

March 15, 2016

House Appropriations Committee

House Bill 2731

Chairman Ryckman and Members of the Committee,

I am Jim Hinson superintendent of the Shawnee Mission School District in Johnson County. I appear as neutral on House Bill 2731. At this point, this bill appears to be one of the least detrimental solutions that has been proposed to the current school-funding crisis.

The representatives of the Shawnee Mission School District desire a solution to the short term issues related to equity. In addition, we desire knowledge that the Legislature is working toward addressing a long term solution that will ultimately satisfy the Supreme Court, and that is a new funding formula.

The bill as written will remove \$1.7 million from my budget. House Bill 2731 may satisfy the equity issue by taking money from some and giving it to others, but my Board will be faced with the decision to increase property taxes to fill this hole or reduce expenditures and cut programs or even increase class sizes this fall. There are solutions that would hold all school districts harmless from loss, but in the absence of any legislative will to increase revenue, it doesn't appear that approximately 79 school districts in Kansas have much choice.

In House Bill 2731 other taxpayers and school districts around the state will receive additional funding to reduce their local property taxes. Shawnee Mission School District will lose funding and be faced with either cuts in services and/or property tax increases. Please take note that situations exactly like this one are why we support a new finance formula. The Shawnee Mission School District supported repeal of the old formula and the Block Grants as a temporary transition to a better, more equitable, and flexible funding system. Our patrons want these temporary, stopgap efforts to be resolved and for the Legislature and the Governor to move forward on a new school finance system. In the absence of remedy, you will continue to be responding to the courts and our school district will continue to be harmed.

I would be happy to answer questions at the appropriate time.