

Approved: 3.16.10
Date

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Clay Aurand at 9:00 a.m. on February 25, 2010, in Room 711 of the Docking State Office Building.

All members were present.

Committee staff present:

Theresa Kiernan, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Amanda Nguyen, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Sharon Wenger, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Dale Dennis, Kansas State Department of Education
Janet Henning, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

Representative Steve Lukert
Representative Clay Aurand
Representative Bill Otto
Tom Krebs, Kansas Association of School Boards
Jim Runge, Superintendent, USD 393 Solomon
John Fast, Superintendent/Elementary Principal, USD 411 Goessell
Carl Helm, Superintendent, USD 401 Chase/Raymond
Linda Kenne, Superintendent, USD 432 Victoria
Rex Bollinger, Superintendent, USD 111 Doniphan West
Mike Newman, Superintendent, USD 406 Wathena and USD 486 Ellwood

Written testimony:

Kent Eckles, Vice President of Government Affairs, Kansas Chamber
Robert Loftin, President, Schools for Quality Education
Chris Vignery, Superintendent, USD 426 Pike Valley
Alan Jamison, Superintendent/Secondary Principal, USD 360 Caldwell
Glennis Zimmerman, Board of Education member USD 509 South Haven
John Showman, Superintendent, USD 509 South Haven
Deborah J. Hamm, Superintendent, USD 358 Oxford
Beth Reust, Superintendent, USD 270 Plainville
Dr. Julie Dolley, Superintendent, USD 359 Argonia

HB 2627 - School districts; consolidation of three or more districts into two districts

Chairman Aurand opened the hearing on **HB 2627** and told Committee members the bill was introduced by Representative Lukert. The Committee was told that when they hear **HB 2627**, they should know it is not an exempt bill, however, the contents are also in **HB 2704**.

Theresa Kiernan gave overviews of **HB 2627** and **HB 2704** to Committee members.

Representative Lukert spoke to Committee members as a proponent of **HB 2627**. Representative Lukert told Committee members that under current law, school districts do not have the authority to divide a district and consolidate with more than one other district. He further related that in his district, there are several communities within the same school district and for consolidation purposes, would like to, at least, have the option of going in different directions. He explained that this bill would allow three or more districts to consolidate into two districts. (Attachment 1)

A question and answer session followed the presentation.

Tom Krebs, Kansas Association of School Boards, told Committee members that remarks from their organization would follow the presentations for **HB 2704**.

Written testimony was received from Kent Eckles, Vice President of Government Affairs, Kansas Chamber of Commerce as a proponent of **HB 2627**. (Attachment 2)

CONTINUATION SHEET

Minutes of the House Education Committee at 9:00 a.m. on February 25, 2010, in Room 711 of the Docking State Office Building.

Chairman Aurand then closed the hearing on HB 2627.

HB 2704 - School districts; low enrollment weighting in districts have an area of less than 200 square miles

Chairman Aurand opened the hearing on HB 2704.

Representative Lukert also spoke to Committee members in opposition of HB 2704. Representative Lukert told Committee members that his primary opposition to the bill is because one of the six school districts impacted by this bill is in his district, USD 451 in Baileyville. Representative Lukert gave several examples of accomplishments for USD 451 and also stated the school district has no current debt and has managed to put nearly a million dollars aside in its capital outlay fund, which ironically is hurting their cash flow right now. (Attachment 3)

Following a question and answer session, Representative Roth told Committee members that Representative Lukert was one of his most favorite, if not **the** most favorite representative in Topeka. Representative Roth requested his comments be recorded in the minutes as stated.

Chairman Aurand gave an explanation of HB 2704 to Committee members. He reminded them he had asked if they were interested in looking at what the Legislative Post Audit had done. He told Committee members that he did not want to get in the position of doing a forced consolidation, telling the schools that they could no longer exist even though they did not meet the original criteria of the 1960's. Chairman Aurand told Committee members that in essence, HB 2704 would amend the current school finance formula concerning the low enrollment weighting. If a school district is less than 200 square miles in area and has an enrollment of less than 400 students, the low enrollment weighting of the district would be calculated as if the district has 400 students. Provisions of this bill would take effect on July 1, 2012. (Attachment 4)

Jim Runge, Superintendent, USD 393 Solomon, spoke to Committee members in opposition of HB 2704. Mr. Runge told Committee members that research shows that rural districts and rural schools have superior performance in most all measures when compared to the large urban districts. He told Committee members the low enrollment cap proposal is simply unfair to rural children. It appears they are being selected out for extra cuts because they have relatively little political clout. He stated voluntary consolidation system is working and is the best approach to a very emotional issue. (Attachments 5 and 6)

Dr. John Fast, Superintendent, USD 411, spoke to Committee members in opposition of HB 2704. Dr. Fast told Committee members that Goessel is a small rural school district of 111 square miles and 265 students. The district has enjoyed tremendous support from the community and area churches. Dr. Fast told Committee members of many accomplishments of the students. (Attachment 7)

Carl Helm, Superintendent/Principal, Chase/Raymond USD 401, spoke to Committee members in opposition of HB 2704. Mr. Helm told Committee members that losing the schools in a district would have an affect on the towns of Chase and Raymond. He stated he believed there would be very little savings with this bill. (Attachment 8)

Linda Kenne, Superintendent, Victoria USD 432, spoke to Committee members in opposition of HB 2704. Ms. Kenne told Committee members they are a unique district and value the hometown atmosphere which has been created for their students. She stated their efforts have paid off with many achievements:

- AYP every year in every subject
- Standard of Excellence every year in many subjects
- Governor's Achievement Award for Victoria High School
- Eight-man State Football Championship two out of the last six years

Ms. Kenne advised their district has seen the budget authority shrink more and more over

CONTINUATION SHEET

Minutes of the House Education Committee at 9:00 a.m. on February 25, 2010, in Room 711 of the Docking State Office Building.

the last two years. She stated the bill would cause their district to lose an additional \$200,278 with a combined loss of \$414,691 over two years would be devastating to the district and town. She told Committee members that their students now have a face and should not have to become a number. She strongly urged the Committee to reject **HB 2704**. (Attachment 9)

Written testimony in opposition of **HB 2704** was received from the following:

Robert Loftin, President, Schools for Quality Education (Attachment 10)
Chris Vignery, Superintendent, USD 426 Pike Valley (Attachment 11)
Alan Jamison, Superintendent/Secondary Principal, USD 360 Caldwell (Attachment 12)
Glennis Zimmerman, Board of Education member USD 509 South Haven (Attachment 13)
John Showman, Superintendent, USD 509 South Haven (Attachment 14)
Deborah J. Hamm, Superintendent, USD 358 Oxford (Attachment 15)
Beth Reust, Superintendent, USD 270 Plainville (Attachment 16)
Dr. Julie Dolley, Superintendent, USD 359 Argonia (Attachment 17)

Rex Bollinger, Superintendent, USD 111 Doniphan West, spoke to Committee members in a neutral position of **HB 2704**. Mr. Bollinger told Committee members (Attachment 18)

Mike Newman, Superintendent, USD 406 Wathena and USD 486 Ellwood, spoke to Committee members in a neutral position of **HB 2704**. (Attachment 19)

Tom Krebs, KASB, spoke to Committee members and advised their organization was in opposition of **HB 2704**, however, a proponent of **HB 2627**. (Attachment 20)

Representative Otto gave an explanation of an amendment that he will offer if the Committee decides to work **HB 2704**. (Attachments 21 and 22)

A question and answer session followed the presentations.

Chairman Aurand closed the hearing on **HB 2704**.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:50 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled for March 2, 2010.

STATE OF KANSAS



TOPEKA

HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS
AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES
TAXATION
AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES
BUDGET

STEVE LUKERT

REPRESENTATIVE, 62ND DISTRICT

2420 ACORN RD.

SABETHA, KANSAS 66534

(785) 284-3623

CAPITOL BUILDING

TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612

(785) 296-7651

February 25, 2010

Chairman Aurand and members of the Education Committee, my name is Steve Lukert, and I am appearing as the sponsor and proponent of HB2627.

We have a number of small school districts in the 62nd district, who like many small districts are feeling extreme budget pressures and are exploring their options for future survival and possible consolidation opportunities.

Under current law school districts do not have the authority to divide a district and consolidate with more than one other district.

In my district we have several communities within the same school district and for consolidation purposes would like to at least have the option of going in different directions. This bill would allow three or more districts to consolidate into two districts.

I believe this bill would be a positive step toward consolidation efforts.

Thanks for your time and consideration.

Rep. Steve Lukert

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steve Lukert".

House Education Committee
Date 2-25-10
Attachment # 1



achieve
more

**Written Testimony before the House Education Committee
HB 2627 – Consolidation of School Districts
Submitted by J. Kent Eckles, Vice President of Government Affairs**

Thursday, February 25th, 2010

The Kansas Chamber of Commerce appreciates the opportunity to present testimony in favor of HB 2627, which would allow two or more school districts to discuss forming two consolidated unified school districts.

