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Testimony of Mr. Keith A. Mispagel, Superintendent of Schools Fort Leavenworth Unified School District 207

- Good afternoon Madam Chairman (Representative Lana Gordon), Members of the House Education Budget Committee – On behalf of the Fort Leavenworth Community and Board of Education, I would like to thank you for your kind attention to our request to successfully pass HB2439.
- The Fort Leavenworth School District, USD 207, is responsible for the education of approximately 2,000 military dependent children each year.
- Approximately 45% of those children are family members of military officers attending the Army's Command and General Staff College (CGSC), a class of approximately 1,400 majors from all military branches, and some 100 international officers from around the world (from over 50 countries). [The international and liaison officers' children make up the majority of our ESL program, which has nearly 90 school age students representing over 25 languages.]
- Until 2006, this postgraduate college course normally convened each year in August and terminated in June. It is a 10-month course focused on leadership, doctrine, and tactics.
- Current world events have had a direct impact on the number of military officers attending the Command and General Staff College. The Army continues to have a goal to send every major to the Command and General Staff College. A second course was added in 2006, which begins in February and graduates in December. It is anticipated this course will continue indefinitely.
- Because of the nature and length of the class, a majority of the officers bring their families and secure housing either on Fort Leavenworth or in the surrounding communities.



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- As you may be aware, USD 207 has an annual student turnover rate of approximately 50%. With a 93% student turnover rate every three years, it is a rare event when a student can claim to have completed Kindergarten through 9th grade at our district.
- According to recent research provided by Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC), “Two million American children have been affected by the challenges of military deployment since 2001. For most this includes repetitive separation from parents and other loved ones, and for many it includes learning to live in the ‘new normal’ necessitated by injury, illness, and loss”.
- We told you in previous testimony that we did not know what the long-term impact of this mid-year influx of students would be. I am here to report that, due to your continued support of the military second count, our staff and faculty have been able to meet this challenge. Even when we have added between a low of 153 students (2007) to a high of 207 students (2009) [and most recently 205 students this year to date] from September 21st to the middle of February.
- We know, that because of your support, we have succeeded in addressing this mid-year student volatility, as evidenced by our continued success in Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), as mandated by No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Not only have we met AYP every year in every building and as a district, we have continued to grow to new levels in meeting the prestigious Standard of Excellence Awards. Please refer to the attached progress chart.
- This has not occurred by chance. Planning for mid-year student turnover must take place far in advance of their arrival. Prior to August and the new school year, teachers and staff need to be in place and supplies ordered. A good example of the necessary pre-planning lies in projected student-teacher ratio in August. This current school year, with a school enrollment that is 40+ students lower than last



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year, I hired 4 additional classroom teachers in August (4 days before the first day of school) due to an influx of students moving in to one housing area on Fort Leavenworth. This is an effort to keep class sizes from starting the year at 26 or 27 students per teacher at specific grade levels, as well as allowing for the unpredictable enrollment surge in December/January with the mid-year CGSC class. This speaks to our need to prepare for the unknown. Not only do we prepare for the unknown need in the staffing realm, but also in services provided that include but are not limited to special education needs, transportation, food service, and technology. With each area we also must address resources needed including everything office supplies to textbooks, workbooks, and other consumables.

- Continuation of the second count date will allow us to accommodate the expected near term growth and the expenditures generated in anticipation of that growth.
- Lastly, please consider that USD 207 has the smallest tax base in the state. Our total 2010-2011 valuation per pupil was \$1,205. More interestingly, the next lowest district has a valuation of \$12,304 per pupil. With the Governor's proposed funding formula for education, there is discussion from other districts about the potential for raising the mill levy to generate additional tax revenue. With USD 207 having such a small tax base, we are unable to generate sufficient revenue through taxation. The Military Second Count provides additional budget authority to address the frequent mid-year student enrollment and all costs associated with this unpredictable fluctuation.
- During a recent visit by a senior army spouse the comment was shared, "I was recently at a high-level army function in Virginia in which we were talking about school district's across the army. Fort Leavenworth School District was ranked as one of the best in the country for the education and services it provides our military children".
- It is our desire and intent to continue to provide a top-quality education for our military children while they are in Kansas. We recognize the sacrifice our soldiers



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make to protect our country, and the hardships this places on mobile military families to include multiple deployments of one or both parents, frequent moves, and the need for resiliency from duty station to duty station on the part of each family member. The successful passing of HB2439 as it is written, provides the necessary support for our dedicated military families.

- Kansas is well recognized among all branches of the military as a very friendly military state. Thank you for your continued support.
- I would like to publicly thank Representative Goodman and Representative Fawcett for introducing HB2439 in support of military children.

To each of you, thank you for your time, efforts, and support of our military families in Kansas.

Very Respectfully,

Keith Mispagel
Superintendent of Schools
USD 207 Fort Leavenworth

Student Assessment Information

- Accredited by the State of Kansas
- North Central Association (NCA) Accredited
- Met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as mandated by No Child Left Behind (NCLB) since its inception into Law in 2002.

<u>Year</u>	<u>KS Districts/Schools Missing AYP</u>
2010	82/166
2011	77/129

<u>School Year</u>	<u>Standard of Excellence Awards Achieved</u>	<u>Standard of Excellence Awards Possible</u>	<u>Percentage Achieved</u>
2005/2006 SY	17	36	47%
2006/2007 SY	32	40	80%
2007/2008 SY	36	44	82%
2008/2009 SY	36	44	82%
2009/2010 SY	37	40	93%
2010/2011 SY	43	44	98%

The Goal of All Kansas Districts is to Meet AYP...their ceiling. AYP is our Floor.
 Our District Goal is to Achieve Standard of Excellence as our Ceiling.

District Enrollment Summary as of 09/20/2011

Schools	Grades	Enrollment			
		(05-06)	(06-07)	(07-08)	(08-09) (09-10) (10-11) (11-12)
Bradley	K-6	393	413	398	380 559 529 558
Eisenhower	K-6	505	521	539	501 530 535 492
MacArthur	K-6	365	389	411	505 449 528 536
<u>Patton Jr. High</u>	<u>7-9</u>	<u>366</u>	<u>396</u>	<u>352</u>	<u>386 415 403 371</u>
Total Enrollment		1,629	1,719	1,700	1,772 1,953 1,995 1,957