



To: Senate Education Chair Baumgardner and Committee Members
From: Kathleen Lippert, USD 113 BOE member since 2015
Date: Tuesday, January 30, 2024
Re: SB 386
Position: Opposition (Written and Oral)

SB 386 seeks to amend K.S.A. 72-5132 which provides the funding formula for K-12 public education. The proposed amendments in SB 386 create a penalty for a district that closes an attendance center.

The closure of an attendance center is one of the most difficult and unpleasant decisions a local Board of Education must consider. These difficult decisions need to be evidence based with a focus on fiscal responsibility to taxpayers and providing the most educational opportunities for families and their students.

Our district embarked on this difficult decision after a decade of monitoring the ailing financials for a building and expending limited resources to make the building viable. The evidence, both financial and educational opportunities, pointed to the hard decision. Codifying a financial penalty for closing a building will incentivize districts to increase taxes and decrease educational opportunities to avoid the penalty.

Heaped on top of the difficult decision, our school board members and staff experienced false narratives, emotional blackmail, and cyberbullying during the process. A sexually explicit object was mailed, false sexual allegations were made, praying that board members experienced a “serious and slow heart attack”, and verbally accosting school cooks who were cornered in a pantry were a few of the experiences.

Legislators must focus on statewide taxes. At the local level, boards of education are focused on providing a great education while respecting the burden on local taxpayers. Local control decisions made by the USD 113 Board of Education used data and facts that included the State’s Finance Formula that has been in existence since 2017. Adjusting this formula at this time for USD 113 would be moving the goal posts and changing the score board resulting in a lack of respect for students, families, and taxpayers.

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