The Chamber's members remain concerned with the cost of doing business in the state, driven by the amount of local units of government (including school districts) and their associated costs, which increase pressure on the State's tax burden. As such, we support efforts to enable or encourage consolidation of local units of government and taxing entities.

Presently, Kansas ranks fifth among states with 3,931 total local governments. The Bureau of the Census reports that Kansas has 104 county governments (5th), 627 city governments (8th), 1,353 township governments (4th), 1,531 special districts (7th), and 294 school districts (16th).

This number of taxing entities and its associated costs is unsustainable on the Kansas population, which has not grown over the last several decades. Costs related school districts' expenditures for salaries and benefits as well as many duplicative services could be reduced through efficiencies achieved.

Such savings would make Kansas a more affordable and thus attractive place to do business and would assist in growing our tax base and revenue through adding new residents and employers.

We urge the Committee to pass favorably HB 2627.

The Kansas Chamber, with headquarters in Topeka, Kansas, is the leading statewide pro-business advocacy group moving Kansas towards becoming the best state in America to live and work. The Chamber represents small, medium, and large employers all across Kansas. Please contact me directly if you have any questions regarding this testimony.



835 SW Topeka Blvd. Topeka, KS 66612 785.357.1

House Education Committee
Date 2-25-10
Attachment # 2

STATE OF KANSAS



TOPEKA

HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES

February 25, 2010

STEVE LUKERT
REPRESENTATIVE, 62ND DISTRICT
2420 ACORN RD.
SABETHA, KANSAS 66534
(785) 284-3623

CAPITOL BUILDING
TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612
(785) 296-7651

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS
AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES
TAXATION
AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES
BUDGET

I am appearing today to oppose HB2704. My opposition is fairly well documented by now as I have taken an active role for the past two years against this same piece of legislation.

My primary opposition, of course, is based upon the fact that one of the six school districts impacted by this bill is in my district, USD 451 in Baileyville. I would take this position to support any small school in my district, but B & B High School in Baileyville would have to be considered by practically anyone's standards as a model for small schools throughout Kansas.

Some of you might remember last year when I invited the B & B football team to be introduced on the floor of the House. They had just won the 8-man division state football championship. However, that wasn't the primary reason I invited them. I wanted to point out what small schools had to offer. All but 3 boys on that squad made the honor roll. Most played in the band and were in the school play. I must admit I was really proud of the clean cut group of young men who stood behind me.

Not only has B&B High School competed for numerous state championships in athletics but two years ago was named by United States News and World Report as one of the elite small schools in the United States.

The final point I want to make is the enviable fiscal policy they have demonstrated. USD 451 has no current debt, and in fact, has managed to put nearly a million dollars aside in its capital outlay fund, which ironically, is hurting their cash flow right now.

I appreciate the efforts of Rep. Aurand and the education committee in their attempts at making our education system more cost effective. The fact that we have had this debate for the past 2 years has sent a message to our small schools and has initiated talks among neighboring districts.

However, I would ask "Is this high school one of the first ones we want to target to starve out of existence?" I would hope we would all ask that question.

Rep. Steve Lukert

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Lukert". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

House Education Committee
Date 2-25-10
Attachment # 3

	2/22/2010		Col 1	Col2	Col 3	Col 4
			2009-10			
USD			FTE Enroll	Total Adj.	Square	Difference
No.	County Name	USD Name	(inc MILT)	Enrollment	Miles	(Col 5 - Col 4)
401	Rice	Chase	139.5	141.0	196.0	-257,652
511	Harper	Attica	139.0	139.0	126.0	-256,851
359	Sumner	Argonia	179.5	186.5	174.0	-250,492
387	Wilson	Altoona-Midway	182.7	187.9	192.0	-249,568
283	Elk	Elk Valley	190.6	190.6	160.0	-247,901
451	Nemaha	B & B	186.5	193.0	107.0	-245,973
479	Anderson	Crest	224.5	224.5	177.0	-210,741
509	Sumner	South Haven	222.0	227.2	150.0	-207,068
354	Barton	Clafin	211.0	229.5	162.0	-203,314
360	Sumner	Caldwell	234.0	234.0	194.0	-195,989
369	Harvey	Burrton	237.2	245.7	95.0	-175,257
426	Republic	Pike Valley	248.0	253.5	194.8	-159,965
411	Marion	Goessel	257.5	257.5	111.2	-151,536
432	Ellis	Victoria	256.0	257.5	193.3	-151,536
456	Osage	Marais Des Cygnes	263.0	272.8	133.0	-116,278
486	Doniphan	Elwood	303.3	309.9	10.0	-38,032
454	Osage	Burlingame	317.0	333.8	74.0	-30,169
358	Sumner	Oxford	327.5	344.8	136.0	-25,947
429	Doniphan	Troy	348.5	346.0	95.0	-25,384
381	Ford	Spearville	358.0	358.0	182.0	-20,559
344	Linn	Pleasanton	323.0	360.5	92.5	-19,253
419	McPherson	Canton-Galva	374.0	379.3	167.5	-10,571
393	Dickinson	Solomon	372.0	389.6	187.5	-5,608
463	Cowley	Udall	364.0	390.2	140.0	-5,327
TOTALS			453,700.1	453,315.9	82,019.7	-3,260,968

House Education Committee
Date 2-25-10
Attachment # 4

Solomon Unified School District 393
113 East Seventh Street
Solomon, Kansas 67480
(785) 655 -2541
James Runge, Superintendent

February 23, 2010

To the House Education Committee:

Testimony in Opposition to HB 2704

My name is Jim Runge and I am, proudly, the superintendent of Solomon Public Schools in Solomon, Kansas. I came to Solomon four years ago because it is a rural district of excellent quality. If you are an educational leader in pursuit of educational excellence for all students small rural districts are the place to be. I hope you know the research shows that rural districts and rural schools have superior performance in most all measures when compared to the large urban districts; i.e. graduation rates, attendance, school violence measures, discipline incidents, test and assessment scores, etc. Solomon is no exception to this. It has invested in the future and has excellent facilities with a new first class high school constructed in 1996. The complex is insured for 16 million dollars. If one wishes to learn how to improve education in Kansas one need look no further than the rural district model with its personalized learning environment and community commitment to the value of education. Why would we want to go down the road of dismantling a successful educational model without a truly compelling reason? (Check with the SQE representative if you want data on rural school performance statewide and nationally.)

Now, to address the low enrollment cap proposal - in a nutshell this proposal is simply unfair to rural children. Frankly, it appears that they are being selected out for extra cuts because they have relatively little political clout.

(My following testimony will include some rhetorical questions, which I am not asking a response to, but request that you consider in your deliberations.)

- Low enrollment weighting was created by previous legislation because Kansas cared about rural children. The belief was that rural children deserved, as all Kansas children do, an adequate and suitable education. No doubt it costs more for children who "live in the sticks," but the legislators in the past said that all Kansas children count. The low enrollment-weighting index was put into the funding formula years ago after much study and deliberation. To change it now based on hunch and prejudice is legislatively irresponsible.
- Many of the districts that would be affected by this are already facing declining enrollment. They are working hard to adjust to this financial crisis. What justification is there to burden them more at this time? The proposal is quite obviously a stick to encourage districts to consolidate. But how much bigger of a stick do you need in light of the historic cuts the past eighteen months? It is a bit

House Education Committee
Date 2-25-10
Attachment # 5

of overkill don't you think? It is simply not necessary. Forcing districts to rapidly consolidate without thoughtful consideration will harm children. Remember this; joining together two sick entities does not create a healthy entity.

- If you support high density weighting on what grounds would you deny low-density rural student weighting (low enrollment weighting)? You might ask yourself that regarding all weightings.
- If you are using the 1960's parameters for school district size, what would be your justification for doing that? Those are fifty-year old circumstances. There were thousands of districts at that time. No permanent definition of district size was mandated or offered in that legislation. That was not addressed and rightfully so. That wasn't the point of the legislation. How do you think school districts will be configured fifty years from now?
- To any reasonable, independent observer this all seems arbitrary and driven by prejudice. Where is the empirical data to determine district size? What impact study has been done to support the proposal? If you are drawing conclusions from the LPA report, be mindful that that report is very suspect. The independent variables selected and the methodology employed is highly questionable. None of it has been reviewed by other experts in this area for its statistical validity and reliability. The report addresses issues of quality and performance in the most limited of ways. It seems legislatively irresponsible to simply trust that report without more scrutiny. I suspect that many on the committee would be hard pressed to define statistical regression and understand how it was employed in that study. Clearly, however the start point of that study was the desire to eliminate low enrollment weighting for rural children. That's is why the study focuses on creating districts of 1600 students or more – the threshold for low enrollment weighting for rural children.
- Please think of these people: Senator Dole, General Eisenhower, Langston Hughes, Walter Chrysler, Senator Specter, William Allen White – all products of rural Kansas schools and the list can go on and on and probably includes some of the individuals in this room. Three years ago one of the top students at KU med school who carried the banner at graduation – a special honor ... a Solomon Schools graduate. While I mention these extraordinary people, what also is just as important is that for the 'average' student the quality of education at a rural school is, as supported by the research, simply better than in any other educational model. Why would we dismantle that?

