



To: Senate Education Chair Baumgardner and Committee Members
From: Todd Evans, USD 113 Superintendent
Date: Tuesday, January 30, 2024
Re: SB 386
Position: Opposition (Written and Oral Testimony)

Although the implications of SB 386 would impact school districts across the State of Kansas, USD 113 is providing testimony from the viewpoint of the decision by the USD 113 Board of Education to close the Wetmore Academic Center (WAC) in the 2022-23 School year.

The flexibility to use unweighted student funding from the previous or prior year allowed the USD 113 Board of Education to budget for and plan for a transition that minimized the impact of the closure. The Board was able to offer positions to all classified and licensed personnel from WAC following the closure decision by the Board of Education in Feb. of 2023. USD 113 considered the funding formula as a type of contract between our district and the State. This concept did not “incentivize” the closure decision, but did provide our district the ability to create a transition plan that included the offer of employment to all district staff.

If USD 113 were required to use current year unweighted FTE for 23-24 as indicated in SB386, we would have had to implement a reduction in force at the end of 22-23. This process would have resulted in the district notifying teachers of the reduction in force - and them leaving the district. This, along with the exodus of the majority of WAC teachers, would have compounded to create lack of time and available human resources to secure teaching staff to educate the students of USD 113.

USD 113 does support adding a current year count for unweighted FTE to the Kansas Education Funding Formula. This supports districts with increasing enrollment.

The 2015 Legislative Post Audit (K-12 Education: Efficiency Audit of the Prairie Hills School District) that recommended the closure of the WAC noted that in addition to the district saving money on the closure of the WAC, that the State of Kansas would save “\$129,000” per year in KPERs contributions.

The USD 113 Board of Education made a very difficult and emotional decision that was supported by a Legislative Post Audit Study. These decisions and financial projections were based on Kansas law.

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