

Pratt Unified School District No. 382

small schools, **BIG OPPORTUNITIES**



Suzan Patton, Superintendent • David Schmidt, Curriculum Director
Bill Bergner, President • Brian Schrag, Vice-President
Mark Fincham • Chris Drake • Bill Skaggs • Jennifer Hopkins • Donna Hoener-Queal
Linda Kumberg, Clerk • Diana Albers, Treasurer • Donna Whiteman, KASB Attorney

DATE: May 18, 2017

TO: **Members of the Senate Select Committee on School Finance:**
Senator Jim Denning; Chairperson; Senator Carolyn McGuinn, Vice-Chair; Senator Anthony Hensley, Ranking Minority Member; Senator Molly Baumgardner, Senator Barbara Bollier, Senator Bud Estes, Senator Dan Goddard, Senator Dan Kerschen, and Senator Pat Pettay.

FROM: Suzan Patton, Superintendent, Pratt USD 382

RE: Opposition Testimony to SUB HB 2410

On behalf of the 1,204 students and 200 employees of the Pratt School District, I want to voice my opposition to SUB HB 2410 regarding two critical components of this bill. While there are many items I fully support, I must raise opposition to the major items that will keep us from successfully serving the students and employees of our district and state.

First, the most glaring item in this bill is the \$4006 in State Foundation Aide. If you look at the history of Base State Aid Per Pupil (BSAPP), you will see that \$4006 is not an adequate amount to fund a student's education in 2018. Below is a table that provides a short history of BSAPP:

| | |
|---------|---------|
| 2006-07 | \$4,316 |
| 2007-08 | \$4,374 |
| 2008-09 | \$4,400 |
| 2009-10 | \$4,012 |
| 2010-11 | \$3,937 |
| 2011-12 | \$3,780 |
| 2012-13 | \$3,838 |
| 2013-14 | \$3,838 |
| 2014-15 | \$3,852 |
| 2015-16 | \$3,852 |

As illustrated, the BSAPP in 2008-2009 was \$4,400. Eight years later, Sub HB 2410 proposes \$4,006 to be sufficient to provide an education for students entering the workforce in 2018. With \$4,006 as a baseline, the small incremental increases will not provide adequate resources to educate those graduating in 2022 or 2029. In our district alone, utility costs have increased by \$20,000. Our property insurance

increases around \$8,000 per year, and that is based on a competitive bidding process. Health insurance costs for the district increase from 5-7% each year. Our special education assessment increases 15-19% each year, while the amount of aide from the state remains static. Fuel costs, textbooks, and technology have increased at a rate greater than the BSAPP.

In addition, we are at the mercy of spikes and declines in our county valuation. Much of Pratt's economy is based on farming, oil, and gas. Our sensitivity to local taxpayers keeps us from drastically raising taxes, yet our desire to hire the best teachers to prepare our students to be happy, employed, tax-paying citizens is severely challenged with the current and proposed State Foundation Aid. As a result, the BSAPP is critical to our ability to meet the Rose Standards. The BSAPP, or State Foundation Aid, must keep up with inflation and must at least start at the 2008-09 base of \$4,400.

The second item I oppose is the proposed "scarcity weighting" for year two of the proposed formula. The current high/low density weighting is far superior to a revised formula. In order to comply with the Rose Standards, it is incumbent upon the legislature to maintain this weighting. I urge you to reconsider and maintain the current method for high/low density weighting.

I commend you for increasing at-risk weighting and paying for all day kindergarten. Many items in this bill give us the ability to successfully operate our school district and allow us to address major challenges for our students; however, you must increase the State Foundation Aid to meet the economic realities of operating a school district in 2018, not 2004 or 2005.