Testimony before the
Senate Education Committee
on
SB 224
submitted by
Dr. George Griffith, Superintendent, Trego County USD #208

Chair Abrams and members of the Senate Education Budget Committee I would like to thank you for the opportunity to appear today and speak on behalf of Trego County Schools and to express the concerns related to SB 224.

At first glance this bill would provide more funds to my district especially if the base state aid per pupil (BSAPP) is increased to $4,492; the main concern with this bill is there is no guarantee the statutory level of funding will be met.

CONCERNS WITH SB 224

1. In order to eliminate the need to use additional money for education, the at-risk weighting would have to be prorated by 31% per the Fiscal Note provided by Dr. Dennis. **A 31% proration of at-risk funds would cut my budget by $44,838 [see financial note pg. 3].**

2. The removal of bilingual weighting will limit the assistance those ESOL students in this state legally will need to have an equal education. This would lead to the formation of a permanent lower class based on language. **This would have no impact on my district but it is not good for students.**

3. As we are working hard to prepare our students to be college and career ready, removal of the Vocational weighting, especially to programs that are very costly to run, will directly impact those individuals who have a limited desire to attend college and is in direct opposition to the Governor's career ready program which I fully support.
4.

CAN SUPPORT IN SB 224

As for the removal of the non-proficient weighting, I feel this is a reactive manner in which to address student performance. Some see this as a means to reward schools who struggle in getting students to do well on the state assessments. I currently could support the removal of this weighting.

Senate Education Committee
Date 3-12-13
Attachment 5

Representative Allan Rothlisberg told me at a meeting of the House Education Budget Committee that we should not just whine about what the legislature is trying to do but we should provide suggestions to address the issues and concerns we have. Although I don't feel I was whining, I do feel making recommendations is important.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SB 224

1. Add the funds needed to insure that at-risk weighting does not need to be prorated. This would make sure there are sufficient funds to address students who test non-proficient. This would allow for the removal of the non-proficient weighting.

2. Do not remove the bilingual weighting prior to evaluating the cost to serve this group of students. If the cost is less than the current weighting provides, then it could be decreased by that amount but do not eliminate it completely. Although this does not directly impact my district, there are many districts that have this need.

3. Adjust the weighting on vocational programs based on a cost analysis of implementation of programs. For example a welding program is more costly than a business program. I would suggest weighting for vocational programs that are determined to be a high investment program with specialized equipment like agriculture, welding, mechanics, construction, etc.

4. This bill should also have a default that only permits these changes in weightings to occur if the base is at or above the statutory level of $4,492 and LOB equalization is fully funded without proration being needed. A default back to the original weightings would automatically take place if the BSAPP falls below $4,492 and/or proration of the LOB is required.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to SB 224

Respectfully,

Dr. George Griffith, Superintendent USD#208

Trego County USD #208 Fiscal notes

Current 2012-13 Budget Numbers				
Enrollment (Head Count)*	366.3	3838	$	1,405,859
Low Enrollment	169.1	3838	$	649,006
Vocational	4.2	3838	$	16,120
At-Risk	33.7	3838	$	129,341
Non-proficient	0.8	3838	$	3,070
Transportation	35.2	3838	$	135,098
Total FTE	**609.3**	**Total Budget**	**$**	**2,338,493**

* Kindergarten counted and .5 in Enrollment Head Count

Projected 2013-14 SB 224 with BSAPP =$4,492				
Enrollment (Head Count)*	366.3	4292	$	1,572,160
Low Enrollment	169.1	4292	$	725,777
Vocational	0	4292	$	0
At-Risk	33.7	4292	$	**99,802
Non-proficient	0	4292	$	0
Transportation	35.2	4292	$	151,078
Total FTE	**604.3**	**Total Budget**	$	**2,548,817**

Full Funded At-risk
$144,640

**Difference prorated by %31
$ (44,838)

* Kindergarten counted and .5 in Enrollment Head Count

Projected 2013-14 SB 224 with BSAPP = $3,838				
Enrollment (Head Count)*	366.3	3838	$	1405859
Low Enrollment	169.1	3838	$	649006
Vocational		3838	$	0
At-Risk	33.7	3838	$	**89245
Non-proficient		3838	$	0
Transportation	35.2	3838	$	135098
Total FTE	**604.3**	**Total Budget**	**$**	**2279208**

Full Funded At-risk
$129,340

** Difference prorated by %31
$ (40,095)

* Kindergarten counted and .5 in Enrollment Head Count

Impact of Change in Weighting			
Descriptor	**BSAPP**		**Difference**
Current BSAPP	3838	$	**0.00**
Current Weighting With Statutory BSAPP	4292	$	276622
SB224 with Prorated at-risk current BSAPP	3838	$	(59286)
SB224 with Prorated at-risk Statutory BSAPP	4292	$	210324