

Thank you for providing the opportunity for testimony regarding the Kansas Special Education Task Force. I would like to provide the following written testimony in support of fully funding SPED.

While I am a school board member and affiliated with KASB, I am first and foremost a taxpayer and a parent of children in public education. And, as a taxpayer and parent, I do support the Legislature fully funding special education at 92% of excess costs. I can see the benefits to ALL children!

Regarding USD 417, Council Grove/Morris County, last year we paid the Flint Hills Special Education Cooperative (FHSEC) a total of \$1,312,836.

\$855,856 of that was "flow through " state aid, funds that are deposited into USD 417's checking account and immediately forwarded on to FHSEC via AP check. The other \$456,980 was our "district share local assessment," which is essentially our portion of the additional costs incurred by the sponsoring district (USD 253-Emporia) for administering the cooperative. Overall, 2022-2023 total revenue for the SPED fund equaled \$952,043.80, while total expenses equaled \$1,390,042.21, creating a shortfall of \$437,998.41.

This is nearly HALF A MILLION dollars that could have been spent on EVERY child in our district, as teacher salaries, as building improvements, as new and improved curriculum and technology, as safer buses, for support staff such as aides, paras, counselors, specialists, cooks, bus drivers, and custodians, and so much more.

I have a personal investment in the SPED funding. I have a daughter that had an IEP, (individual education plan). She was a gifted student and her education could have been phenomenal. However, our gifted programs have slowly faded into the background as more and more resources have to be diverted into funding our students who require additional needs due to their disabilities.

And it is not just our gifted students who would benefit from fully funding SPED. It is every child that would benefit from all of the things I mentioned previously, however, in order to do so, districts need help financially, in regards to their special education programs.

I wish to thank you for your time and your continued investment in the future of public education in Kansas. EVERY child in public education deserves a 21st Century Education. Can we please give them that opportunity?

Cordially,
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