

Testimony before the
Senate Select Committee for Education Finance
on
SB 44

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Rex Bruce, Superintendent of USD 374, Sublette. I write as a Proponent of SB 44 for many reasons.

Sublette is a 2A school in western Kansas with a current enrollment of 445. Our numbers have held steady for the 15 years I have been superintendent. This year we dropped 50 students, which will result in a budget decrease of approximately \$215,000.

Because of two late resignations and no applicants for 7th and 8th grade mathematics, and 7th and 8th grade science. We were forced to use our high school teachers, and our librarian to fill these positions. This creates a significant hardship for these teachers. Our math teacher, now has to prepare each night for 6 different math classes, and our librarian is out of the library for two hours. This was great for the budget, but when teachers are stretched too far, requiring them to prepare for hours each evening, they find better jobs in other districts, or they are not as prepared to teach a high quality lesson.

Funding in SB 44 will provide three major things for Sublette Schools.

1. The additional funds will allow us to hire additional employees to fill teaching positions that are currently open. This will provide teachers who are certified to teach the specific positions that are open.
2. We anticipate hiring an additional high school science teacher to take some of the burden off of our current science teacher. This new teacher will also provide a CTE pathway for health education and teacher education, both of which are areas of need across the state.
3. Additional funds will allow us to give an increase in compensation to our employees. With enrollment staying static for years, and now decreasing dramatically, USD 374 has not kept up with salaries of surrounding schools. This makes it extremely difficult to not only hire new teachers, but to retain them. USD 374 employees have not been given any significant salary increases for years.

Thank you for your time and your service to the State of Kansas.