



Testimony before the
Senate Education Committee

on

SB 362

by

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Testimony provided on behalf of the USA-Kansas and Kansas School Superintendents Association

Madam Chair and members of the committee

Our organizations stand neutral to SB 362

Like the committee we believe the school district remains accountable to the patrons of the district, and we support idea of keeping the public informed. Our caution is the potential added workload for administrators and possible misinformation that could come from a single document if worded properly.

Superintendents and their teams prep and plan for the school budget over the course of the school year, if not multiple years in advance. This bill references a need assessment to assist the school board when preparing the budget of the school district. It should be noted school board members are not responsible for creating the budget for the district, that responsibility usually falls to the superintendent, treasurer, or a budget team.

The board provides direct oversight of the superintendent to assure the budget reflects the needs of the strategic plan that has been put forth by the board of education and the accreditation needs of the school district. In a district of 1200-1500, or more board members and the superintendent remain informed regarding the work of the districts through committee meetings, planning meetings, and organizational meetings. In smaller districts, much of the information is shared during bi-weekly or monthly meetings with a district leadership teams.

These committees are often comprised of administrators, teachers, directors, school board members, parents, and students. Every school district is a different. The size of the district often determines the size and representation on the committee.

Below is a partial list of committees and meetings that are utilized to gather progress through the school year. It is through these committee and meetings that recommendations are fed back to the superintendents, treasurers, and budget committees to consider when preparing the district's budget. This is not an exhaustive list.

1. Technology committee
2. Multiple curriculum committee
3. Textbook committee
4. Facility committee
5. Professional development committee
6. Negotiation meetings
7. Site Councils meetings
8. PTA meetings
9. SPED Reviews (Especially districts participating in a coop.)
10. Student Council meetings
11. Directors meetings
12. Principal meetings
13. PLC meetings
14. Department meetings
15. Staff evaluations

Reports from these meetings are shared with the superintendent and school board members during the academic year. Reports of the district meetings might be shared through a director's or principal's report at a board meeting or possibly meeting minutes shared in a Friday board notes shared by the superintendent. The process looks a little different in each district.

Beyond the meetings themselves, multiple resources are shared with board members, the combination of resources, data, and meeting review provides the school board with the information to make informed recommendations or ask/answer questions regarding the district's budget. Again, not an exhaustive list.

1. Student enrollment and trends (classroom needs)
2. Staffing trends and needs
3. SPED students, loads, and needs
4. Transportation needs (buses, drivers, training)
5. Utility cost (might include facility or equipment upgrades or repairs)
6. Student assessments
 - a. Local (Classroom and Observation)
 - b. Adaptive Achievement and growth test
 - c. Interim (MTSS or others formative assessments)
 - d. State summative assessment
 - e. National normed assessments
7. Attendance data

8. Athletic and Activity participation numbers and needs
9. Student behavior data
10. Graduation rates
11. Career Technical programs and certifications
12. Post-secondary data review
13. Middle and High students course request data

Beyond the additional workload, the challenge of having the building principal compile a needs assessment doesn't tell the story of what is occurring or appropriately describe the needs of the school. Added to the challenge of a single document, in our smaller school districts particular budget decisions can be based upon only a few students; it would be inappropriate to have any identifying information regarding a student's needs or achievement made public during this process.

I believe there is a workable solution and would ask if Chairwoman Baumgardner and Senator Dietrich could sit down with a small group of superintendents and school board members to discuss a possible solution that doesn't add to the school districts workload and will meet the intent of the original law.