



**KANSAS ASSOCIATION
OF SCHOOL BOARDS**

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Oral, Proponent Testimony before the

House Committee on K-12 Education Budget

on

HB 2561 – Amending the Kansas school equity and enhancement act regarding the transportation weighting.

by

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Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee,

[HB 2561](#) would amend the transportation weighting in the Kansas School Equity and Enhancement Act by adjusting the “curve of best fit” in the formula for high-density enrollment school districts to correspond with the Department of Education’s current practice of calculating state aid for the transportation weighting. KASB supports this bill for the following reasons.

The Legislative Post Audit study said the KSDE practice was likely justified by the additional transportation costs of large, densely-populated districts. (It also found the entire formula likely underfunds actual costs.)

Whether or not this adjustment was specifically authorized in statute, it is a long-standing practice. Legislators and school districts have known the “amount” of money it provides to each district, regardless of the specific steps. In recent years, the Legislature has never cut transportation aid to districts.

These dollars have been used as intended by the districts that received them: to safely transport students to and from school. If this bill is not passed and these payments are no longer made, districts will still have to provide transportation services for students living 2.5 miles or more from school. Their only options will be to either reduce transportation services to other students (less than 2.5 miles), raise transportation fees, or shift funding from other parts of their budget, including instruction and other support programs.

This bill will not increase the cost to the state, since next year’s budget has already been approved assuming these minimum payments are made.

It makes no sense to reduce transportation aid to certain districts when the entire formula has been found to be inadequately funded by the Kansas Supreme Court, and the same Post Audit study indicates the transportation formula is likely underfunded.

Finally, KASB believes it should be made clear, as soon as possible, that districts should not be required to repay these funds from previous years. These dollars were used by districts in good faith to provide services as intended and repaying dollars will simply reduce educational services to students.

It has been documented that the Legislature has underfunded the school finance law in specific statutory amounts by over \$850 million since 2009. The Legislature should remove any threat that districts will need to repay these transportation funds.

Thank you for your consideration.