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Senate Education Committee
Testimony on Senate Bill 131

February 18, 2013

Chairman Abrams and Members of the Committee,

    I am Stuart Little, representing the Shawnee Mission School District, located in Johnson County. I appear today in support of Senate Bill 131. Shawnee Mission is the state's third largest school district with 27,443 students enrolled in 2012-13. We are like all other school districts in Kansas that have adjusted to declining state financial support. We have been reducing teachers and administrators, increasing class size, and closing schools in the last three years. We are very aware of the challenges you face at the state. We are managing the reductions in funding in our schools and our patrons are noticing the impact of budget cuts on the education their children receive. Senate Bill 131 is one measure that can help us manage this current budget crisis.

    Senate Bill 131 will allow us to expand the uses of our capital outlay funds beyond the current statutory limitations. We currently levy the maximum allowable mill levy of 8 mills. The bill presents some challenges for us as we have substantial existing needs to maintain our large facilities, many of which are aging and require continual maintenance. We are responsible for maintaining 33 elementary, five middle, five high schools, and nine support facilities that exist to provide operational and educational services. Nonetheless, Senate Bill 131 provides us some greater flexibility to appropriately manage our financial resources in the most efficient manner possible. Senate Bill 131 supports and expands recent legislative initiatives to provide better local funding flexibility in the absence of any additional state support

    We support your efforts to consider this bill and other options to adjust and manage the school finance formula more efficiently and fairly for all students in Kansas.

    I would be happy to stand for questions at the appropriate time.

Senate Education Committee
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