

Testimony before the
Senate Education Committee

on

SB 386

by

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Testimony provided on behalf of the USA-Kansas and Kansas School Superintendents Association

Madam Chair and members of the committee:

Our organizations stand neutral to this bill as it is presented today.

We are a strong proponent for school districts using their current year audited enrollment to determine local and state aid. Our organizations opposed the elimination of using the current year enrollment for BASE aid when the current law was established just six short years ago, but it was augured by the legislature that delayed payment was necessary to manage the state budget for better accountability of the actual dollars needed to fund K-12 education.

Today it's for the same reason we stand neutral to this bill. Removing access to the second previous enrollment count leaves a number of school districts without an opportunity to appropriately roll back expenses and plan for their future. School Boards in districts that are facing a declining enrollment have been able to reduce spending and plan and appropriately minimize the impact on student learning.

We have identified a couple of options:

1. Leave in the previous two year look back, plus allow districts to use current enrollment to determine a districts base aid.
2. Allow districts to use an average of the two prior years as an alternative to only the previous year; (or)
3. For the 2025 budget phase in the single prior year, allow districts to use either of the two previous years, giving districts a year to find the appropriate reductions without disrupting the educational integrity of the district. Moving forward without a phase-in

alternative could cause districts to make up two years of lost enrollment in a single budget year. In the 2026 budget year all districts would move to use either the current year or previous year enrollment.

In addition to the enrollment count:

Page 4 of the bill, lines 19-22, forces school districts to use current enrollment numbers if a school building is closed. In most cases these districts are already in an enrollment decline and are attempting to reduce spending. The only way to reduce significant spending is through closing schools or reducing personnel. This language is contradictory to providing the best educational opportunity for all students and being fiscally responsible with the resources provided to our districts. When districts make the difficult choice to close a school attendance center it doesn't go without a great deal of local conversation, but when local school boards make that decision, it doesn't make sense that the state would punish the district for losing enrollment and making the best financial decision for the local school district. I would think the legislature would be encouraging of closing the less than efficient attendance centers. We would encourage the committee to remove this language from the bill.