



**Senate Ways and Means Committee
Senator Masterson, Chair**

June 23, 2016

Superintendent John Allison
Wichita Public Schools

Chairman Masterson, members of the Committee:

Today we are offering comments on bills which have just become available. The Wichita Public Schools is supportive of a bill which is focused on solving the equity issue that does the following:

- Keeps schools open
- Restores equity for all schools and fully supports equalization of LOB and Capital Outlay
- Make the extraordinary needs fund available with expanded criteria to support all schools
- Has a single focus on funding equity, i.e., a clean appropriations bill.

In this regard, we urge the legislature to allocate the \$38 million required for LOB and Capital Outlay state aid. We remind this committee that the Supreme Court, in its May 27th decision, at page 40, in part states:

"Third, in *Gannon II* we cautioned the legislature that any funding system it enacted in response to our decision "must be demonstrated to be capable of meeting the equity requirements of Article 6—while not running afoul of the adequacy requirement." *Gannon II*, 303 Kan. at 743.

We favor a solution that solves the equity problem and that does not include a general state aid reduction, and we urge that every funding source be searched to find a solution that does not include a reduction to general state aid.

However, it is in the best interests of our students, families, employees and community that schools remain open. Closing schools would be costly and would have a long-term negative effect on the school system. Because of the cost and the negative effect that closing schools would have, we would not object, after exhausting alternatives for funding and considering other proposals which have been brought forward, to funding a portion of the equity solution from a reduction in general state aid that does not exceed the amount proposed in the current bill pending before this committee, and does not include in the bill or in any separate bill any additional policies that would apply to school districts.

That being said, the court is scheduled to take up the adequacy issues this fall. It must be understood that we do not think public education is adequately funded from a state constitutional standpoint. We also want to be clear that reducing general state aid at this time will have a negative effect on adequacy. This fall, when the adequacy issue is before the court, we will take the position that schools are not adequately funded and that any reduction in general state aid to solve the equity problem will exacerbate the adequacy problem.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter of critical importance

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