

Emporia Public Schools

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19 Constitution Street
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Logan Avenue Elementary
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Riverside Elementary
327 S. West Street
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Turning Point Learning Center
315 S. Market Street
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Elementary
902 Exchange Street
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12 March 2013

Senate Education Committee

1:30PM

Re: Opposition to Senate Bill #224

Steve Abrams, Chair

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in opposition to Senate Bill #224 that would enact changes to K.S.A 2012 Supp. 72-3715.

Education is important to the people of our community! We are home to Emporia State University and Flint Hills Technical College. Emporia has always been committed to assuring that all students have opportunities to achieve success.

The demographic makeup of the Emporia community has changed dramatically over the past 15 years (as noted in Chart 1). Last year, 66% of Emporia students qualified for free and reduced price meals; 33% of our incoming kindergarteners required bilingual assistance; and 1,548 or 33% of our students received bilingual support each day throughout the district. Therefore, we have invested in the staff development, curriculum and intervention strategies necessary to assure that students in Emporia classrooms receive direct, explicit, scientifically research-based instruction from every teacher they encounter throughout the day. Through partnerships with Emporia State University and Kansas State University, we provide classroom teacher training in second-language instructional approaches, develop cultural proficiency, and assure accurate assessment skills for every new teacher every year! Without a doubt, the transfer of that specialized training into the classroom has made a difference for all students but especially for our children of poverty. Our data demonstrates that the steps taken in Emporia to develop highly skilled teachers and to equip them with research-based resources and materials have made a significant difference for our students!

Senate Education Committee

Date 3-12-13

Attachment 10

Emporia Public Schools has worked within the law as it currently exists to produce results. We have been able to accomplish these significant results by taking advantage of the dollars generated through at-risk weighting. It has worked for students! We have created a system for diagnosing needs for children of poverty, strategically prescribing interventions within the primary classroom and successfully supporting a continuum of services with appropriately licensed and highly qualified professional staff. As a consequence, our students experience effective classroom instruction suited to their needs and they demonstrate extraordinary results!

SB 224 will negatively impact the momentum generated from our success. This bill eliminates the weighting factors designed to recognize the extraordinary challenges faced by children who live in poverty and with it, the very resources that make a difference for Emporia kids! If enacted into law, this bill will force us to make decisions that compromise the structure and support we have been able to build...a tragic loss for Emporia students.

SB 224 fails to lock in funding or to hold harmless the struggles we have addressed. But take notice of the demographic changes our community has experienced! Our enrollment has not simply increased with the influx of low SES students. Instead, we have welcomed a new and diverse population that rather quickly replaced a middle-to-upper income school community. Moreover, our community has experienced an enrollment decline.....not a loss of low SES students...not a reduction in challenge! Yet, SB224 assumes that any new students to Emporia are just like any other student in the state. This BSAPP is nowhere near the actual cost of successfully educating students with the challenge of poverty.

We understand that our local community and our state have experienced the strain of financial distress. As a result, we have worked hard to accept our share of the financial constraint imposed. However as our state recovers, should we continue to ask our most challenged patrons to accept less for their children? Should our zip code condemn Emporia students to a life that fully recognizes the bottom of the bell curve?

Twenty years have passed since our state established the current funding formula. Twenty years that have resulted in adjustments that can finally accommodate our state's demographic changes. It is time that Kansas remembers and that our state accepts the challenge that its schools have accepted with grace and commitment. Make a difference for our kids.

Thank you for your attention to this very important issue.

