

Senate Education Committee

Testimony on SB 224

Presented by

Dr. Sharon Zoellner, Superintendent, Louisburg USD 416
on behalf of United School Administrators of Kansas

March 12, 2013

Thank you for providing this opportunity to speak in opposition to SB 224, a bill related to weightings in the school district finance and quality performance act. Our understanding is this bill will eliminate the virtual, non-proficient, bilingual and vocational weightings from the statutory school finance formula in order to achieve a Base State Aid Per Pupil (BSAPP) of \$4,492. The bill would also require the proration the At-Risk pupil and High Density At-Risk pupil weightings.

USA|Kansas has continually supported the formula and funding levels **enacted by the Kansas Legislature** in 2006. Through targeted funding, schools were able to invest in programs and services to help our students achieve academic proficiency and success. Investments in K-12 education positively impacted student performance on state assessments and the achievement gap narrowed.

The measures in this bill will take our state backwards. Removing weightings and moving money around to reach a Base State Aid Per Pupil (BSAPP) of \$4,492 does not solve our funding problems **or best serve students**. The base figure was put in place with the understanding that the weightings would supplement additional needs in various districts.

I have personally been working with school funding in Kansas for the past 20 years. The challenges we have faced through the years have been difficult, at best. When the weightings were added and later adjusted to be more equitable, I was hopeful for a solid funding mechanism for every child of the state. We may be one of the few states where the courts determined that our formula was constitutional as long as it was adequately funded.

USA|Kansas understands the concern by some that the BSAPP does not capture the state's full investment in education. We understand that there may need to be additional discussions about how best to address that issue. However, our goal is to develop and maintain programs and resources to support our students as they work towards college or career readiness – this bill does not move us in that direction.

I strongly urge you oppose SB 224. Thank you for your time and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Senate Education Committee

Date 3-12-13

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