



## TESTIMONY TO SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

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### SB 361

Honorable Senator Schodorf and fellow Senators:

Blue Valley USD #229 appreciates the Governor's willingness to examine the current school finance formula and courage to propose significant changes in the way schools across Kansas are funded.

SB 361 contains a section that allows local school boards to determine the amount of local authority to fund schools, a position that Blue Valley has advocated for many years. We believe that local districts should have the ability to raise local tax dollars to support the education of their children.

While the current proposal contains a number of positive initiatives (additional dollars for lowest Assessed Valuation per Pupil (AVPP) districts, hold harmless provision, local control, etc.) as is often the case, the bill has some shortcomings as well. Blue Valley would suggest the following:

- If the 7.5% cap on cash balance remains in place, it should only involve the general fund. The current language exempts the bond and interest fund, the capital outlay fund and the special education fund. However all fee based funds such as food service, summer school, driver's education, extraordinary schools and textbook and student material should be exempt. All special reserve funds need to be exempt in order to avoid GAPP audit violations. Other tax levied funds such as special assessment and special liability should be exempt as well.
- Provision should be made for additional dollars to be allocated to provide services for "at-risk" students.
- An additional allocation to spur innovation and entrepreneurship should be considered.
- The teacher evaluation and teacher licensure provision should be removed and dealt with separately.
- Full day Kindergarten funding should be re-visited. While a 1.0 FTE is included in the current bill, no funding provision was made. The program should be fully funded or in the least, districts should be able to continue to assess a fee to parents for the additional half day.

We look forward to working with you to create a school finance formula that meets the needs of all children in Kansas.