Respectfully,

M. Theresa Davidson

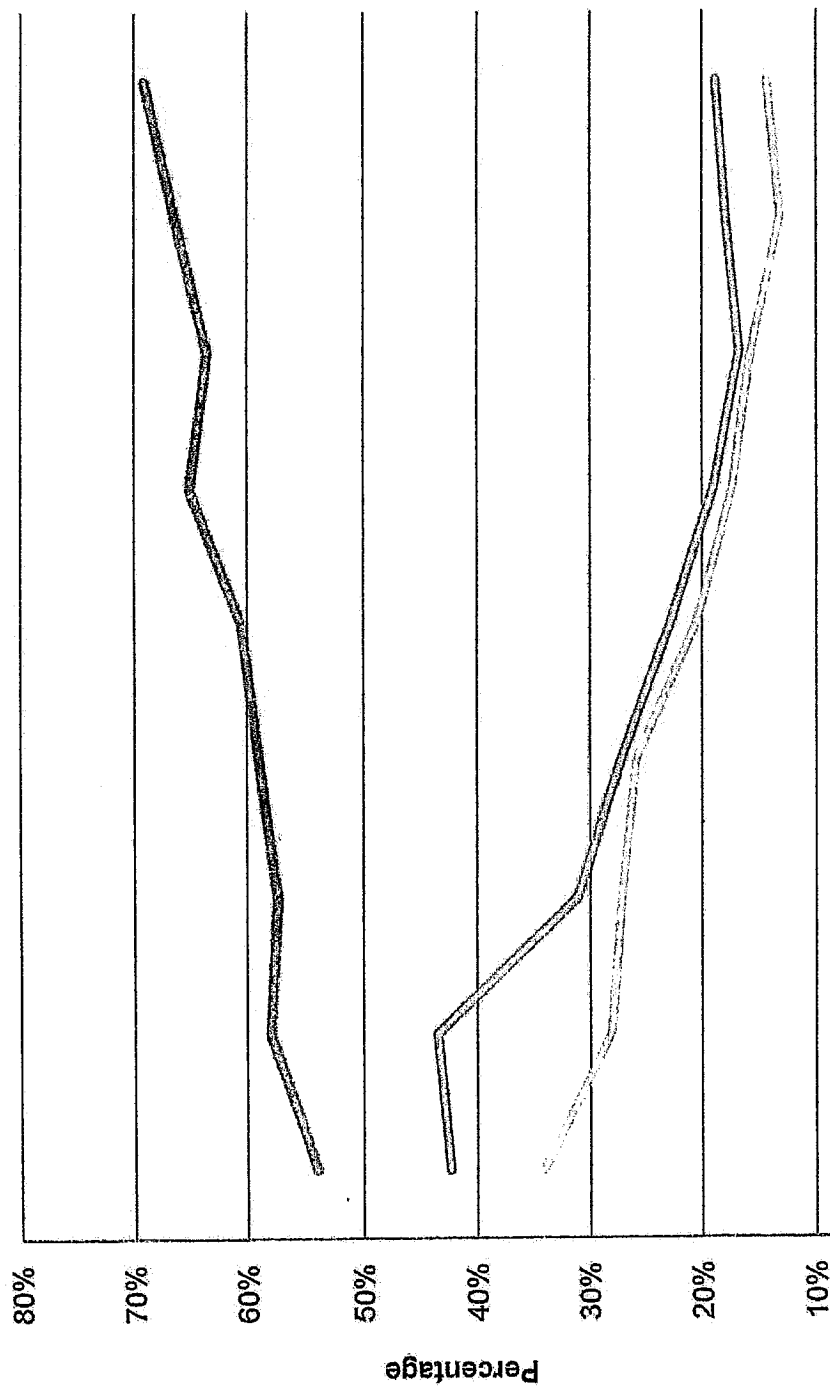
M. Theresa Davidson
Superintendent

Robert Scheib

Robert Scheib
Assistant Superintendent of Business

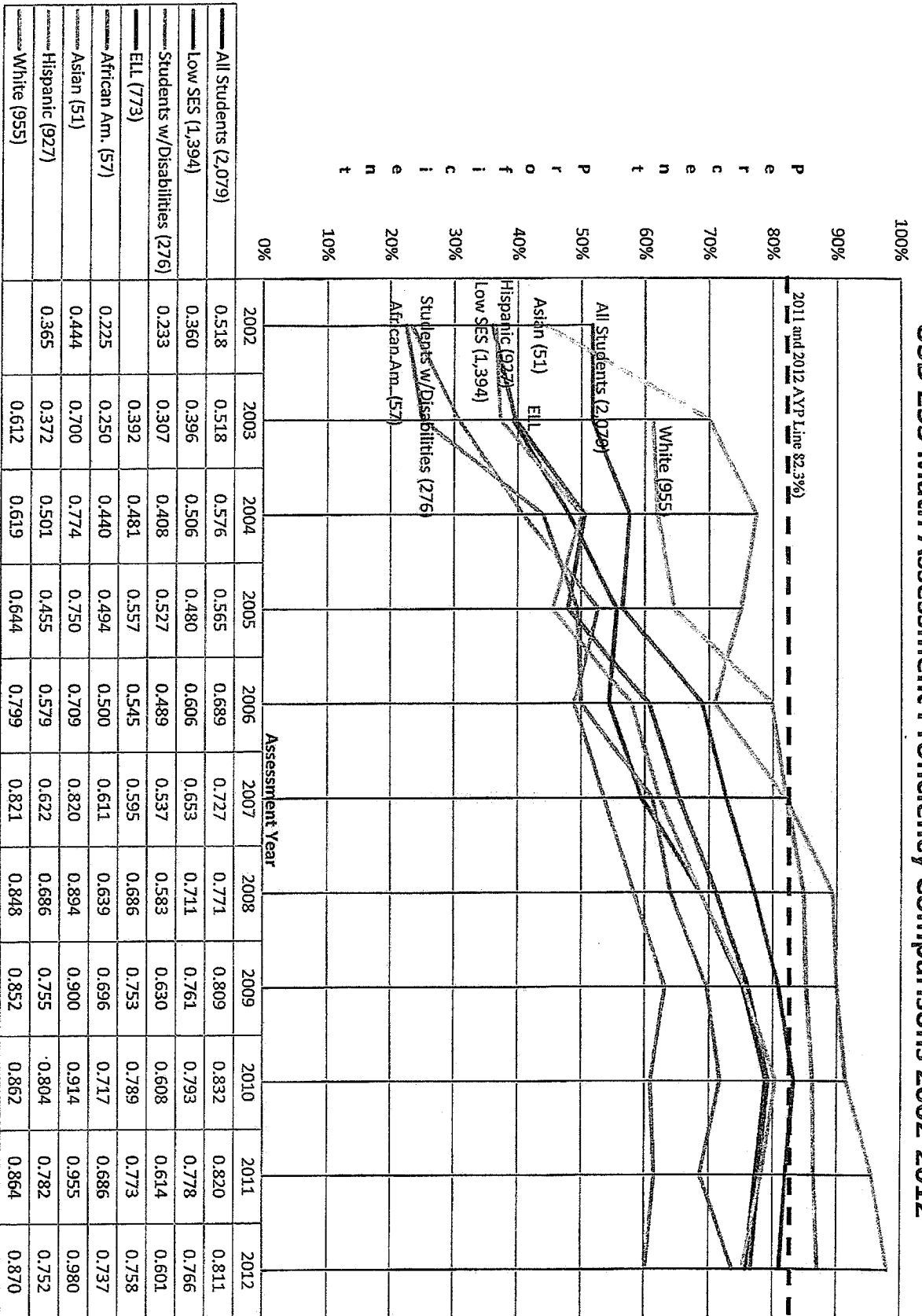
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Kansas Assessment Percent Non-Proficient versus Percent Low SES



	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Math Non-Proficient	42.4%	43.5%	31.1%	27.3%	22.9%	19.1%	16.8%	18.0%	18.9%
Reading Non-Proficient	34.0%	28.0%	27.1%	25.8%	20.5%	17.3%	15.7%	13.1%	14.3%
Low SES	54.0%	58.0%	57.4%	59.0%	60.5%	65.1%	63.5%	66.4%	69.1%

USD 253 Math Assessment Proficiency Comparisons 2002-2012



USD 253 Reading Assessment Proficiency Comparisons 2002-2012

