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November 30, 2021

To: 2021 Special Committee on Education

From: Norma Volkmer, Fiscal Analyst

Re: At-Risk and High-Density At-Risk Weightings

AT-RISK AND HIGH-DENSITY AT-RISK WEIGHTINGS

The School District Finance and Quality Performance Act enacted by the 1992 Legislature set the at-risk weighting at 0.05 and provided that school districts with an at-risk population of at least 35.1 percent and a density of 212.1 students per square mile receive the same high-density at-risk weighting as those school districts with at least 50.0 percent at-risk students. The Kansas School Equity and Enhancement Act (KSEEA) removed the provision for the high-density at-risk weighting and amended the weighting to allow for calculation at the individual school building level. KSEEA also set the at-risk weighting at 0.484. The table below details the at-risk weighted (WTD) full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment and funding and the high-density at-risk WTD FTE enrollment and funding since the 2014-2015 school year.

School Year	BASE Aid	Free Lunch Headcount	At-Risk WTD FTE	Total At-Risk Funding (incl. HD)	High-Density WTD FTE	High-Density At-Risk Funding
2015	$3,852	193,253	88,122.9	$390,387,488	13,223.8	$50,938,078
2016	N/A	195,781	Kansas state aid to schools was distributed via block grants in 2016 and 2017, which did not include designated at-risk funding.			
2017	N/A	190,158				
2018	4,006	186,717	90,371.1	414,185,147	13,020.1	52,158,521
2019	4,165	179,640	86,945.8	413,027,223	12,220.4	50,897,966
2020	4,436	177,759	86,035.1	434,604,236	11,937.0	52,952,532
2021	4,569	168,263	81,439.7	423,136,004	11,170.5	51,038,015
2022 Est.	4,706	160,900	77,875.2	417,872,564	10,184.5	47,928,257

Staff Note: The 2022 estimate is from the Kansas State Department of Education FY 2022 Legal Max as published on November 23, 2021.

At-Risk Weighting (KSA 72-5151)

An at-risk student is defined as a student enrolled full-time in grades 1 through 12, younger than 20 years of age, and eligible for free meals under the National School Lunch Program. Any student with an individualized education program does not have to be enrolled full time or be younger than 20 years of age to qualify. To be classified as at-risk, the student must also be enrolled in a school district that maintains an at-risk student assistance program approved by the Kansas State Board of Education.

To determine a district's at-risk weighting, the number of at-risk students (as defined by statute) is multiplied by a factor of 0.484. The resulting number is then added to the district's FTE enrollment. The formula is as follows:

● Number of at-risk students x 0.484 = at-risk weighting.

For example, if a school district has 500 students who qualify for free lunches, 500 is multiplied by 0.484, which produces an at-risk weighting of 242. The calculation would be as follows:

● 500 x 0.484 = 242.

High-Density At-Risk Weighting (KSA 72-5151)

Generally, the high-density at-risk weighting applies to school districts with populations of at-risk students exceeding 35.0 percent of the district's enrollment. The weighting is calculated differently for districts with at-risk populations of at least 50.0 percent and for those with at-risk populations of at least 35.0 percent but less than 50.0 percent. The weighting may also be calculated at the school building level. The high-density at-risk weighting was originally scheduled to expire on July 1, 2019; it has since been extended to sunset on June 30, 2024.

For school districts with an at-risk population of at least 50.0 percent, the number of at-risk students is multiplied by a factor of 0.105. The formula is as follows:

● At-risk enrollment x 0.105 = high-density at-risk weighting.

For school districts with an at-risk population of at least 35.0 percent but less than 50.0 percent, 35.0 percent is subtracted from the percentage of at-risk students in the district. The difference is then multiplied by a factor of 0.7. That product is subsequently multiplied by the number of at-risk students in the district. The formula is as follows:

● (% of at-risk students – 35.0%) x 0.7 x at-risk enrollment = high-density at-risk weighting.

Take, for example, a school district with an at-risk population of 1,000 students that equals 40.0 percent of the district's total enrollment. Subtract 35.0 percent from 40.0 percent. The difference (5.0) is multiplied by 0.7. This product (3.5) is then multiplied by 1,000. The at-risk weighting would therefore be 3,500. The calculation would be as follows:

● (40% – 35%) x 0.7 x 1,000 = 3,500.