified personnel to deliver essential public services.
5. Appropriate dollars for LOB state aid under the law. Prorating this shifts the burden to local communities.
6. Fund all-day kindergarten at 1.0 FTE.
7. Maintain the existing maximum LOB authority and equalize at 100 percent.

Funding our Schools: *State funding reductions to public schools should not be allowed to continue.*

- Additional cuts to public education funding will result in the reversal of significant gains in student achievement accomplished during the past five years.
- Kansas accepted federal stimulus funds targeted for education and utilized those dollars to meet constitutional obligation to Kansas kids. The remaining shortfall necessitated cutbacks in staffing, employee salaries and classroom resources in the amount of \$5.5 million over the past three years.
- USD 305 does not receive adequate funding to meet current needs of students or the demands of state and federal requirements.
- Special education costs continue to rise significantly due to the increasing needs of students identified for special education services at the statutory rate.
- Mandated adequate yearly progress goals continue to increase at the same time that funding is being decreased.



Salina USD 305 Legislative Platform 2012

Additional Mandates and Funding: *No additional unfunded programs should be mandated by the state or federal government.*

- Unfunded federal mandates include special education (IDEA) and No Child Left Behind.
- Recent state mandates include
 - Common Core Standards
 - Career & Tech Education Programs/Facilitators
 - Kansas Board of Regents Qualified Admissions
 - Bullying Prevention
 - Financial Literacy
 - KIDS and other state reporting requirements

Tax cuts enacted during the last four years are estimated to be \$1.135 billion through FY 2013, with a cumulative total since 1995 of \$6.7 billion. The state legislature should stop the depletion of its financial resources by reversing special interest tax exemptions.

Salina USD 305 Budget Snapshot – Cuts in Base State Aid Per Pupil (BSAPP) from FY09 to FY12 equal \$5.5 million in general and supplemental fund budget authority.

- 2/12/09 SB23 Rescission Bill - \$33 from BSAPP = \$4,400
- 5/7/09 HB2373 Omnibus Bill - \$87 from BSAPP = \$4,280
- 7/2/09 Governor's Allotment - \$62 to BSAPP = \$4,218
- 11/23/09 Governor's Allotment - \$206 BSAPP = \$4,012
- 5/28/11 HB2014 Budget and Appropriations Bill - \$75 from BSAPP = \$3,937
- 5/28/11 HB2014 Budget and Appropriations Bill - \$157 from BSAPP = \$3,780

Additional Funding Losses

- Loss of Capital Outlay Equalization Aid: \$566,000 (FY10 and beyond)
- LOB State Aid Prorated to 83%: \$997,722 in lost state aid was shifted to our local community

A strong public education system is essential for economic development, recruitment of new business and the retention of current business and industry in Salina.

Funding Loss Effects on Salina USD 305

The district weathered this year's revenue shortfall without widespread reductions in force or increasing class sizes. Salina Public Schools addressed the shortfall and balanced the fiscal year 2012 budget by reductions in staff positions, transportation routes, professional development, department budgets, facilities maintenance and utilization of contingency reserve funds. Federal Title ARRA funding was reduced by \$1,126,611. These funds were used for after-school programs and classroom technology at Title schools. Since 2009, the district's early childhood program (Heartland Head Start) has lost over \$388,000 including a Kansas Early Head Start cut of nearly \$101,000 and a decrease in the Kansas Early Learning Collaborative and Parents as Teachers fund of \$10,000.

Salina USD 305 Legislative Platform 2012



Salina USD 305 Quick Facts

Mission: To educate all students by providing them with opportunities to gain skills necessary to participate successfully in the communities in which they live. Completion of this mission is the responsibility of the students, family, community, teachers and staff in a cooperative partnership.

Vision: Meeting the needs of each student in a culture of excellence.

Strategic Plan:

- Provide in a safe and healthy environment a comprehensive curriculum that leads to each student's academic achievement and personal growth.
- Develop an organization committed to continuous improvement through innovation and best practice.
- Engage families, businesses and the larger community actively at all levels of the organization.

By the Numbers:

K-12 Schools
8 Elementary Schools
2 Middle Schools
2 High Schools

K-12 Enrollment
6,870 Students

Student Demographics
3,451 Free-Lunch Eligible
1,187 Special Education
537 Limited English

96.1% Attendance Rate
79% Graduation Rate

- 735 Certified Teachers
- 57% of those teachers have advanced degrees
 - 64% have 10 or more years teaching experience

