



Spring Hill

SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Testimony for House Education Committee

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Thank you for allowing us to share our thoughts as proponent for HB 2270, the Rooker-Kelly School Finance Bill. We are a small, rapidly growing district with a student population of a little over 2,800 students. We are located in southern Johnson and northern Miami Counties.

We appreciate the amount of work that went into this new formula. We think most school districts throughout the state will be in support of HB 2270 because it addresses both adequacy and equity by creating a foundational state aid per pupil while also funding students with specific education needs. Adding provisions for the next four years to achieve adequacy and maintain it through cost of living increases shows foresight by the committee.

We are encouraged the new formula supports local control by allowing districts to go to 33% in their local option budget without having to go through the election process which can be expensive and time consuming. Block grant funding has taken away our ability to increase our local option budget to the level of our neighbors because we are past the July 1, 2015 deadline.

We are very supportive of the new formula taking the bond and interest state aid calculation back to the 2014-2015 method. As a growing district, we rely heavily on bond and interest state aid to build quality facilities for our children. Without this state aid, our local mill levy would be one of the highest in the state of Kansas.

Our understanding is this funding formula is at a starting point. With this in mind, we would ask that you consider that funding be based on the current year's enrollment. Our district fully understands the consequences on student learning of funding which is a year (or two) old. If funding cannot be based on the current year's enrollment, we would support an Extraordinary Growth fund to provide for growing districts. We ask that this fund be finite and protected in a locked box.

Block grant funding has had significant negative impact on our district the last two years. Under the old formula, our 2015-2016 general fund budget would have increased by more than \$500,000 to meet the needs of a student population that grew 143 students or 5.6%. We also would have increased our supplemental general fund budget by nearly \$500,000 but found it capped with block grant funding. We were grateful to receive \$317,164 in extraordinary need state aid to offset the cost of additional teachers and paraprofessionals that were hired. Instead

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of losing nearly \$1,000,000 in additional budget authority, we were down approximately \$700,000.

Our 2016-2017 general fund budget would have increased yet another \$500,000 under the old formula to meet the needs of a student population that grew by 132 students or 5%. When we went before the extraordinary needs committee in August 2016, we requested an amount of \$941,440 to help fund the additional 10.5 teachers and 9 paraprofessionals that were added to service an anticipated increase of 190 students. The KSDE Extraordinary Needs committee approved us for \$848,580. Kansas schools contributed .4% (\$11 million) of their general fund budget to the Extraordinary Needs fund. However, the 2016-2017 Extraordinary Needs funds were not used for the Extraordinary Needs Committee. The funding was contingent upon a successful sale of the Kansas BioScience Authority of over \$25 million. The sale failed to generate the needed funds. This left a significant gap between the monies our students deserved to receive for their educational needs and the funding that was provided the district.

Again, we appreciate the effort that went into this bill to adequately and equitably fund schools. Thank you for investing in the education of the next generation of Kansans.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Wayne Burke
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