



Schools for Quality Education

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Senate Select Committee on Education Finance

Senate Bill 44

Submitted by

**Dr. Kelly Arnberger, Superintendent/Elementary Principal, USD 482
Dighton, a member of Schools for Quality Education**

Chair Baumgardner and committee members. Thank you for taking the time to consider my testimony in favor of **Senate Bill 44**. There are many issues facing our citizens who reside in rural Kansas and it goes without saying that the future of our local schools is at the top of the list. We appreciate your efforts during the last legislative session to rectify the inequity and inadequacy of the school finance formula. We also appreciate this legislation that will allow school districts throughout the state to eliminate a major concern and spend their time planning approaches to better educating their students.

At Dighton USD 482, we have utilized the renewed state's financial support to address a variety of issues and we look forward to even more progress in the future once the court case is finally resolved.

During the last three years, we have accomplished the following:

Raised our base teaching salary from \$31,151 to \$33,000. Our plan over the next three years will be to increase the base by \$750 to \$1000 per year.

We have been able to hold our local property taxes steady due to the increase in state aid while enduring declines in our assessed valuations.

We have also launched our District Redesign that allows us to better meet the needs of our students. This includes providing a flexible schedule at the high school level, starting a project based learning academy, providing real work experiences off campus, and providing a personalized learning platform for students in grades 7-9 so that they will be able to possess the habits of success and cognitive skills to ensure their final three years of high school will truly prepare them for post-secondary success.

"Rural is Quality"

Our elementary school embraces care and concern for the social-emotional needs of each student, recognizes each child learns differently, and at a different pace, and most importantly, is committed to helping students utilize their foundational skills in reading, writing, and math to pursue their curiosity and creativity.

To move forward confidently, our district must rely on the valuable resources that state aid provides as we continue in our mutual work to improve the learning experiences of our children.

We are not here to ask for what we have done without for so long, but rather, we are here to ask the legislature to now complete the task and help us provide for a system that will ensure equity and adequacy for the long term. For the first time in a decade, with the passage of **Senate Bill 44**, we will be able to look forward to embracing future opportunities without the fear of having to revert to obsolete methods due to a lack of resources.

Thank you for the opportunity to visit with you and your committee.

Respectfully,

Kelly Arnberger
Superintendent/Elementary Principal
USD 482 Dighton