



Oral Testimony as Neutral before the
Senate Select Committee on Education Finance
on
SB 352 - Requiring transportation funding for school districts from the state general fund
by
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Madam Chair, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on **SB 352**, which would replace highway funding currently going to school district aid with state general dollars and prohibit such transfers in the future.

We appear as neutral because we believe our members understand and share concerns about state transportation infrastructure. However, we also believe passage of this bill alone could absorb general fund dollars that will likely be necessary to restore school funding to reach state education goals.

The shift of state highway funding to support K-12 education occurred because the Governor and Legislature passed deep tax cuts without offsetting revenue at a time when state aid to schools had already been sharply reduced. It was a way to avoid even more severe cuts in the public-school system.

KASB does not oppose ending highway fund transfers to support public education, but we are concerned that this bill alone – without other considering other budget and revenue changes – could make it much more difficult to comply with the Kansas Supreme Court’s *Gannon* decision and achieve the education outcomes defined by the Court in the “Rose” capacities. These same goals are reflected in the Governor’s call for leading the nation in graduation and postsecondary attainment, leading our neighboring states in teacher salaries, adding counselors and social workers, and giving all students a start on college at no cost. These steps are necessary to compete economically with other states and to ensure a prosperous future for Kansas.

Although school leaders commend and appreciate the difficult decisions made last session to raise revenue and provide the first substantial increase in school funding in almost a decade, we do not believe the work is complete. By many measures, K-12 education remains underfunded compared to where it needs to be – based not only on the Supreme Court’s ruling, but by past Kansas experience, evidence from other states and successful targeted programs, and, we believe the new cost study. **SB 352** by itself would help solve one of the state’s concerns – adequate transportation infrastructure. However, we are concerned this step is premature without a plan in place to address the long-term funding needs of K-12 education, which really means workforce development, income and economic security.

Thank you for your consideration.