

**Testimony on FY 2012 Education Budget
Senate Ways and Means Subcommittee on the Department of Education**

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The mission of United School Administrators of Kansas (USA|Kansas), through collaboration of member associations, is to serve, support, and develop educational leaders and to establish USA|Kansas as a significant force to improve education. I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you regarding **K-12 education funding for FY 2012**.

Accountability for preparing students for post-secondary education and the workforce has never been higher. At both the federal and state levels, Kansas has supported policies that increase expectations for student performance and establish rigorous goals for student outcomes. For example:

- **No Child Left Behind (NCLB)** demands that 100 percent of our students demonstrate proficiency in math and language arts by 2014 – this includes our at-risk, special education, and non-English speaking students. The State Accountability Plan, approved by the U.S. Department of Education, establishes benchmarks that increase annually.
- **Common Core Standards.** Kansas is one of forty-one states that has adopted these more rigorous standards. The Common Core standards are designed to be relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our students need for success in college and the workforce. The State Department of Education (KSDE) is currently rewriting state standards for math and language arts and will be phasing in new state assessments over the next three years. This will require new textbook adoptions, instructional support materials and professional development.
- **Qualified Admissions.** The Kansas State Board of Regents recently amended the Qualified Admissions criteria and, effective this Fall, high school freshman will be required to meet additional math requirements prior to graduation.

While the economy has faltered and K-12 education funding has decreased, performance expectations and school accountability have continued to increase. In a Legislative Post Audit study, there was a nearly one-to-one correlation between increased education funding and increased student performance. This is due to the ability to invest in a high-quality workforce and in research-based programs that are proven to be successful in supporting students with the greatest needs.

K-12 Education Funding

As you deliberate on the FY 2012 budget, administrators encourage you to consider the impact additional cuts would have on the education workforce and on our children. In a Legislative Post Audit study, there was a nearly one-to-one correlation between increased education funding and increased student performance. This is due to the ability to invest in a high-quality workforce and in research-based programs that are proven to be successful in supporting students with the greatest needs. Administrators believe that this is especially important as we prepare our students for a global, competitive workforce.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and State Stabilization Funds will not be available in FY 2012. The Governor's budget recommends additional spending reductions, replacing only part of the federal Recovery Act grants with State General Fund support.

The **Base State Aid Per Pupil (BSAPP)** will likely be reduced from \$4,012 to \$3,937 in the current fiscal year, based on the Governor's recommendation. The Governor has further recommended that the BSAPP be reduced another \$157, to \$3,780, in FY 2012. This would represent a cumulative decrease of \$232 on the BSAPP in FY 2011 and FY 2012 and would be \$792 below the current statutory requirement of \$4,492 per pupil. We are concerned that these additional cuts will further negate the work districts have done to ensure a quality education for each child and are not sustainable over time.

While we appreciate the Governor's proposed increase of \$129.3 million in FY 2012, it is important to note that those funds are directed to KPERs, capital improvement and special education.

Special education funding

Administrators recognize the importance of supporting those students with special needs and challenges. USAKansas supports the Governor's request to increase **special education funding** in FY 2012. However, we also believe that funding the ARRA maintenance of effort requirement in FY 2011 is absolutely necessary to avoid penalties in future years. Our belief is that the Kansas children are better served if those funds are not sent to Washington, D.C. and instead support programs and services here.

Local Option Budget

The Governor's budget recommendation does not increase the state aid for the Local Option Budget (LOB). As a result, any LOB increases will impact the pro-ration. In FY 2011, the pro-ration is estimated at 91-92%. In FY 2012, we expect that will decrease to approximately 88-89%. Administrators believe that continued equalization of the LOB is extremely important given the significant variance in the value of a mill across the state.

Unfunded mandates and burdensome administrative functions

As new initiatives and opportunities arise, administrators encourage the Legislature to consider whether these initiatives enhance student learning, are more *effective* in achieving the desired outcome and whether there are sufficient new resources to support implementation and delivery. We strongly encourage you to oppose any new mandate that increases district administrative costs without commensurate reimbursement.

Suitable Education and State Spending

Although administrators believe the current funding formula is sound, we recognize that there is a lot interest in discussing how education is funded and in defining “suitable education.” *Administrators across the state are committed to working with you. USA!Kansas supports working collaboratively to define a suitable provision for finance* that ensures Kansas students receive a quality education that helps them reach their potential and become successful, productive citizens.

We further support long-term planning for school finance to create stability and allow for the efficiencies and effectiveness that can be gained through advanced planning.

The education workforce

Finally, as districts have repeatedly cut budgets, administrators across the state have worked to maximize resources, create efficiencies and identify innovative solutions. Districts have sought first to make reductions in administrative functions and non-instructional services, but **all changes impact students and their families either directly or indirectly**. The elimination of programs and support services will result in reductions to the workforce and the opportunities available to students.

Beyond the most immediate impact in the classroom, workforce reductions in K-12 education impact local communities across Kansas. K-12 education is a major workforce and economic driver in Kansas. From the district and building level personnel to contracted vendors, these individuals support local economies in many ways, whether it be supporting local retail or contributing to the tax base. In some of our small communities, with limited employment options, these individuals and families will relocate entirely – having a devastating, long-term impact on local communities.

Recent personnel reports by the Kansas State Department of Education indicate that certified personnel decreased by approximately 818 Full Time Equivalents (FTE) between 2009-2010 and 2010-2011. Noncertified personnel have decreased by approximately 844 FTE between 2009-2010 and 2010-2011. In total, the K-12 education workforce has eliminated more than 1,600 FTE through attrition and elimination of positions.

Administrators recognize that there are many competing interests for the same limited dollars every year and that all Kansans have been called to sacrifice in this economic climate. K-12 education funding, representing a large percentage of the general fund budget, has decreased

significantly since 2009. As you consider the FY 2012 budget, educational leaders hope that you recognize all the progress Kansas students have made. Kansans have been called upon to compromise and work together for the common good of the State. We remain committed to working with you, in partnership, to support Kansas students and the communities we serve.