

Proponent, written testimony before the
Senate Select Committee on Education Finance

on

**SB 44 - Appropriations for the department of education for FY 2019, 2020 and 2021;
increasing BASE aid for certain school years; continuing 20 mill statewide levy for schools
and exempting certain portion of property used for residential purposes from such levy.**

by

Gail Jamison,

President, Goddard Advocates for Public Education

February 6, 2019

Madam Chairwoman, Members of the Committee:

In my volunteer role as President of the Goddard Advocates for Public Education, a group of nonpartisan parent, district and community members, I speak as a proponent of SB 44. I am a parent of Goddard District graduates, an active education volunteer and a former USD 265 Board of Education President. I value education and support a constitutionally funded school finance system for the students of Kansas.

In January, the Goddard Advocates for Public Education and fifteen other parent groups from across Kansas, united in a statement of support for our public schools and the children our schools serve.

The message was clear; we have been encouraged by the actions of 2017 and 2018 Legislatures that stabilized the state budget and allowed for increased funding for our schools after years of cuts and freezes.

The increases have resulted in positive improvements in our children's education.

These improvements can be seen in smaller class sizes, the restoration of lost positions that support our children and increased salaries for our hard-working teachers. With adequate financial support, Kansas schools will be able to better compete with other states in salaries; address the special challenges that keep some students from realizing their potential, from poverty to dyslexia; improve the health and safety of students; and prepare more students with the skills they need to prosper and fill the jobs Kansas needs to thrive. We are confident that our schools are finally beginning to move ahead again in ways that we have not seen since the 2006 Montoy resolution and in ways that will pay off for the children in our schools today.

Parents encourage our state officials to work in a bipartisan effort to address the Supreme Court's June 2018 decision. I urge this committee to support SB 44, which includes a funding solution that addresses the inflation factor as noted by the Court and recommended by the Kansas State Board of Education.

Moving forward with a solution to restore a constitutional school funding formula that is both adequate and equitable could result in a timely decision from the Court to approve the Legislature's action. This critical legal issue could be resolved, putting the school funding litigation behind us, and restoring the constitutional rights for our children and their education.

For these reasons, I urge members of the committee to support SB 44.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.