



Spring Hill

SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Written Testimony for House Education Committee,

Thank you for allowing us to share our thoughts on HB 2410, the Chairman's draft of a new K-12 funding formula Finance Bill. We are a small, rapidly growing district located in southern Johnson and northern Miami counties.

We appreciate the amount of work that went into this new formula. We appreciate the idea that you are working to address student growth for districts such as Spring Hill USD 230 that are growing rapidly and the base amount per pupil has increased. We are also encouraged that Virtual school funding remains as current law.

Our understanding is this funding formula is a template and at a starting point. With this in mind, we would ask that you consider the following points:

We certainly appreciate the idea of fully funding All Day Kindergarten. However, eliminating our half day kindergarten classes, trying to create enough classroom space, and hire enough teachers to provide All Day Kindergarten for 2017-2018 could be a challenge. Depending upon when the legislature passes a new school finance formula, we may have a very short time frame until kids come back in August. A nice alternative might be to leave it alone for 2017-2018 and then fund at 1.0 starting in 2018-2019. It gives school districts time to prepare for the change and the overall cost is basically the same.

Funding should be based on the current year's enrollment. The new enrollment calculation seems more complicated than the old formula. If given a choice, we believe the old method worked well. 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.

We ask that you consider having the new formula take 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.

We are encouraged the new formula supports local control, but we ask that you consider removing the election requirement on the special local activities budget. Elections are costly and time consuming for districts. An alternative may be for the locally elected school board to

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pass a resolution, similar to capital outlay, and allow a protest period. By allowing districts to go to 33% in their local option budget without having to go through the election process is less expensive and saves time. 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.

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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