Have Governor Sam Brownback and the Kansas Legislature increased school funding in Kansas to record levels, or are school districts dealing with the consequences of state funding cuts?

Both are true, according to new analysis by the Kansas Association of School Boards of all funding provided to K-12 education. KASB compiled information from the Governor’s budget division, the Kansas Legislative Research Department and the Kansas State Department of Education to present the complete picture of school funding at the state level since 2009.

The full report explaining how each piece of the school finance system works and changes from 2009 through the Governor’s recommendations for the current year (Fiscal Year 2014) and next year (FY 2015) is available at www.kasb.org/completefunding.

Key findings of the report include:

- Between 2009 and 2015 (assuming all projections hold), total school spending will have increased by $363 million.
- Almost all of the increase has come since 2011, Governor Brownback’s first year in office.
- Student enrollments are up statewide, requiring additional aid.
- The increases in funding are primarily in three areas that cannot be used for general operating expenditures: building and equipment aid; KPERS contributions, and other local expenditures.
- Other local expenditures include bond payments, building costs, food services and other fee-based programs, primarily funded by local property taxes and increased parent fees.
- General fund budgets - the major operating funds for school districts - are down $128 million, although this has been mostly offset by increased local option budgets and higher local property taxes.
- Adjusted for inflation, total spending is down $385 million since 2009 and has barely broken even since 2011.

The report traces K-12 funding from 2009 through projections for 2015, with a second comparison from 2011, the first year of Governor Brownback’s administration. By providing two comparisons, the report shows the net impact of changes in school funding since 2009. This is considered the ‘high water’ mark for school funding in response to the Supreme Court’s Montoy school funding decision. By looking at funding since 2011, KASB traces the impact of the funding policies from Governor Brownback’s administration.

Although total funding per pupil reached an estimated high of over $12,500 per pupil in 2013, and KASB projects it will go even higher in 2014 and 2015, total funding per pupil is down almost 10 percent (over $1,200) after adjusting for inflation since 2009, and by 2015 is projected to remain slightly below adjusted 2011 levels.

Districts have had to rely on local revenues - which vary significantly among districts - to make up for some of the reduction in state funding, and operating budgets have fallen behind inflation and student enrollment growth.

These changes explain why school districts continue to express concerns about hiring and retaining staff and maintaining programs to meet student achievement goals, despite increases in overall funding.

Additional information is available through the Tallman Education Report, tallmankasb@blogspot.com, and on the KASB website at www.kasb.org/completefunding.

### Changes in Per Pupil Expenditures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Change FY 2009 to FY 2015</th>
<th>Change FY 2011 to FY 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Fund Per Pupil</td>
<td>($442)</td>
<td>$29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Ed State Aid Per Pupil</td>
<td>($25)</td>
<td>($40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Option Budget Per Pupil</td>
<td>$232</td>
<td>$241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fed. Aid Per Pupil (Excl. stimulus)</td>
<td>$59</td>
<td>($48)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Aid Capital Aid</td>
<td>$75</td>
<td>$82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPERS Per Pupil (K-12 only)</td>
<td>$296</td>
<td>$359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other Local</td>
<td>$260</td>
<td>$308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Additional Per Pupil</td>
<td>$454</td>
<td>$831</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FROM THE KASB EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DR. JOHN HEIM

Outside the averages: Some very special students

A good friend of mine has two lovely daughters that are about the same age as my sons. When one of the girls was very young, a tumor began to grow and wrap itself around her spinal cord and the base of her brain. This caused developmental delays and physical issues that continue to manifest themselves as she has matured into her 20’s. I had the honor of bestowing a diploma on her for her good works in high school. She is quick with a smile, loves computer games and hates it when the Royals lose. She works at a job during the day and with her parents support is happy and as healthy as can be expected. She has been successful because she has a loving family and she got a free and appropriate public education.

I have been thinking about my friend as I hear politicians talk about the $250,000 classroom. In a throwaway line in the state of the state speech, the governor did a quick math problem and said an average classroom in Kansas gets $250,000 a year. Some have claimed this number is inaccurate, others say it is a sign of inefficiencies. But is it? [For more on this, see The Quarter Million Dollar Classroom www.kasb.org/classroomcosts]

Averages are tricky and by definition don’t tell the whole story. We have all heard the story of the man with his head in the oven and feet in the freezer who, on average, is very comfortable. So too it is with per pupil, or classroom funding.

Although I have been in all kinds of classrooms in my career, I popped in for a visit at a nearby school for a reminder of some of the challenging students like my friends daughter schools are called upon to educate.

Let me stop and challenge every board member, patron, or policy-maker who has not done so recently to visit one of these classrooms in your local area.

When you visit you will be struck first by the joy that exists in these classrooms. It is a reminder that we provide educational services to all children not because it is the law, but because it is the right thing to do. You may not recognize the educational goals, but you will recognize the joys and frustration of teaching and learning.

I visited after lunch and saw one child who was working on a developmental goal of sitting upright in her wheelchair for 30 minutes. (A requirement because of her feeding and breathing tubes.) The teacher was patient and the girl worked hard while growing tired and frustrated.

You will also notice the adult to student ratio is very high. In the classroom I visited for grades 1-5, only one student had complete bathroom control. All others were learning. Two students were in wheelchairs and had feeding tubes. One student required being aspirated by her full-time nurse. All of the students had a wide range of needs that were being met. I asked the teacher how many adults were involved in providing services to these students. Her response:

- Adaptive PE Teacher
- Speech and Language Teacher
- Occupational Therapist
- Physical Therapist
- Vision and Hearing Impaired Teacher
- Nurse
- Special Education Teacher
- Social Worker
- School Psychologist
- Counselor
- Administrator
- Four full-time paras

There were five students in the classroom, and while the first words out of the teacher’s mouth were “I love my job,” I challenge anyone to keep up with the level of activity that I witnessed in that room. Not so obvious is the specialized training that each staff member has to have, based upon the individual student’s needs. From CPR and first aide to emergency feeding and medical services, to instructional tech, these educators are all highly skilled and trained.