Please be thoughtful. The voluntary consolidation system is working. It is the best approach to a very emotional issue. The LPA report agrees with that. Let the locals work this out. I don't think you want to be the one to rip the heart out of a community. Many rural families are really struggling. Don't disrupt them further. This issue will always be with us as the rural to urban migration continues as it has for hundreds of years. The cost issue will always be there. Districts are going to fold and combine in the

future. The voluntary system with incentives is a peaceful approach to this challenge. Let it be. Remember the configuration of school districts did not cause this financial crisis. If you are bent on cutting K-12 education fairness requires it be a comprehensive approach. However in my judgment any further cuts to public education will sink Kansas's prospects for growth and prosperity in the future – Kansas will join the poorer states, economically, to the south. It would just be disastrous for the state. I wouldn't want my name on that legislation when this chapter of Kansas's history is written. Do you?

Respectfully,



Jim Runge

SCENARIO 1
(1960s Criteria)
Resources Before and After Consolidation

USD	Expenditures		Personnel			School Buildings		
	Total	Per FTE	Teachers	Principals	Superintendents	Elementary	Middle	High
1007 = Greensburg - Mullinville								
422 - Greensburg	\$2,837,551	\$13,480	21.5	2.0	1.0	1	0	1
424 - Mullinville	\$1,748,157	\$7,715	7.2	0.8	0.3	2	1	1
Total Before Consolidation	\$4,585,708	\$10,491	28.7	2.8	1.3	3	1	2
Total After Consolidation (a)	\$4,186,284	\$9,577	26.1	2.8	1.3	2	0	1
Difference	(\$399,424)	(\$914)	(2.6)	0.0	0.0	(1)	(1)	(1)
1008 = Claflin - Hoisington								
354 - Claflin	\$2,374,005	\$10,689	23.5	0.6	0.4	1	0	1
431 - Hoisington	\$6,033,209	\$9,931	47.8	3.0	1.0	2	1	1
Total Before Consolidation	\$8,407,214	\$10,134	71.3	3.6	1.4	3	1	2
Total After Consolidation (a)	\$7,623,229	\$9,189	63.3	3.6	0.9	2	1	1
Difference	(\$783,985)	(\$945)	(8.0)	0.0	(0.5)	(1)	0	(1)
1009 = Anthony - Harper - Attica								
361 - Anthony-Harper	\$8,280,027	\$10,121	64.8	4.0	1.5	2	0	1
511 - Attica	\$1,681,649	\$12,142	18.4	0.5	0.5	1	0	1
Total Before Consolidation	\$9,961,676	\$10,414	83.2	4.5	2.0	3	0	2
Total After Consolidation (a)	\$9,342,758	\$9,767	77.1	4.5	1.3	3	1	1
Difference	(\$618,918)	(\$647)	(6.1)	0.0	(0.7)	0	1	(1)
1010 = Republic County - Pike Valley								
109 - Republic County	\$4,984,276	\$10,384	40.9	3.1	1.0	1	1	1
426 - Pike Valley	\$2,661,856	\$10,500	24.0	2.0	1.0	1	1	1
Total Before Consolidation	\$7,646,132	\$10,424	64.9	5.1	2.0	2	2	2
Total After Consolidation (a)	\$7,061,649	\$9,627	57.4	5.1	1.3	2	0	1
Difference	(\$584,483)	(\$797)	(7.5)	0.0	(0.7)	0	(2)	(1)
1011 = Solomon - Abilene								
393 - Solomon	\$3,462,841	\$8,890	34.2	2.0	1.0	1	0	1
435 - Abilene	\$12,469,899	\$8,368	101.4	6.1	1.0	3	1	2
Total Before Consolidation	\$15,932,740	\$8,477	135.6	8.1	2.0	4	1	3
Total After Consolidation (a)	\$14,136,343	\$7,521	119.4	8.1	2.0	3	1	1
Difference	(\$1,796,397)	(\$956)	(16.2)	0.0	0.0	(1)	0	(2)
1012 = McPherson - Canton - Galva								
418 - McPherson	\$17,682,231	\$7,853	146.0	9.0	1.0	4	1	1
419 - Canton-Galva	\$3,847,711	\$10,476	36.5	3.0	1.0	2	0	1
Total Before Consolidation	\$21,529,942	\$8,221	182.5	12.0	2.0	6	1	2
Total After Consolidation (a)	\$21,163,019	\$8,081	167.5	10.9	1.3	4	1	1
Difference	(\$366,923)	(\$140)	(15.0)	(1.1)	(0.7)	(2)	0	(1)
1013 = Goessel - Moundridge								
411 - Goessel	\$2,674,443	\$10,907	23.1	1.5	0.5	1	0	1
423 - Moundridge	\$4,426,241	\$10,194	36.8	3.0	1.0	1	1	1
Total Before Consolidation	\$7,100,684	\$10,451	59.9	4.5	1.5	2	1	2
Total After Consolidation (a)	\$6,575,468	\$9,678	53.1	4.5	1.0	2	1	1
Difference	(\$525,216)	(\$773)	(6.8)	0.0	(0.5)	0	0	(1)

SCENARIO 1
(1960s Criteria)
Resources Before and After Consolidation

Transportation			District Funding				
Students Transported > 2.5	Miles Traveled	Bus Routes	Enrollment Funding	Transportation Funding	Districts' Share of Local Option Budgets	State's Share of Local Option Budgets	Total Change in Funding Available
41	92,445	7	\$1,453,789	\$58,314	\$453,631	\$0	---
25	51,565	9	\$1,526,183	\$38,592	\$469,432	\$0	---
66	144,010	16	\$2,979,972	\$96,906	\$923,063	\$0	\$3,999,941
71	151,139	14	\$2,521,053	\$103,448	\$787,350	\$0	\$3,411,851
5	7,129	(2)	(\$458,919)	\$6,542	(\$135,713)	\$0	(\$588,091)
78	53,177	4	\$1,506,504	\$89,096	\$478,680	\$0	---
92	62,175	5	\$3,362,763	\$115,250	\$643,729	\$399,675	---
169	115,352	9	\$4,869,267	\$204,345	\$1,122,409	\$399,675	\$6,595,697
184	120,857	9	\$4,341,024	\$218,926	\$1,018,225	\$349,760	\$5,927,935
15	5,505	0	(\$528,244)	\$14,581	(\$104,183)	(\$49,915)	(\$667,761)
332	207,992	16	\$4,293,675	\$368,138	\$796,398	\$602,146	---
20	16,135	2	\$1,062,580	\$28,965	\$327,464	\$0	---
352	224,127	18	\$5,356,255	\$397,104	\$1,123,862	\$602,146	\$7,479,367
373	231,023	18	\$4,839,976	\$420,673	\$1,048,725	\$529,470	\$6,838,844
21	6,896	0	(\$516,279)	\$23,570	(\$75,137)	(\$72,676)	(\$640,522)
192	161,517	11	\$2,740,418	\$233,967	\$589,595	\$302,721	---
142	67,946	5	\$1,634,839	\$148,673	\$238,470	\$296,584	---
334	229,463	16	\$4,375,257	\$382,640	\$828,065	\$599,304	\$6,185,266
370	240,167	15	\$3,934,247	\$418,947	\$765,845	\$540,113	\$5,659,152
36	10,704	(1)	(\$441,010)	\$36,308	(\$62,220)	(\$59,191)	(\$526,114)
133	60,800	5	\$2,271,783	\$138,867	\$347,680	\$375,515	---
342	130,809	11	\$6,455,659	\$260,377	\$935,481	\$1,079,330	---
475	191,609	16	\$8,727,442	\$399,244	\$1,283,161	\$1,454,845	\$11,864,691
542	224,723	18	\$7,805,190	\$463,056	\$1,160,146	\$1,320,327	\$10,748,720
66	33,114	2	(\$922,251)	\$63,812	(\$123,014)	(\$134,518)	(\$1,115,972)
204	54,161	5	\$9,350,365	\$189,322	\$1,926,701	\$935,205	---
218	59,756	5	\$2,153,414	\$197,358	\$487,953	\$217,279	---
422	113,917	10	\$11,503,779	\$386,680	\$2,414,654	\$1,152,484	\$15,457,597
470	128,926	11	\$10,875,608	\$421,489	\$2,290,519	\$1,098,610	\$14,686,227
48	15,009	1	(\$628,171)	\$34,809	(\$124,135)	(\$53,874)	(\$771,370)
123	50,056	5	\$1,602,955	\$117,766	\$224,461	\$291,755	---
120	45,250	4	\$2,506,042	\$124,333	\$676,390	\$112,723	---
243	95,306	9	\$4,108,997	\$242,100	\$900,851	\$404,478	\$5,656,426
262	99,886	11	\$3,694,175	\$257,786	\$835,520	\$350,068	\$5,137,549
19	4,580	2	(\$414,823)	\$15,686	(\$65,332)	(\$54,409)	(\$518,877)

Goessel USD 411
P. O. Box 68
Goessel, Kansas 67053

Chet Roberts
Business Manager
620-367-4601
Fax 620-367-4603

John A. Fast
Superintendent 620-367-4601
K-5 Principal 620-367-8118
Fax 620-367-4603 or 367-8156

