



Honorable Kristey Williams, Chair
House Budget Committee on Education

House Bill No. 2485

IN SUPPORT

Thank you for allowing us to share our thoughts as a proponent for HB 2485. We appreciate the amount of work and thought that went into this bill. For school districts with increasing enrollment, funding based on the previous year's enrollment creates a financial hardship. For instance, in FY '24 alone, USD 230 had an increase of more than 180 students. The district has spent more than \$1 million in additional salaries for both certified and support staff to accommodate these students, yet funding for FY '24 was based on FY '23 enrollment numbers.

From 1992 to 2015 the State of Kansas funded school districts based on: 1) the current year enrollment, 2) the prior year enrollment, or 3) the 3 year average (whichever was higher) with no lag time. From 2015 to 2017, under Block Grant Funding, the Spring Hill School District continued to add more teachers and support staff to deal with a growing student population, but received no additional funding for those students while budgets were frozen.

Today, many districts in Kansas are declining, but there are protections in place to avoid having to make immediate budget reductions that could negatively impact student learning. A declining district can be funded based on the prior year enrollment, the enrollment from two prior years, or the 3 year average (whichever is higher). Giving a declining district additional time before making budget reductions is good for students and should be kept in place, for at least maybe 1 additional school year. Yet, growing districts should not be penalized by having to wait a full year for the additional funding to come available. Within USD 230, our local tax rate is set at approx. 2 - 3 mills higher than it could be if current year funding were available.

In addition, with Open Enrollment set to begin FY '25, there is no doubt that more districts may see an increase, and when that happens, the clamor for current year funding as an option will only increase. At the same time, there are many regions across the State of Kansas whereby the economic engines are running strong, which is leading to positive growth.

In general discussions with colleagues, I do believe such legislation to fund school districts with a higher enrollment from the previous year on that current fiscal year would be welcomed by many and would definitely be equitable. It is important to note that if this bill would be adopted, it is a one-time fix.

Thank you for your consideration and time.

Link W. Luttrell, Ed.D
Superintendent of Schools