A visitor will also notice that the physical accouterments of this classroom are very different from the typical elementary room. There is a large bathroom with a changing table and area. There is a shower room that doubles as a sensory room for students who need a break from bright lights. The teachers use iPads and computer programs as instructional tools, and there are various apparatus for enhancing student mobility such as wheelchairs, carts, machines that help with standing, and others that help with crawling. Large notebooks line shelves and each contains a daily record of medical issues experienced.

When asked about the requirements of educating special education students, the KASB legal staff often cite a case in which the judge said schools are expected to provide a Chevy, not a Cadillac education. The room I visited was not a Coupe Deville, nor was it Cobalt, more like a nice Chevy Impala. So how much does that classroom cost?

It’s hard to say. One full-time teacher and four aides would be about $140,000. Services provided by the other adults are based upon the individual education plan for each student. An educated guess would put the other adults at about $60,000. Add to that the other costs provided in the KASB study (www.kasb.org/classroomcosts) and you have $375,000; include extra expenses for special transportation requirements and room and equipment needs, and my best estimate is closer to $400,000. For these five students, at about $12,000 per student, the district receives $72,000 in total state funding. The remaining $328,000 must be made up from the district budget.

The mid-sized district I visited has three of these classrooms. There are thousands of high needs students being served in Kansas schools. Students that up until 10 years ago were served in state hospitals were being served in Kansas schools. Public schools proudly serve all students: your children, your grandchildren, your neighbor’s children, and my friend’s child.
The Kansas Association of School Boards has released additional information about the costs associated with a typical Kansas public school classroom. Governor Sam Brownback, in his Jan. 15, 2014, State of the State Address, noted Kansas residents pay $12,500 per student each year for public education support, equaling $250,000 for a classroom of 20 students.

“It’s a great investment,” said Frank Henderson, Jr., president of the Kansas Association of School Boards. “First, Kansas schools continue to operate efficiently and effectively, and are continuing to do better in this area. Second, if you look at overall achievement, Kansas students rank among the best. That’s due to the investment we continue to make in our public schools.”

The information released by the school board association provides a detailed analysis of the costs, including the percentage and actual dollar amount for each of the nine areas of spending.

These include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers, Aides, Classroom Materials</td>
<td>$125,000 per classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction, Repair and Remodeling of School Buildings, including classrooms, libraries, gyms, auditoriums, lunchrooms, technology and other equipment</td>
<td>$50,000 per classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance and Operations, including utilities, insurance and security</td>
<td>$20,000 per classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>$8,000 per classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch and Breakfast costs</td>
<td>$10,000 per classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselors, Social Workers, Psychologists, Speech Pathologists, Audiologists, Nurses, Attendance and Resource Officers and Security Staff</td>
<td>$10,000 per classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Librarians, Technology Support and Instructional Programs</td>
<td>$8,000 per classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Administration and Support Staff</td>
<td>$12,000 per classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Administrative Support, Business Operations, Human Resources, Legal Services</td>
<td>$7,000 per classroom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kansas ranks eighth in the nation across multiple measures, KASB notes, while spending close to $20,000 less per classroom of 20 students than the national average.

Since 1990, the adult high school completion rate has increased from 81.3 percent to 89.5 percent, and four-year degree completion has risen from 21.1 percent to 29.8 percent. Advance degree completion has risen from 7 percent to 10.2 percent.

“We are educating more Kansas children to higher levels of achievement than at any other time in our state’s history,” Henderson said. “When you factor in that higher levels of education equate to higher earning potential, clearly what Kansans spend in support of our public education system is a great investment.”

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### BLOGS • TWITTER • FACEBOOK • WEBSITE • PODCASTS

www.kasb.org

- Tallman Education Report [tallmankasb.blogspot.com]
- John Heim: I’m From Kansas [heimkasb.blogspot.com]
- KASB Leadership Services [kasbleadershipservices.blogspot.com]
- Carol Pitts: How Do I [pittskasb.blogspot.com]
- Kay Tibbs: TechSnacks [tech-snacks.com]

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@Tallman_Mark
@DuckMo73
@bjordan41
@TomKrebs1

Leadership Services Podcast [www.kasb.org/ospodcast]
Feb 27, 2014
KASB/Topeka
8:30 a.m. Registration
9 a.m. Meeting Begins
Whether you are new to the clerk’s role or a seasoned veteran, the annual KASB Clerks and Treasurers Workshop is for you. Timely topics are carefully selected to provide the information you need to serve your board and superintendent. A time to investigate KASB Services and Partnerships will also be offered to those who attend.

www.kasb.org

March 25 - Newton
8:30 a.m. Registration
9 a.m. Meeting Begins
The KASB Human Resources Academy gives boards and administrators the ‘nuts and bolts’ knowledge you need as an employer. Topics include references and background checks, hiring and firing procedures and reductions in force along with pertinent, timely information you can take back to your district and use tomorrow. The focus is on the practical application of legal requirements.

www.kasb.org

Legislative Webinars back for 2014 session
You may remember from last year’s session the series of Legislative Update Webinars presented by KASB’s Associate Executive Director Mark Tallman. On January 16, we resumed the webinars for the 2014 Session.

If you missed the first few webinars, recordings are available online at www.kasb.org/LegisWebinars.

To listen in live each week just go to www.myvsl.com/kasb133 after 12 p.m. Each webinar begins at 12:30 p.m. and lasts approximately an hour.