



Oral Testimony in Opposition before the

House Education Committee

on

HB 2485 – Requiring transportation of certain students when no safe pedestrian route is available

by

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Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee:

As we understand [HB 2485](#) would require districts to provide transportation for students under the statutorily prescribed 2.5 mile distance if, said students did not have a safe pedestrian route and the additional service would not increase the districts transportation cost.

First, we want to emphasize that making sure that all students can safely make it to school and home each day is a priority for all districts in Kansas.

While we recognize and appreciate the authors intention of keeping this legislation budget neutral we have several concerns and observations that have lead us to oppose this legislation as it is presented.

First, from an operational perspective we have concerns about possible interpretations of the bill as presented and who would be responsible for "auditing" the additional cost calculations and how those would be measured?

Additionally, we would have concerns over possible conflicts relating to the implementation of this legislation, if it could cause some additional students to be served under the law, but not all eligible students based on varying transportation routes and logistical impacts.

Secondly, we would like to reinforce that our current transportation funding formula does not even cover the cost of transporting students that are above the 2.5 mile limit. In the December 2017 audit report on K-12 Transportation Funding the Auditors found that the current formula does not meet the actual cost for many districts in vary degrees.

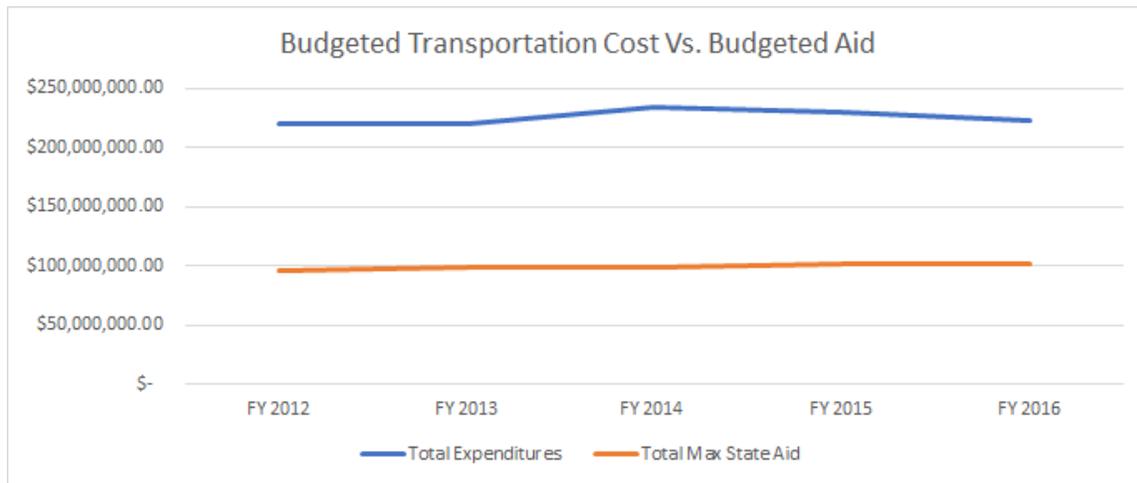
**Question 2: How Does the Funding School Districts Receive for Funded
Transportation Services Compare to Their Actual Costs?**

Overall, our 16 sample districts received less funding than it cost them to transport students, but the results varied by district (p. 17). The funding formula uses student density to estimate transportation costs but a variety of other factors can also influence costs (p. 20). Last, based on our sample, the current funding formula appears to understate the comparative cost of transporting students who live at least 2.5 miles from school (p. 22).

Source: www.kslpa.org/assets/files/reports/r-17-020.pdf

While the LPA audit only looked at a sample of districts in Kansas, their final recommendation was to look at increasing the multiplier in the Transportation formula to help cover that gap in funding for required effort by the districts.

In addition, we would like to highlight that, total state transportation aid for school districts only covers between 42-45 percent of the amount invested currently in providing, safe transportation for students. As you can see in the below graph, from 2012-2016, state transportation aid still had a significant cost to school district general fund expenditures.



*Total Max State Aid does not include Special Ed Transportation or Tech Ed Transportation (Totals \$10.65 M in FY'18)

While we certainly understand the good and necessary intentions behind this piece of legislation, we would suggest that this conversation could be a piece of the larger K-12 finance discussion and efforts being made to better serve students throughout Kansas.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill and I will stand for any questions at the appropriate time.