

Testimony before the Joint Meeting of House Committee on Appropriations and
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

by

Judith Deedy of **Game On for Kansas Schools**

June 23, 2016

Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to communicate our concerns regarding funding the Gannon equity remedy. [Game on for Kansas Schools](#) is a nonpartisan grassroots effort among Kansans who share a belief in high-quality public education as a right of all Kansas students. We advocate for Kansas public schools to ensure our teachers, principals, superintendents, and school board members have the resources necessary to deliver quality education to all Kansas students. We inform communities across the state about issues and legislation affecting their students.

As there is no bill before us, we submit this testimony to share our perspective and convey our hopes for this special session. We ask that you act quickly to comply with the Supreme Court's latest decision in the equity portion of the Gannon case. We respectfully request that you keep the special session focused on this one urgent issue and avoid adding education policy provisions, or constitutional amendments as you draft the bill.

We know that over the past several years, this legislature and designated efficiency committees have received a great deal of funding information from the Kansas Department of Education, school district employees and school board members. The Gannon court record also includes a great deal of data on funding needs in our schools. We've learned that educating 460,000 children over 82,000 square miles is a complicated and expensive endeavor. It is also essential. Our children are our most valuable natural resource, and our public schools are our strongest driver of economic growth. We must continue to invest in them.

We acknowledge that revenue in our state continues to fall below estimates and that you find yourselves facing difficult choices. We believe a suitable solution can be found, one that achieves equity and minimizes the harmful impacts on Kansas students. Once that has been accomplished, we hope that our legislators will continue working to create a new school funding formula based on the reality of what it truly costs to prepare our children to be educated citizens who can lead our state into economic prosperity. Please rely upon the experts in our communities and ensure that we have the revenue necessary to meet the educational needs of our children.

Thank you.

Senate Ways and Means Committee
Date: 06/23/2016
Attachment #: 8