

Testimony in Support of HB2232
To Teach Each Kansas High School Student
How to Manage the Money They Earn
Presented by
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Of all the subjects we teach our K-12 students, one of the most important is how to make sound financial decisions. Yet sadly, a comprehensive course in personal financial literacy is still only being taught to each high school student in a few Kansas school districts.

Consequently, since it is not required for graduation, the majority of Kansas students receive their high school diploma without the skills they need to manage the money they will earn as adults. They then become easy prey to scams and run up debt far beyond their ability to pay it back.

In 2003, the Legislature passed a bill to create K.S.A. 72-7535. This statute was revised again in 2009. It requires the state board of education to develop curriculum, materials, guidelines, and standards for local districts to teach financial literacy. But, it only requires the state board to “**encourage school districts**” to select textbooks which include “**topics concerning financial literacy**”.

To get local school districts to take this law seriously, the statute then requires the state board to include a few financial literacy questions on the math and social studies portions of the state assessments mandated by K.S.A. 72-6439. Unfortunately, the state assessments have so little to do with measuring how much students know about managing money that these economic concepts and skills are seldom taught at any grade level. This means that most Kansas students graduate without learning even the basics of how to balance a check book or save enough money to buy a car or purchase a home.

Yes, a few school districts now make the completion of a comprehensive course in personal financial literacy a graduation requirement. For example, Wichita made it a requirement to graduate in 2012. But clearly, the legislative intent of K.S.A. 72-7535 is not being implemented statewide.

The objection from some education lobbyists is that requiring each student to learn these basic life skills is an “unfunded mandate”. They claim they need more money from the legislature before they can be expected to teach another course to all high school Juniors or Seniors.

The truth is, that most high school students have already completed the courses required for graduation by the start of their senior year. Plus, the September 20th census taken in each school is the basis for their BSAPP funding. The average amount of money spent in Kansas in FY2014 was \$13, 228 per FTE student. So the districts receive this money whether their senior students are enrolled in a full course load or not.

The state board of education already allows local school districts to count the one semester course in personal financial literacy called for in HB2232 as a substitute for a required math credit. Since most of the money management skills students need to learn use applied math, this allows local schools to teach PFL without adding another course. Furthermore, the state board also permits some CTE courses to count as a math credit. Currently, a semester PFL course is being taught as part of the Career Pathway in some districts—such as Wichita. So, counting PFL as a math credit can be done statewide.

Please pass HB2232 into law this session. There are currently 450,000 Kansas students plus future generations who are depending on you to “do the right thing”. Learning these PFL skills is necessary for all graduates and should not be left to chance as to which high school they attend.

Respectfully submitted,



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