

Testimony before the K-12 Education Budget Committee

on

HB2410

by

Dr. Shelly Kiblinger, superintendent, USD 308 – Hutchinson Public Schools

Today I'm submitting this testimony on behalf of Hutchinson Public Schools

March 23, 2017

Chairman Campbell and Members of the Committee:

I am in opposition of several points of this bill, but will address only the points below.

1. Under HB2410, Hutchinson Public Schools will lose 2.9 million dollars in funding overnight. This will decimate our school system and impact the safety and wellbeing of our students. We will not be able to meet the educational standards required by our state board of education nor those legally required according to the Rose Capacities.
2. The weightings associated with the increase/decrease in student enrollment over a four-year period lacks any apparent reasoning and seems to inflate the impact of student growth or decline arbitrarily depending upon the year in which it occurs. Use the greater of actual prior year's enrollment or a straight average of several prior years would seem a simpler and fair calculation.
3. The elimination of a weighting for vocational / career and technical education will force elimination of expensive programs such as automotive, auto body repair, health science pathways, welding, and construction trades. We currently receive \$432,964 in vocational weighting. We spend \$1,940,455 in total state aid dollars to provide our current level of career and technical education. This does not include federal funding, donations from business and industry, and revenue generated from college and partnerships with other districts. Under HB2410, the \$100 we are to transfer to provide for vocational programing totals \$422,800. Thus, we would be forced to reduce other educational programs in the district by nearly 1.5 million dollars or close our Career and Technical Education Academy.
4. The investment in K-12 education underwhelms and likely will not pass the scrutiny of courts. The elimination of vocational weighting combined with the reduction of all other weightings by 3.504 percent makes the increase to the base essentially a wash. The total amount of "new" money added to K-12 education barely covers the increase in student numbers in the state. Thus, it would appear there is very little, if any, new money per student.
5. The addition of an increase based on the Midwest consumer price index is positive. However, it should not be seen as a way to ramp-up to a level of adequate funding. Such

a provision is necessary in any new formula, but only after adequate funding has been achieved.

6. The high density at-risk calculation creates a sharp decline or increase of funds if enrollment increases or decreases or poverty level changes. This will create a hardship on districts or overnight windfalls with no time to plan for the increased funding.
7. It will be incredibly difficult for districts to know their budget with 2 count dates (September 20 and February 20). ~~It takes our district hundreds of hours to do the~~ September 20 count. This would double that work. Also, in February, we are gearing up for state assessments. The same personnel involved in the September 20th count are busy confirming data in KIDS and getting set up for state assessments in February. We would have to add temporary personnel to get an additional count taken in February, and training is required so finding a temporary person to do this work would be nearly impossible. Likewise, I don't think the state could produce audited numbers in time for us to have a final budget before June. I see no reason to have a dual count dates, and it would seem it more difficult for legislators to have accurate and timely information to plan the state's budget.

There are several options for improving HB2410 or putting portions of it to use. These are not all the improvements needed, but are the most critical changes needed.

1. Use the greater of actual prior year's enrollment or a straight average of several prior years to calculate enrollment.
2. Provide adequate funds for vocational programming. Restore the vocational weighting similar to the old formula or move to a tiered system of program funding that accounts for the actual costs of offering various vocational programs, similar to the KBOR funding system.
3. Apply the at-risk definition using free lunch to HB2270 as it was a better legislative starting place than this bill.
4. High density at-risk is needed, but any calculation (or other weighting for that matter) should not have a hard cut line of student count or poverty percentage where funding is cut completely. The calculation has to be more graduated in some manner.
5. Eliminate the dual count dates and have only one enrollment count date on September 20.
6. The base aid should increase to a higher number than \$4170 and the weightings should not be reduced.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. We stand opposed to HB2410 overall for the reasons stated above.

Respectfully,



Dr. Shelly Kiblinger
Superintendent, USD 308-Hutchinson Public Schools