



Mark Desetti, testimony
Senate Bill 142
Senate Select Committee on School Finance
March 6, 2019

Madame Chair, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts on Senate Bill 142. We appear neutral on this bill because while it is a start, it in no way provides the full solution to the Gannon decision and it ignores some of the important components of school funding that help teachers and administrators lead children to higher levels of achievement.

Kansas NEA has one hope for school finance in this session - that is, we hope the Legislature will respond to the Gannon decision in a way that guarantees that Kansas teachers will open schools on time this August with their classrooms filled with students eager to learn. And we believe that this solution is within reach at this time.

We ask that the Legislature do two things.

First, leave the finance formula alone. It has been determined to meet constitutionality in terms of equity. Any alterations to the formula, any efforts to have additional funds directed in new or specific ways will simply raise the possibility of once again harming equity. The best thing to do is to put new money on base aid as this not only helps students generally but impacts other aspects of the formula such as at-risk and bilingual funding.

Secondly, provide the inflation fix in each of the out years in a way that gets us to the Montoy safe haven accounting for inflation.

We firmly believe that if you do these two things, you will resolve the Gannon case and end this cycle of litigation.

We would also hope that you would take the more global school finance approach from Senate Bill 44 and include the funding for other programs such as mentor teachers and professional development as these programs help our teachers improve practice and find new ways to meet the individual needs of their students.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share our thoughts. We would end by reminding you that they sooner this is done, the sooner the state can prepare for the Court and the sooner our educators and our students and their parents can be assured that schools will open as usual.