Marc E. Grout
6-12 Principal
620-367-2242
Fax 620-367-2571

Feb. 25, 2010

To: Chairman Clay Aurand and House Education Members

Re: Presentation to the House Education Committee
Testimony against House bill 2704, elimination of low-enrollment weighting

School and Community Profile:

Goessel USD 411 is a small rural school district of 111 sq. miles and 265 students located in a predominately Mennonite community that is growing in diversity. USD 411 has enjoyed tremendous support from the community and there is a close relationship between the school system, the community of Goessel and the area churches. Through the years, our students have excelled in many ways:

- Goessel High School was TWICE selected by a national magazine, U.S. News and World Report as Best of the Best, in a study of 22,000 high schools nationwide. No more than 30 high schools in Kansas have been selected with the majority of those schools being small rural high schools.
- Goessel Elementary has made the Governor's Achievement list. Less than 10% of schools in the state make this esteemed list.
- Goessel High School and Goessel Elementary have repeatedly produced nearly a dozen standards of excellence on state assessments each year.
- Sports: In recent years, our students have competed at the state level on track, cross-country, golf, basketball, volleyball and football.
- Music: Our music department has excelled through the years, placing more students proportionally on the state KMEA band and choir than other schools in Kansas. They have competed at the Dallas Music competition against 300 other schools, large and small, and tied for second overall.
- Academics: Our students consistently score 1.5 to 2.0 points above the state average on the ACT.
- Activities: Nearly all of our students participate in activities in our school, many of them competing at the state level with Scholar's Bowl, FFA, Quiz Bowl and other activities.
- Safety: Our schools rank among the safest. Our students do not use locks on their lockers. People know each other and look out for each other.
- Accountability: With only two administrators in our school district and one being half-time principal and half-time superintendent, administrators and teachers work closely together monitoring student progress and making adjustments as needed.

Equal Opportunity Employer

House Education Committee
Date 2-25-10
Attachment # 7

- Generation BRIDGE: Generation BRIDGE has been a state recognized program involving our 5th grade students and the residents of Bethesda, a retirement community. This program has garnered state accolades for what it is achieving.
- Enrollment: Our enrollment has increased this year.
- Our community is proactive: Our community stakeholders have started a housing development on the east side of town. The town is working hard at finding ways to increase the quality of life, with new walking trails, ball diamonds, lighting, a new water tower, and major efforts to promote the town.

Financial data:

- Our assessed valuation is only \$11,800,000. Consequently, one mil only raises \$11,800 in our district.
- Our budget has dropped from 2.3 million to 2.1 million.
- We have already lost \$225,000 since the cuts began a year and a half ago.
- The loss of low enrollment weighting would result in an additional loss of \$152,000.
- Total financial reductions would amount to \$377,000.

Implications:

- With the loss of \$377,000, K-12 education in Goessel would look very different. Maintaining the necessary programs would be extremely difficult.
- Our students would experience less accountability in larger districts.
- Increased costs for transportation and time involved for bussing students from one end of the district to another district.
- The creation of another dying rural community in Kansas.

Question:

How can creative legislation work to reward schools that are working and support communities that are committed to their schools?

An invitation:

We would like to extend an open invitation to any legislator to come visit our school and community and see what makes Goessel USD 411 outstanding.

Respectfully submitted,

John Fast

Dr. John Fast, Supt./Elem. Principal
Mr. Dan Miller, Vice President, USD 411 School Board

(Goessel is not a member of SFFF. We have chosen to focus on communication and education as a means of bringing about the positive changes we wish to see.)

**Remarks to House Education Committee:
February 25, 2010
I strongly oppose House Bill 2704**

By Carl Helm, Superintendent/Principal, Chase/Raymond USD 401

I represent a small 1A district which is made up of two small towns and covers 196 square miles. The original district was 202 square miles but lost 6 square miles during consolidation. House Bill 2704 will effectively cut the heart out of our district. Everyone knows that all State agencies have already been losing money due to the economic hardships currently being faced by the State, but this additional random cut will be very detrimental to these twenty plus school districts.

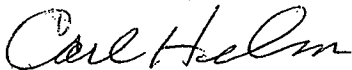
The Chase/Raymond school district has a grade school, junior high, and high school that have all made AYP every year the state has had AYP. We have a small but effective staff with only one full-time administrator, 19 full-time and part-time certified staff members, and 12 non-certified staff members (4 year around). A cut of this size would cause us to reduce the number of staff members, thus affecting student achievement. Chase educational curriculum is based around the three R's-good healthy Relationships plus Relevant curriculum equals Rigor in all curriculum areas, meeting both State and National Standards. Our district non-proficient weighting for 2009-10 is only .4 funding.

I also believe that there would be very little savings with this bill. If our district were to consolidate with another district, the state would still be paying for those students. We also have a high number of students on free/reduced lunches which could put another district in a higher density category for at-risk pupil weighting. This would also increase transportation costs for a consolidated district; currently, our transportation weighting is 9. The new district would be transporting all our students in addition to their students over a larger area. We are a small enough district that we receive no supplemental LOB or Capital Outlay; a district consolidating with us could actually receive more LOB and Capital Outlay than they currently receive. Taking money away from one district does not necessarily mean that the state will be saving money. At present the district uses all its LOB authority and has authorized 5% Capital Outlay. (This shows great support for our students from the communities.)

Losing the schools in a district would also affect the towns of Chase and Raymond. All of us have watched small towns lose their schools over the years. Unfortunately, the towns die after the schools close. Young families do not move into the area, teachers and staff members move away, and businesses close. The town loses its identity. There would no longer be Chase Kats or Raymond Bulldogs.

Thank you for your time and consideration. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. **Please say no to House Bill 2704 .**

Respectfully,



Carl Helm

House Education Committee

Date 2-25-10

Attachment # 8

Testimony presented to the House Education Committee regarding HB 2704
Given by Linda Kenne, Superintendent USD #432 Victoria February 25, 2010

Victoria is a small town that rises starkly on the Kansas prairie. We are a town of about 1200 residents and home to one of the 8 Wonders of Kansas, the Cathedral of the Plains. Our residents are proud of their town, their church and especially their schools.

We are a unique district, as is every district in Kansas, and value the hometown atmosphere we have created for our students. Our efforts have paid off with many achievements:

- AYP every year in every subject
- Standard of Excellence every year in many subjects
- Governor's Achievement Award for Victoria High School
- Eight-man State Football Championship two out of the last six years, to name a few

Our town has made a big investment in our schools by passing a \$3.5 million dollar bond issue for which we get no state Bond and Interest help. We received a \$350,000 FEMA grant to include an F-4 tornado safe room in our addition. We have raised the maximum amount of LOB authority and raised our Capital Outlay authority. We receive no state aid for LOB or Capital Outlay and we have one of the lowest free lunch percentages in the state. We are doing our share.

We have seen our budget authority shrink more and more over the last two years and have lost \$16,846 in 2008-2009 and \$197,567 this school year in budget authority. This bill would cause us to lose an additional \$200,278 -- \$154,060 from General Fund and 46,218 from LOB. This combined loss of \$414,691 over two years would be absolutely devastating to our district and our town.

We have an FTE of 256, but we offer all-day Kindergarten and also run a pre-school. Everyday we have 290 students come through our doors. Our K-3 grades average 23 students. Our town is in the middle of a housing addition project that will make available 30 new home sites. Both our town and our schools are growing.

We do have less than 200 square miles in our district - we have 193 square miles, 7 miles shy of the 200 required by this bill. However, we draw students from the fringes of our district and if the land those students come from were included in our square footage, it would more than meet the 200 square mile threshold. For many, many years families on the fringes of our district have sent their children to our schools because they felt this was the best place for them. They have always had that choice. This bill will restrict the choices the people in Ellis County have for educating their children.

Victoria should not be penalized for doing a good job and doing the best we can with the resources available to us. Our patrons should not lose local control of their schools, schools they have supported generously over the years. Our students should not be subjected to long bus rides because their new district finds that they can be transported to achieve efficiency. Our students are now a face, a face that everyone in the school knows and cares about. They should not have to become a number. I urge you to reject HB 2704.

House Education Committee
Date 2-25-10
Attachment # 9



Testimony in Opposition to HB 2704

Robert Loftin, President, Schools for Quality Education

February 25, 2010

Chairman Aurand and Committee Members:

My name is Robert Loftin and I serve as the President of Schools for Quality Education (SQE). SQE was formed to give a voice to the particular needs of rural Kansas schools and highlight the importance of preserving rural schools and communities. Many of us are the products of an outstanding Kansas public education and it is imperative that we continue that tradition for future generations.

As the state struggles to find solutions to the budget shortfall, I urge you to reject measures that cut education and single out a particular sector of schools to find those cuts. SQE believes that HB 2704 is a policy that will significantly damage dozens of school districts and communities yet the return to the state is minimal. The Legislative Post Audit (LPA) K-12 reorganization audit completed in February 2010 predicts a savings of only \$15 million if schools with fewer than 400 students and less than 200 square miles are penalized with low-enrollment weight caps. With a \$400 million state budget deficit looming, it is difficult to understand how this policy helps the state while the ramifications could be very destructive for targeted school districts.

