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To: Special Committee on Education

From: Craig Neuenswander, Deputy Commissioner
KSDE Division of Fiscal and Administrative Services

Subj: Needs of At-Risk Students

Chair Williams and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee about school finance as it relates to the needs of at-risk students. Under state statute school districts receive additional weighting for students qualifying for free meals under the National School Lunch Program. The funding is generated by a weighting of 0.484 in the school finance formula. An additional high density at-risk weighting (HDAR) applies to those districts with 35% or more of their students qualifying for free meals.

The table on the next page lists at-risk weighting, state aid, and expenditures since the final year of the block grant, 2016-17. At-risk weighting over those years has declined due to fewer students qualifying for free meals. In FY2021 and FY2022, this was due in part to the decision by the federal government to provide free meals for all students. With that provision in place, some parents chose not to complete the free meal application.

While the weighting is generated by students qualifying for free meals, the funds may be spent on services for any at-risk students, as defined in 2021 House Bill 2134. A student shall be identified as eligible to receive at-risk programs and services if the student meets one or more of the following criteria:

1. Is not working on academic grade level;
2. is not meeting the requirements necessary for promotion to the next grade or is failing subjects or courses of study;
3. is not meeting the requirements necessary for graduation from high school or has the potential to drop out of school;
4. has insufficient mastery of skills or is not meeting state standards;
5. has been retained;
6. has a high rate of absenteeism;
7. has repeated suspensions or expulsions from school;
8. is homeless or migrant;
9. is identified as an English language learner;
10. has social-emotional needs that cause the student to be unsuccessful in school; or
11. is identified as a student with dyslexia or characteristics of dyslexia.

Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.

The table below indicates school districts spend more providing services for students meeting the at-risk criteria than they receive in state aid.

SCHOOL DISTRICT AT-RISK WEIGHTING AND FUNDING – STATE TOTALS

School Year	¹ FTE Enrollment	BASE	At-Risk Weighted FTE (Includes HDAR)	At-Risk State Aid (Includes HDAR)	At-Risk Expenditures	Expenditures Above State Aid (difference)
2016-17	449,594.7	NA	NA	NA	\$395,531,846	NA
2017-18	466,226.8	\$4,006	103,391.2	\$ 414,185,147	469,863,733	\$ 55,678,586
2018-19	465,349.5	4,165	99,166.2	413,027,223	493,698,730	80,671,507
2019-20	465,158.8	4,436	97,972.1	434,604,236	494,374,257	59,770,021
2020-21	446,859.9	4,569	92,610.2	423,136,004	488,307,567	65,171,563
2021-22 Budgeted	450,015.5	4,706	88,059.7	414,408,948	652,320,472	237,911,524

¹ FTE (full-time equivalency) Enrollment (student counts on 9/20 and 2/20) (excludes 4 yr old At Risk and Virtual)

For more information, contact:
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