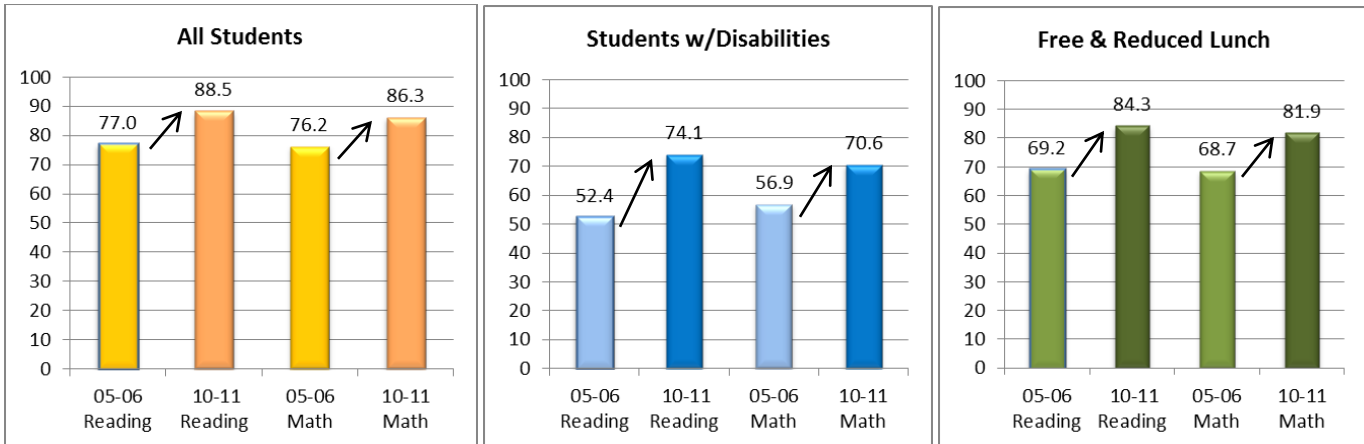
Salina USD 305 Sponsors the Following Agencies and Programs:

- **Heartland Programs/Head Start**
Programs include a multi-county Head Start program, Parents As Teachers, Kansas At-Risk Preschool and the support services for pregnant women and families with children birth to age five.
- **Central Kansas Cooperative in Education**
CKCIE is a special education cooperative of 12 school districts providing special education support services to public schools.
- **Salina Adult Education Center:** This program provides adult basic education, English as a second language and GED® preparation for people 16 years or older and out of school.



Salina USD 305 Legislative Platform 2012

2011 Assessments



2011 Standards of Excellence

Coronado Elementary School Reading Grades 3, 4, 5 and Building-Wide Math Grades 3, 4, 5 and Building-Wide Science Building-Wide	Cottonwood Elementary School Math Grade 5 and Building-Wide	Heusner Elementary School Reading Grade 5 and Building-Wide	Meadowlark Elementary School Reading Grades 3, 4, 5 and Building-Wide Math Grades 3, 4, 5 and Building-Wide Science Building-Wide	Oakdale Elementary School Reading Grades 4, 5 and Building-Wide Math Grades 3, 4 and Building-Wide
Stewart Elementary School Reading Grades 3, 4, 5 and Building-Wide Math Grades 3, 4, 5 and Building-Wide	Lakewood Middle School Reading Grades 7, 8 and Building-Wide Math Grade 7	South Middle School Reading Grades 6, 7, 8 and Building-Wide Math Grades 7, 8 and Building-Wide	Central High School Reading Building-Wide	South High School Reading Building-Wide

No Child Left Behind

The Salina USD 305 Board of Education requests state legislative support in lobbying the federal government for changes in special education (IDEA) and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), No Child Left Behind.

While this board of education acknowledges that No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is a federal law and therefore removed from the purview of the state legislature, we offer the following comments and ask for legislative support:

1. NCLB: Salina USD 305 supports the laudable goals of NCLB in promoting high standards of teaching and learning and eliminating the disparity in achievement among various student populations. However, the district believes the current measurements of student achievement and school success/failure are educationally inappropriate. Moreover, the impact of the law in narrowing the curriculum and focusing educational efforts toward a single test and its results has stifled the creativity of students and teachers and deprived students of the broader curriculum necessary for personal growth and for success in global economy.
2. Despite the federal government's mandate, it has failed to fund the program as promised. For example, in 2006 Congress authorized \$139.6 million in Title I funding, yet Kansas was estimated to have received only \$81.8 million, a \$57.7 million difference.
 - Testing students (yearly in grades 3-8 and once in high school) requires additional costs and time.
 - Developing and implementing programs to improve student achievement for special populations remains underfunded.
 - Meeting the requirements for highly qualified staff strains already-stretched budgets for salary and benefits as well as staff development.

This mandate continues to require resources far beyond what local school districts are able to provide.

3. Salina USD 305 supports the efforts of the State Department of Education in requesting a waiver of the No Child Left Behind Legislation. To this end, Salina USD 305 supports the development of an accountability system that focuses more on individual student growth rather than group achievement measures on a single test.



Salina USD 305
1511 Gypsum
Salina, KS 67401

Mr. William D. Hall
Superintendent of Schools
785-309-4727
bill.hall@usd305.com

For additional information please contact
Jennifer Bradford-Vernon
Public Information Coordinator
785-309-4723
jennifer.bradfordvernon@usd305.com