In the LPA consolidation audit, it is important to note that their examination focuses on efficiency in schools, not quality. In this quest towards efficiency, is there the potential to harm the excellent education that our small schools provide every day? While this legislation does not technically mandate consolidation, it forces this result from a practical perspective of starving these districts until they consolidate.

Combining districts has been an evolution that has occurred as our population shifts, aided by incentives from the state. The hallmark of this effort is it leaves the decision and responsibility to consolidate in the hands of those with the local experience and expertise to determine what is appropriate for a specific community. HB 2704 is a reversal of local decision-making that has served us so well for so long. Since 2002-03, nineteen Kansas school districts have either dissolved or consolidated. The voluntary process is working and needs to be allowed to continue working.

SQE supports efforts to provide districts with more incentives to combine rather than penalties. The LPA consolidation audit recommended several incentives that we would support. The first is to allow combined districts to receive funding based on the 2008-09 level, which is higher than current levels. The second is to gradually decrease incentives so that consolidated districts do not experience a sharp revenue drop after the incentives have expired. The third is to temporarily reduce the mandatory

House Education Committee
Date 2-25-10
Attachment # 10

twenty mills property tax levy so that local residents are likely to support the consolidation effort. The fourth is more state help in financing a new facility that might be needed with a consolidated district.

We support these incentives as a way to increase efficiency without sacrificing quality. Thank you for your consideration of this issue.

Pike Valley USD #426

"Opening Doors to Success"

Chris Vignery, Superintendent

100 School Street / PO Box 291
Scandia, Kansas 66966
Tel. (785) 335-2206
Toll Free: (877) 554-4651
FAX: (785) 335-2219

Dear Chairperson Aurand,

Over the past several months I have had the opportunity to speak with different community groups concerning financial cuts to education, specifically Pike Valley Education. During those opportunities I've shared what we have currently lost and what we could lose over the next couple of years based on the Legislative Research Department's Data.

USD 426 Pike Valley's budget has been cut \$188,000 for fiscal years 2009 and 2010. If the Legislative Research Department's Data is correct about future revenue shortages it is understood that education could take another hit with \$286 off the BSAPP for fiscal year 2011. This would be an additional \$140,000 loss for Pike Valley. If nothing is done to generate revenue for fiscal year 2012 it is understood that education could see an additional loss of nearly \$700 off the BSAPP, which would affect Pike Valley another \$420,000. That amounts to a 31% decrease in our budget over a four year period.

If HB 2704 would pass and become law it would affect Pike Valley School District \$160,000 additional dollars based on this year's figures. This amount along with what we have already been cut and what the possible cuts are in the near future would devastate USD 426. That would be a 38% cut to our budget in four years.

Through retirements Pike Valley Schools has been able to save nearly \$120,000 in salary for next school year. However, these savings does not come without hurting kids. We have done this by cutting the High School art program, cutting the Vocational Agricultural program from fulltime to halftime, cut our High School counselor from fulltime to halftime, and moved staff around to eliminate a fulltime salary (we did not eliminate any programs to do this).

Every staff member at Pike Valley is making sacrifices to their schedules so kids won't suffer and programs won't get cut. We know that tough times are ahead and we have been preparing for this day years ago; however, if HB 2704 passes during these tough economical times it would cut the legs out from underneath us. Passing this bill would take away local control from our school board and community on whether or not we should consolidate with other schools, thus forcing us into consolidation.

I urge you and thank you for not passing HB 2704.

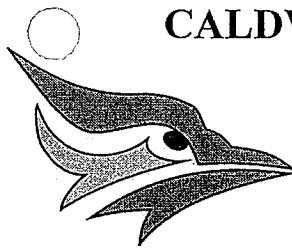
Sincerely,

Chris Vignery

Chris Vignery, Superintendent
USD 426, Pike Valley

House Education Committee
Date 2-25-10
Attachment # 11

CALDWELL UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NUMBER 360



22 North Webb Street
Caldwell, Kansas 67022

www.usd360.com

"Home of the Bluejays"

Alan Jamison
Superintendent
Secondary Principal
620-845-2585x105
Fax 620-845-2610
ajamison@usd360.com

Jim Bolden
Pre K-5 Principal
6-12 Associate Principal
Federal Programs/
Transportation Director
620-845-2585x107
Fax 620-845-2332
jbolden@usd360.com

Kevin Schmidt
K-12 Counselor &
Assistant Principal
620-845-2585x108
Fax 620-845-2534
kschmidt@usd360.com

Terre McDorman
Athletic Director
620-845-2585x119
Fax 620-845-2533
tmcdorman@usd360.com

Paula Custer
Activities Director
620-845-2585x110
Fax 620-845-2533
pcuster@usd360.com

Stan Burdett
E-Rate, Perkins, VE2
620-845-2585x111
Fax 620-845-2534
sburdett@usd360.com

Cindy Conrady
Technology Director
620-845-2585x118
Fax 620-845-2534

cconrady@usd360.com
Honorable Representatives of the House Education Committee,

On behalf of the school board, faculty, staff, students, and the community of Caldwell, I would like to express our concern and objection to House Bill 2704.

As I understand it, a statute has been on the books since the 1960's making it mandatory for schools to have either 400 students in grades 1-12 or at least 200 square miles of land in the district. This statute has not been enforced to my knowledge for quite a few years. During these difficult financial times, this statute has become the focus of some members of the legislature.

USD 360 Caldwell Schools is a district with 234 FTE and with a land area of 194 square miles. According to the statute designated over 40 years ago, we do not meet the size criteria by six square miles. In my review of school enrollment and the size of districts, I am familiar with a school district that has fewer than 90 students, yet with a land area of 203 square miles, which will not be affected by the extreme cuts to low enrollment weighting proposed under this bill. I find this difference of nine square miles and the financial ramifications attached to this bill to be most inequitable.

According to a study released last month from Legislative Post Audit, there are 32 districts in the state that do not meet the 1960's criteria. It looks as though HB 2704 is intended to penalize those of us who do not meet the criteria or who will not consolidate. The bill does influence low enrollment weighting for all schools in some way, but it is the latter part of this bill that is additionally severe to those of us not meeting the 1960's criteria. If HB 2704 is passed, USD 360 stands to lose at least \$187,000 in low enrollment weighting, based on our current enrollment.

In the Legislative Post Audit report new incentives were recommended to encourage consolidation among districts. I feel that those recommendations should be publicized to possibly encourage more discussion about consolidation for those of us not meeting the criteria.

Over the past five years, our district has shared teaching staff with a neighboring district, USD 509 South Haven, which is also a district on the list that does not meet the 1960's criteria. We currently share five teaching positions. For the past three years we have cooperatively developed joint district calendars and also coordinate most of our in-service activities with each other.

Our communities and school boards have had numerous meetings this year to try and work together and possibly put consolidation to a vote. Right now things are at a standstill. We need some time to sit down together and work through some of the issues we are encountering and make this a positive endeavor for both communities. If voluntary consolidation is the intent of this bill, then I feel we need to be able to have open and honest discussion about the pros and cons for doing so. Interaction with the 32 school districts that this bill will impact would be more valuable in helping us to move along with these discussions and decisions.

There is feeling in our district that although HB 2704 impacts low enrollment weighting to all schools, it is especially penalizing to a small group of schools. I hope you reconsider sending this bill out of committee until further discussion with school districts can take place as well as examining all of the incentives for consolidation.

I appreciate the opportunity to present my testimony for your consideration in reevaluating HB 2704.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Jamison
Alan Jamison,
Superintendent/Secondary
Principal

House Education Committee
Date 2-25-10
Attachment # 12

1033 S Hoover Rd
South Haven, KS 67140
February 23, 2010

Honorable Representatives of the House Education Committee:

As a member of the South Haven USD 509 Board of Education I am writing to express my objection to House Bill 2704.

The South Haven USD 509 was formed individually in 1967 by state statute, and is the only school district in the state so formed. When it was formed, it did not have the requisite 200 square mile area or the 400 students. Nevertheless, and even though today it has only 220 students, it has been a district delivering a high quality education to those students. This is evidenced by the success of our graduates and the building-wide standards of excellence earned on state testing.

HB 2704, however, would have a devastating impact on our funding. We would lose almost \$200,000 from our budget if this law is passed. There are other districts with enrollments much less than ours who have the necessary 200 square miles, one with less than 90 students but 203 square miles. These districts, however, would not be penalized as we will be penalized by this law. This law affects low enrollment weighting for all schools, but especially affects those districts who do not meet the criteria set forth in the 1960's law or who are not yet consolidated. That is where the cut in funding is most severe.

