

Turner USD 202 is an urban/suburban district that is densely compacted into 17 square miles located in metropolitan Kansas City. There are approximately 3900 students and 600 employees that learn and work in Turner. Due to the last days of school, we are unable to physically testify at the Capitol, however, we wanted to voice our thoughts and concerns related to HB 2410 as amended and sent to the Senate Select Committee on Education Finance.

The bill has a promising structure to provide a suitable and equitable system to finance Kansas Public Schools and the education of the children we are entrusted with. We do, however, feel that the funding proposed is insufficient to meet the Rose Standards and pass muster during the Supreme Court review. There has been unnecessary delay in putting together a plan to raise and distribute funds for Kansas Public School students. Continued delays put summer programs for students at risk. If the school finance bill is found to not be sufficient by the Kansas Supreme Court, a shutdown of schools across the state would be devastating. During the month of July, a shutdown would impact summer maintenance activities causing delays in necessary repairs and additional costs that could impact opening of school in August.

Specifically, USD 202 believes:

The Local Excellence Budget is dis-equalizing and only of benefit to districts that have a high assessed valuation per pupil and the ability to generate more funding than those districts with high at-risk population enrollments.

Increasing at-risk funding is a positive benefit that directly impacts students and supports outcomes related to the Rose Standards.

Increasing funding for Kindergarten from .5 to 1.0 will greatly benefit districts around the state. In Turner, the board of education has believed that all-day kindergarten was so important to providing a solid foundation for students that they have been forced to fund the program locally. State support of full-time kindergarten would continue to go toward providing primary students with strong foundational experiences. Every dollar spent early in a student's career can save substantial costs in remediation later.

Finally, Turner believes that individual education plan teams who are comprised of parents and staff are best equipped to make educational decisions related to the student. The idea of a physician, psychologist, or clinical social worker prescribing applied behavior analysis therapy without consultation or involvement of the local individual education plan team is disjointed and potentially harmful to the student and their overall educational program. Kansas schools have a strong system in place to provide appropriate goals and the necessary learning activities.

Douglas B Powers

Assistant Superintendent of Business and Public Relations

Turner USD 202