



Testimony before the House Education Budget Committee  
in **SUPPORT** of  
**House Bill 2270 – Creating the education finance act.**  
by  
**Game On for Kansas Schools**  
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Erin Gould, Member  
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Mr. Chair, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 2270.

Game On for Kansas Schools is a nonpartisan, grassroots advocacy 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 education funding and policy issues and legislation affecting our students. The Game On team includes members representing the spectrum of education stakeholders (parents, educators, and other community advocates), and our membership extends statewide.

As parents, we have seen the impact of budget cuts over the past several years. Kindergartners in 2008 are now sophomores in high school. Their entire educational career has been subject to inadequate funding that undermine their opportunities. At the same time, we are told how vital it is for them to get a strong education if they are going to compete and succeed in the 21st century. Our children need a funding formula that is adequate, fair and predictable so their districts can develop and maintain meaningful programs that advance educational outcomes, and give them a real chance to compete and succeed as adults. We oppose the continued use of block grants, and we urge the legislature to adopt a new formula this year. Our children have waited too long for improvements in the funding levels of their schools.

We acknowledge that this formula is quite similar to the formula we had. We note, though, that school finance formulas nationwide typically start with a foundational amount and then add funding to address certain other needs. This formula reflects that reality. We appreciate that this formula is student-based. It fixes several flaws in our old formula, and makes changes that will help our schools meet the needs of their students and deliver a quality education. We are especially pleased to see that the new formula:

- Begins with a reasonable per-pupil foundational funding amount
- Provides a clear mechanism for ensuring reasonable future funding
- Stabilizes the assessed valuation per pupil
- Adds funding certainty by utilizing prior-year headcounts
- Funds at-risk education and full-time kindergarten
- Restores funding for special education and at-risk 4-year-old preschool.

We are also pleased to see that this formula avoids tying funding to achievement, which would be inappropriate due to the difficulty or impossibility of eliminating the effects of external factors.

We have some concern whether the CPI incorporated into this formula will adequately address the rising costs faced by districts, which are particularly affected by rising employee-related costs such as health care costs. We also understand our state's current economic reality. We hope the efficiencies incorporated by our schools over the past decade, coupled with the improvements made by this formula, will allow this formula to deliver an education that meets the needs of our students, families, and communities, and a budget that works for our state, but we have some reservations regarding the total funding in this bill.

Overall, we believe that the formula proposed in this bill is a meaningful step in the right direction. We appreciate the effort our legislature is making this year to address the issue of funding for schools in a thoughtful, transparent way. We are grateful for the opportunity to participate in the development process and to share our thoughts.