We have begun consolidation discussions with our neighbor district Caldwell USD 360. We share teachers, have a common calendar, and plan staff development activities together right now. However, we are not yet at a place where we are ready to bring the issue to a vote of our patrons. We still need to work out some of the sticking points that result when two districts are discussing merging. One of those sticking points has been the huge loss of funding in low enrollment weighting after the five years of guaranteed funding. This loss of \$400,000 has caused many of our patrons to question why we would want to consolidate with that kind of loss looming. The LPA consolidation study recommended that new incentives be added to encourage consolidation. Instead, I believe HB 2704 to be a club to "beat us into submission".

The school in our small community is the glue that holds the community together. A funding loss of \$200,000 will be devastating for USD 509, and for the community. If the purpose of HB 2704 is to have schools consolidate, then would it not be more helpful to encourage schools in a positive fashion than in this punitive way? I encourage you to not forward this bill out of committee and instead look for incentives that make the consolidation process more appealing to the patrons of the 32 districts that do not meet the 1960's criteria.

Thank you for the opportunity to present my testimony in opposition to HB 2704.

Respectfully,

Glennis Zimmerman
South Haven USD 509 Board of Education Member

House Education Committee
Date 2-25-10
Attachment # 13

SUPERINTENDENT/PRINCIPAL K-5

Mr. John Showman
Phone (620) 892-5215

PRINCIPAL 6-12/A.D.

Mrs. Kim White
Phone (620) 892-5215

**SOUTH HAVEN SCHOOL
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 509**

229 S. Kickapoo, P.O. Box 229
South Haven, Kansas 67140-0229
Phone (620) 892-5215
FAX (620) 892-5814
www.usd509.org

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Amy Brown
Brett Butler
Chris Deyoe
Sharon Mason
Todd Ray
Delmer Spencer, Jr.
Glenn Zimmerman

Suzanne Davidson, Clerk
Carla Crenshaw, Treasurer

February 23, 2010

Honorable Representatives of the House Education Committee:

As superintendent of USD 509 South Haven Schools, I wish to respectfully express my objection to House Bill 2704.


USD 509 is district that has existed for almost 43 years and has never met the 1960's unification requirements of a district having 400 students and/or 200 square miles. Yet it has functioned effectively and efficiently in providing quality education in such a manner that it has attracted 25 to 35 percent of its students from other districts over the past 15 to 20 years. Our school has been a strong force in attracting young families to our community. Because our town is only four miles north of Oklahoma, many of these families are from Oklahoma who moved to Kansas because of the quality of education provided by our school. I call that economic growth for Kansas.

The fact that Kansas schools have experienced significant budget cuts in 2009-10 and will likely experience more in the future has forced our board of education and me to spend the majority of our time this year determining operational cuts and trying to plan for the future instead of focusing on educating our children. This wasted time is devastating to the future of our children who will compete in a world that you and I will not recognize. House Bill 2704 will continue to add to this wasted time for our district as it will cut about \$200,000 from our budget.

Five years ago, we started sharing teachers and programs with Caldwell USD 360, a district about 12 miles to our west. At present, we have frequent joint BOE meetings, share five staff members and use the same calendar. The recent budget cuts have forced us to talk about consolidation for financial more than educational reasons. We had hoped to revolve that discussion around what is best for our students and not just on how we are going to survive. The best educational decisions are made with the proper planning and research, not in times of crisis. The years 2011-12 and 2012-13 are going to have enough budget crises of their own without adding HB 2407 to the problem for 2012-13. I know you have extremely difficult decisions that relate to balancing our state's budget. My thoughts and prayers are with you.

Thank you for taking your time to listen to my written testimony in opposition to HB 2407.

Respectfully,


John Showman



House Education Committee
Date 2-25-10
Attachment # 14

Unified School



Oxford

District No. 358

Deborah J. Hamm
Superintendent

February 23, 2010

Honorable Representatives of the House Education Committee:

On behalf of the school board, staff, students, and patrons and community members of Oxford USD 358, I would like to express our objections and our concerns to House Bill 2704.

Several months ago, the *Wichita Eagle* ran an article on consolidation based on a statute from the 1960's. According to the reporter I spoke to, some legislators were speculating that consolidation might need to be considered to lessen the impact of school funding on the state's burdened budget. The statute, while still on the books, has not been enforced in the state for decades. Today, the negative after effects of forced consolidation 50 years ago is still having an affect in districts. Yet, now seems to be the time when legislators are considering this as a possible solution.

Oxford USD 358 is a district with 327.5 FTE and 136 square miles within our district's boundaries. While the conditions have changed a great deal in the rural areas of Kansas in the last 50 years, the state statute that could dramatically impact our district has not. Rural Kansas and the people who live in the communities that surround the farm and ranch lands that comprise a vast majority of the state value their way of life and the economic benefits that their hard work bring to the state, nation, and global marketplace.

While all Kansans benefit from the work of rural Kansans, it appears that HB 2704 will leave some students in Kansas at a severe disadvantage. The provisions of this bill will cost the school district approximately \$26,500. While a seemingly small amount to some, these funds, along with the significant cuts due to declining enrollment and state budget cuts, represent meaningful programs and opportunities for our students. However, the cuts we will face are diminished by the impact of the bill on neighboring school districts. In spite of the impact of this bill on schools in Sumner County, it appears other districts that are smaller but are slightly above the 200 square mile criteria of the statute are impacted less by the statute. If this bill is meant to encourage districts to consolidate it appears that some districts are being "encouraged" much more than others.

Recently, members of the legislature received the Legislative Post Audit report recommending that the legislature consider additional incentives for school districts to consolidate. The Sumner County superintendents have been meeting for several months to find additional ways to work together, streamline resources, and become more efficient. We volunteered to meet. I believe that this bill does nothing to promote positive working relations between districts and seems to penalize some districts (regardless of size) more than others. I hope that you will reconsider sending this bill out of committee and instead consider bringing stakeholders to the table to determine the least disruptive manner to create an educational system that will take us into the next half century.

I appreciate your time in consideration of my opposition and concerns regarding HB 2704.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Deborah J. Hamm".

Deborah J. Hamm, Ed.D.

Superintendent

Oxford USD 358

Plainville Public Schools

...where students walk through the doors of opportunity every day.

USD 270



Members of the House Education Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to submit written testimony on the proposed HB 2704. Respectfully, this bill, although it does not immediately affect the Plainville district as we have 275.8 square miles, does make it one step closer in forcing a community of nearly 2000 residents to consider it a threat. By that I mean, if this bill is passed today, tomorrow it will be proposed to change the word "and" to "or" and we will be under the pressure cooker. We will not be alone!

At the best it seems to be an effort to penalize rural school districts and rural students without regard to the low cost savings that would be realized or the academic strengths that come from our smaller systems. Let me get you an example of what I mean.

Last year we had an FTE of 381.9. We had a plant closing and lowering oil prices in the community which caused our enrollment to decline to 368.2 this year. We are down 13.7 students. Our projections for next year are for 353 students, a drop of almost 15 more students. Our three year average would be 367.7. For expediency if we just use the whole number...we would be able to count 368 as our enrollment which is a low enrollment weighting of 169.68. This year we have a low enrollment weight of 174.3. Just in the difference in low enrollment weighting we lose \$18,535. We also lose \$54,964 in the difference between our enrollment last year and this year. (Of course this isn't counting all of the other money that we have reduced already this year in July and in November.) All of this is without you doing anything.

If you raise the factor to an enrollment of 400, we would lose yet another \$15,686. Our total loss would be two teachers plus some other resources. And our enrollment mark is close to the mark that is being set. How many districts of just our size would it take for you to even gain \$1 million of the state's budget shortfall? Is this really the answer?

In the post audit report, closing these districts only realized about \$15 million and that required closing buildings. Is starvation or incentivizing a more humane way of making up this deficit?

Thank you.
Beth Reust

Beth Reust

Superintendent of Schools
111 West Mill, Plainville KS 67663
Phone 785.434.4678

Troy Keiswetter

High School Principal
202 SE Cardinal, Plainville KS 67663
Phone 785.434.4547

Karen Crowe

Grade School Principal
203 SE Cardinal, Plainville KS 67663

BOARD MEMBERS - JOHN CRAWFORD - JESSI HRABE - DONNA BROWN - LOREN HEMPHILL - JAY

House Education Committee
Date 2-25-10
Attachment # 16

Argonia Public Schools

Unified School District 359

A Collaborative Family Creating a Legacy of Pride through Uncompromising Excellence

Travis Riebel
High School Principal
(620) 435-6611

Dr. Julie Dolley
Superintendent of Schools
504 N. Pine
Argonia, KS 67004
(620) 435-6311 Office
(620) 435-6623 Facsimile

Dennis Murray
Elementary Principal
(620) 435-6716

Honorable Representatives of the House Education Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the Argonia school district and community to express our objections of House Bill 2704. Many of us in this area are very concerned about the impact this bill will have on our district of 195 students (179.5 FTE) and 174 square miles. If this bill passes it would cut an additional \$260,000 out of our budget. There wouldn't have to be further bills introduced for forced consolidation if this bill passes. Most of the 32 districts this bill affects would not be able to withstand cuts of these amounts and be forced to consolidate anyway.

This bill directly affects 32 school districts across the state. I do not think it is fair to treat these districts any differently from other districts in the state. It is evident in our test scores that we are very successful at the business of educating students. We have dealt with the budget cuts that have been handed down to us from the state and are still managing to maintain our academic successes.

