

BRUCE GIVENS
SENATOR, 14TH DISTRICT
1525 COUNTRY CLUB RD
EL DORADO, KS 67042



STATE CAPITOL
TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612
(785) 296-7678

TOPEKA
SENATE CHAMBER

TO: Senate Committee on School Finance
FROM: Bruce Givens
May 19, 2017

RE: Specific items in SB 251

As most of you know, I have been a special education administrator since 1984. My expertise is working with principals and superintendents is providing special services to students that are eligible for special education (in Kansas, this includes Gifted).

I have been President of the Kansas Association of Special Education Administrators and served on various funding committees over the years. I do not know when Kansas adopted the current funding model for special education, but it has changed very little since 1984. In the mid-1980's a change was made to paraeducator funding. In the early 1990's after a special committee studied numerous special education funding possibilities (I served on this task force) a new issue entitled "catastrophic funding" was put into law. In 2010, I led a group of special education directors in recommending significant changes the "catastrophic funding" piece.

I have several statements or issues that I would to address:

1. There is a major difference between on-line learning and virtual learning. Nearly every school in Kansas has the resources of on-line learning. There are as many programs as there are counties in Kansas. Special education day schools use on-line learning as well as most high schools. This adds to the programing for special education students in the secondary setting. This leads to my question – how is \$5,000 per FTE of virtual learning reasonably calculated?
2. Current Kansas Statute states that special education funding should be 92% of "excess cost." With the proposed 12 million to special education – please show your work and describe how that amount will still be significantly below 92% excess cost.
3. Using the standard of "reasonably calculated" – how is it reasonable to fund special education in the same distribution formula has it has been the past approximately 40 years? I will present a plan that would distribute the additional 12 million in a different manor. The revisors are working on the language, but I will share a printout prepared by KSDE. Any changes to the

current method will create winners and losers in Kansas. My plan would not harm any USD or special education provider such as cooperatives and interlocals.

4. The lower quartile of Kansas students includes significant numbers of special education included in that group. You have heard that not all at-risk students are in the lower 25 percentile. Not all special education students are in the lower 25 percentile as well. In Kansas, over 13 percent of the K-12 population are individuals with a disability. I would think that since this is over half of the population that the Kansas Supreme Court wants addressed, more emphasis could be placed on this group.

I look forward to a healthy discussion.