

Written Testimony before the

**Joint Meeting of the House Committee on Appropriations  
And  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means**

on

**School Equity Funding**

by

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**June 23, 2016**

Chairman Ryckman, Chairman Masterson, and Members of the Committees:

Difficult times call for difficult decisions that may only be reached through strong leadership. I don't think anyone will argue the fact that Kansas education is facing difficult times. Setting aside all politics, it is imperative all parties work together and lead not only for a solution, but for the benefit of all students and families across Kansas.

On Monday, June 20, six superintendents, Chairman Masterson, Chairman Ryckman, Randy Watson, Dale Dennis, and Kansas School Superintendents Association (KSSA) leadership gathered to discuss a possible solution to solve the equity challenge. The group agreed there may be other ways to achieve equity; however, at this point, the quickest and more certain path to ensure a constitutionally equitable system is to restore both the previous capital outlay formula (based on the median valuation per pupil) and the previous LOB formula (based on 81.2 percentile of valuation per pupil). We understand this would cost the state approximately \$38 million.

As this group worked together, they experienced both agreement and challenge. However, by the end of the day, a plan was constructed with the most challenging component being a reduction of .005% to all school districts. As the committees work today, three revenue plans exist including the plan KSSA constructed with Chairman Masterson and Chairman Ryckman. All plans achieve the necessary \$38 million through both common and unique revenue sources

Although I personally appreciate the hard work of the committee, it is difficult for me to support a plan which takes any additional funds from schools through a reduction in the General Fund, especially since USD 505 is already losing money based on changes in virtual funding and anticipated changes in Local Option equity funding. I encourage you as lawmakers to find an acceptable compromise among the competing plans that does not negatively impact current funding; however, should all other options be

explored and exhausted and no other compromise possible than a reduction in the General Fund, I implore that this amount not exceed .005%.

I agree with the four priorities outlined by KSSA and ask lawmakers to consider these while working towards a solution:

1. Keep schools open
2. Equity for all schools; we can support any plan that fully supports equalization of LOB and Capital Outlay
3. Extraordinary needs fund must be available with expanded criteria to support all schools
4. A Clean Appropriation Bill with a single focus on equity

I regret my inability to present my testimony in the presence of the committee, but if I can be of any additional assistance or support please don't hesitate to contact me.

I appreciate your consideration in this matter.