I realize the legislature has a long, hard road ahead trying to balance the state's budget but this is not the way to get it accomplished. If all the school districts in scenario #1 of the LPA consolidation study were to consolidate it would only save \$15 M. If all the districts in scenario #2 were to consolidate it would only save \$129 M. Is it really worth that amount of money to disrupt so many lives and small communities in this state? Not to mention the loss of revenue that would come from the laid off teachers who would be leaving the state to find jobs elsewhere.

The focus should be on what is best for all Kansas students. There are students who would not function well in a larger, more urban school system when it is so vastly different from what they have been used to all their lives. How can you discredit a district just because it is small when we are able to prove in our test scores, graduation rates, and attendance rates that we are doing an excellent job educating our students? Our kids deserve better.

I appreciate your taking the time to read my testimony and sincerely hope that you will consider these objections. If we decide as a district that we can no longer educate our students with the funding that is available, then we will seek consolidation and a scenario that best suits our students. I am in favor of incentives to consolidate but that issue needs to be a district's decision. There will be a lot less stress and conflict if our school district and community reaches that conclusion on its own.

Sincerely,
Julie Dolley

Board of Education

Joe Allen Scott Greenwood Rick Nafziger Robert Pike
Randy Simon Sarah Vineyard Ron Work

House Education Committee

Date 2-25-10

Attachment # 17

An Equal Employment and Education Opportunity Agency

Testimony on HB 2704

Mr. Chairman, members of the House Education Committee, thank you for allowing me to provide testimony today.

My name is Rex Bollinger, I am the superintendent of the newest school district in Kansas, Doniphan West Schools USD 111 which was formed by the consolidation of Highland USD 425 and Midway USD 433 on July 1, 2009.

From our experience last spring, although we had a successful consolidation of schools, consolidation is a difficult process emotionally. Through the process of consolidation we utilized the incentives passed by the Kansas Legislature.

We oppose HB 2704 which limits the low enrollment of districts that are less than 400 students and less than 200 square miles. We do support the portion of the HB 2704 which would allow consolidation from three districts to two districts. Doniphan West Schools is a proponent of consolidation incentives and feel that the incentives recommended by the Legislative Division of Post Audit would lay the ground work for future consolidations in the state of Kansas and possibly Doniphan County.

We would also propose another incentive to the current consolidation laws. Previous to 2006, this legislative body changed the consolidation law in which two schools that were consolidated would have three years of incentives versus the previous two. In the 2006 Legislative session K.S.A. 72-6434b was amended to mirror that consolidation law. When the Legislature in 2008 amended the current consolidation law providing for incentives based upon size of schools, it did not at that time amend 72-6434b to follow those incentives.

K.S.A. 72-6434b allows two consolidating school districts to utilize the higher of the two districts supplemental general state aid while the consolidation incentives are in place. This keeps the local property taxes on the supplemental general low for the period of the consolidation. We propose this change to apply to any school district consolidation on or after July 1, 2008. That would allow districts that have utilized the newest set of incentives to benefit from this change.

We believe that consolidation should be a local issue. If the ultimate goal of the Legislature is to decrease the number of school districts then we believe that incentives are the vehicle to provide for more consolidations.

On behalf of Doniphan West Schools USD 111 we appreciate the opportunity to address the committee today. Thank you.

Rex E. Bollinger
Superintendent
Doniphan West Schools USD 111
2/25/2010

House Education Committee
Date 2-25-10
Attachment # 18

72-6434b

Chapter 72.--SCHOOLS

Article 64.--SCHOOL DISTRICT FINANCE AND QUALITY PERFORMANCE

72-6434b. Same; district formed by consolidation or disorganization. (a) Unless the context otherwise requires, as used in this section, "district" means: (1) Any school district formed by consolidation in accordance with article 87 of chapter 72 of the Kansas Statutes Annotated; or (2) any school district formed by disorganization and attachment in accordance with article 73 of chapter 72 of the Kansas Statutes Annotated, and amendments thereto, if all the territory which comprised a disorganized district is attached to a single district.

(b) (1) For the purposes of determining the amount of supplemental general state aid, the state board shall determine the ranking of each of the former school districts of which the district is composed as required by subsection (a)(2) of K.S.A. 72-6434, and amendments thereto, for the school year prior to the effectuation of the consolidation or attachment.

(2) For the school year in which the consolidation or attachment is effectuated and the next succeeding two school years, the ranking of the district for the purposes of subsection (a)(2) of K.S.A. 72-6434, and amendments thereto, shall be the ranking of the district receiving the highest amount of supplemental general state aid determined under paragraph (1).

(c) The provisions of this section shall apply to districts which have consolidated or disorganized on and after July 1, 2004.

History: L. 2006, ch. 165, § 7; July 1.

Proposed – (to go into effect for schools districts consolidating on or after July 1, 2008)

Should mirror current 72-6445a as amended in the 2007-2008 legislature in SB 531 keep section (b) (1) the same while change section (b)(2) as follows and then adding sections (b)(3)-(b)(6) as proposed below:

(b) (2) For the school year in which the consolidation or attachment is effectuated and the next two school years of the district for the purposes of subsections (a)(2) of The provisions of this paragraph shall apply to any consolidation of school districts which is completed before July 1, 2011. If any of the former school districts had an enrollment of less than 150 pupils on September 20th of the school year preceding the consolidation, For the school year in which the consolidation or attachment is effectuated and the next succeeding two school years, the ranking of the district for the purposes of subsection (a)(2) of K.S.A. 72-6434, and amendments thereto, shall be the ranking of the district receiving the highest amount of supplemental general state aid determined under paragraph (1).

(b) (3) The provisions of this paragraph shall apply to any consolidation of school districts which is completed on or after July 1, 2011. If any of the former school districts had an enrollment of less than 150 pupils on September 20th of the school year preceding the consolidation, For the school year in which the consolidation or attachment is effectuated and the next

succeeding school year, the ranking of the district for the purposes of subsection (a)(2) of K.S.A. 72-6434, and amendments thereto, shall be the ranking of the district receiving the highest amount of supplemental general state aid determined under paragraph (1).

(b) (4) If all of the former school districts had an enrollment of at least 150 pupils but any had less than 200 pupils on September 20th of the school year preceding the consolidation, For the school year in which the consolidation or attachment is effectuated and the next succeeding three school years, the ranking of the district for the purposes of subsection (a)(2) of K.S.A. 72-6434, and amendments thereto, shall be the ranking of the district receiving the highest amount of supplemental general state aid determined under paragraph (1).

(b) (5) If all of the former school districts had an enrollment of 200 or more pupils on September 20th of the school year preceding the consolidation, For the school year in which the consolidation or attachment is effectuated and the next succeeding four school years, the ranking of the district for the purposes of subsection (a)(2) of K.S.A. 72-6434, and amendments thereto, shall be the ranking of the district receiving the highest amount of supplemental general state aid determined under paragraph (1).

(b) (6) If the consolidation involved the consolidation of three or more school districts, regardless of the number of pupils enrolled in the districts, For the school year in which the consolidation or attachment is effectuated and the next succeeding four school years, the ranking of the district for the purposes of subsection (a)(2) of K.S.A. 72-6434, and amendments thereto, shall be the ranking of the district receiving the highest amount of supplemental general state aid determined under paragraph (1).

Mr. Chairman and Members of the House Committee

I thank you for the opportunity to testify about our schools' concerns on House Bill 2704. My name is Mike Newman, Superintendent of Wathena USD 406 and Elwood USD 486. I represent two of the districts that were highlighted in the LPA Consolidation Reports.

My two districts are opposed to the penalties prescribed in HB2704 for schools with less than 400 students and 200 square miles. I particularly have a concern when the two districts taking a consolidation vote are not both affected by the 400 students or 200 square mile requirement. In our case, Elwood has less than 400 students and less than 200 square miles. Wathena does have over 400 students.

If my two districts were to take a consolidation vote and it passed in Elwood, but did not pass in Wathena, then the larger district's vote would impose the penalty on the smaller district even though Elwood had approved the issue. For this reason, I think it is very important to consider the incentives recommended by the Post Audit Group, and to also leave in place the existing consolidation incentives.

The incentive that would probably have the most impact on voters would be the temporary decrease in the 20 mill tax rate. A 5 mill decrease in the rate for three years for our two districts would cost the state approximately \$141,000 per year. This is not a high cost item to insure passage of a consolidation vote.

The incentive of ramping down the loss of funds due to consolidation over a period of ten years does not cost the State any additional monies, but does allow the State to start receiving a benefit in year 2 instead of waiting for year 6. This could work by decreasing the amount of state aid by 10% each year.

The incentive of letting consolidated districts receive the BSAPP amount that was set for the fiscal year of 2009 is the most costly for the State. To put this in place for our two districts would cost the State approximately \$474,000 a year.

I would like to give my support to the provision of the bill that allows three districts to consolidate into two districts and receive the existing consolidation incentives.

Again, thank you for your time. We appreciate your consideration of adding any or all these incentives to the bill.

Mike Newman
Superintendent
Elwood USD 486 & Wathena USD 406

House Education Committee
Date 2-25-10
Attachment # 19

KANSAS
ASSOCIATION



OF
SCHOOL
BOARDS

1420 SW Arrowhead Road • Topeka, Kansas 66604-4024
785-273-3600

Testimony before the
House Education Committee
on
HB 2704

by
Mark Tallman, Assistant Executive Director/Advocacy
Kansas Association of School Boards

February 25, 2010

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear today. KASB opposes the provisions of **HB 2704** which reduces low enrollment weighting to districts with fewer than 200 square miles and 400 students. We support the provision that would allow consolidation of three or more districts into two districts, which is also the purpose of **HB 2627**.

The positions adopted by the KASB Delegate Assembly are quite clear. We oppose direct or indirect efforts by the state to mandate or coerce consolidation of school districts, but we strongly support incentives to encourage consolidation where appropriate. These positions are based on the belief that the state may offer guidance, but local communities and their elected representative's best understand local circumstances; while understanding school district consolidation and school closing is an extremely sensitive and difficult choice, even when it becomes necessary.

We want to stress the following points:

First, consolidation is about closing schools and reducing teaching staff. We have never seen any evidence that simply reducing "overhead" can produce substantial savings.

Second, the Post Audit study itself does not recommend state mandates, financial penalties or "sticks." Instead, it recommends further incentives or "carrots." It should also be noted the current incentives have been working: there has been a substantial increase in district consolidations over the past 10 years.

Third, the Post Audit study notes not all districts will be able to reduce costs enough to match the loss of funding in either of the models the study develops; and the authors stress these are only models. This is why we believe the final decision on consolidation should be made locally, where the actual impact of changes can be best evaluated.

House Education Committee
Date 2-25-10
Attachment # 20

Fourth, it has been suggested the state should be more aggressive because local districts are losing quality programs due to budget cuts. But under **HB 2704**, all of the affected districts would have fewer dollars per pupil available, and would be just as likely to continue to cut programs.

Fifth, we are not aware of any conclusive studies which show school consolidation can both improve academic quality and reduce costs. In fact, we believe most consolidation efforts, including the Kansas unification process in the 1960s, resulted in more spending, not less, because it was driven by a belief that larger units would allow a more comprehensive education system. School spending increased significantly. In fact, when districts combine, the usual direction is to move salaries and programs to the level of the higher spending district.

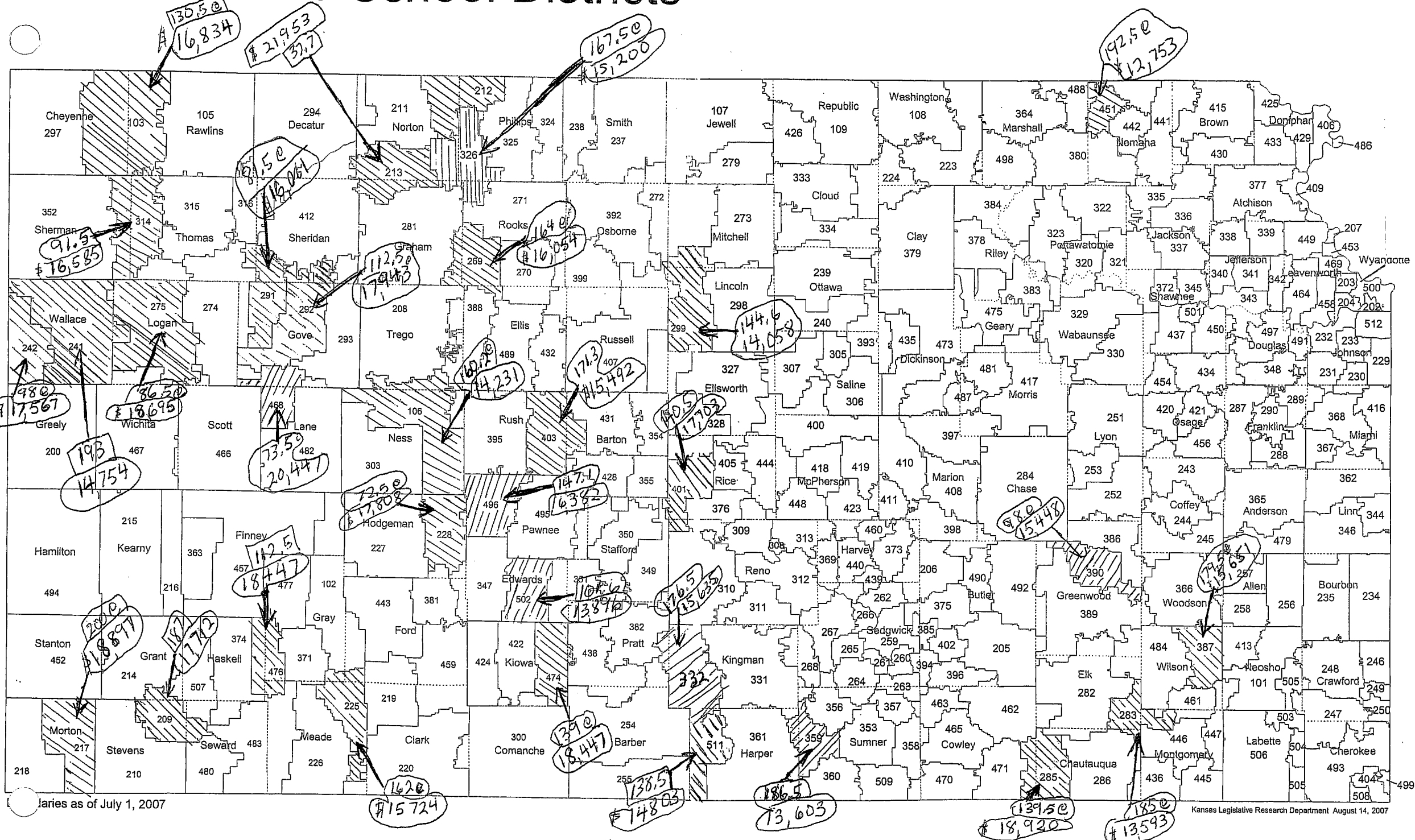
Sixth, ironically, some of the same advocates of school consolidation for "efficiency" are also advocates of more independent charter schools or building-based governance. Yet consolidation tends to increase the distance from the local parents and communities to the point of governance: the school board and the district office. That is certainly one reason why many communities resist these changes.

Seventh, it has been suggested the current organization of school districts no longer reflects the same population and demographic situation as when most districts were created in the 1960s. But we submit that in Kansas, the idea of community really is often defined by the local school district. Losing the district and local schools damages that sense of community, whether the current structure seems rational or not.

The provisions of **HB 2704** and **HB 2627**, on the other hand, simply give local districts another choice in how to approach changes in district organization when the communities believe it to be important.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kansas United School Districts



Statistics as of July 1, 2007

House Education Committee
 Date 8-25-10
 Attachment # 81

COLUMN EXPLANATION

- Column 1 -- September 20, 2009 FTE enrollment
- 2 -- 2009-10 Estimated computed general fund budget at \$4,012
- 3 -- 2009-10 Estimated revised computed general fund budget at \$4,492
- 4 -- 2009-10 Estimated general fund budget increase
- 5 -- 2009-10 Estimated adopted local option budget
- 6 -- 2009-10 Estimated revised local option budget at 22 percent of general fund
- 7 -- 2009-10 Local option budget or revised amount whichever is lower
(Column 5 or 6)
- 8 -- 2009-10 Estimated decrease in local option budget authority
(Column 7 - 5)
- 9 -- 2009-10 Estimated increase in spending authority (Column 4 - 8)
- 10 -- 2009-10 Estimated local option budget state aid revised—90.3% equalized
- 11 -- 2009-10 Estimated general fund mill rate
- 12 -- 2009-10 Estimated local option budget mill rate
- 13 -- 2009-10 Estimated total mill rate (Column 11 + 12)
- 14 -- 2009-10 Proposed general fund mill rate
- 15 -- 2009-10 Proposed local option budget mill rate
- 16 -- 2009-10 Proposed total mill rate (Column 14 + 15)
- 17 -- Difference (Column 16 - 13)

Table with columns: USDF, USD Name, County Name, 2/23/2010, Col 1 (9/20/09 FTE), Col 2 (2009-10 Computed GF), Col 3 (Revised GF), Col 4 (Est. Gen. Fund), Col 5 (2009-10 Adopted), Col 6 (Revised LOB Max), Col 7 (Revised LOB), Col 8 (Est. Decrease), Col 9 (Est. Increased), Col 10 (2009-10 LOB), Col 11 (2009-10 Gen Fund), Col 12 (2009-10 LOB Mill), Col 13 (2009-10 Total Mill Rate), Col 14 (Proposed Gen Fund), Col 15 (Proposed LOB Mill), Col 16 (Proposed Total Mill Rate), Col 17 (Difference). Rows include districts like D0218 ELKHART, D0441 SABETHA, etc.

Handwritten mark resembling the number '22' with a flourish above it.

