

Testimony on **SB 68**
before the
Senate Education Committee

by

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Madam Chair, Members of the Committee:

After extensive discussions of school finance issues by school board members and administrators at 10 regional meetings this Fall, members of the KASB Board of Directors and Legislative Committee drafted a resolution on school finance that was adopted without dissent at our Delegate Assembly in December.

That process involved districts of all sizes, geographic locations and demographic characteristics. Our Board and Legislative Committee each include 10 representatives chosen by regions of the state, plus the five member school boards with the largest enrollments (Wichita, Olathe, Blue Valley, Kansas City and Topeka).

The consensus that emerged from this process on the issue of at-risk funding is that Kansas should continue to use BOTH student poverty measures AND additional criteria, such as the non-proficient weighting, to determine funding for at-risk student support programs. Therefore, we support removing the expiration on Non-Proficient Weighting, as contained in **SB 68**.

KASB believes there are a number of problems with using test scores alone for at-risk funding. However, KASB supports continuation of the Non-Proficient Weighting, which is based on non-free-lunch students who score below proficiency, as an “add on” to student poverty factors such as free lunch eligibility. The reason is simple: we acknowledge the use of free lunch counts is not a perfect measure and factors other than poverty cause academic problems. We believe additional measures should be available for districts with lower poverty rates. While poverty is clearly a strong predictor of academic challenges, even a district without a single child in poverty will have students who face academic difficulties and require extra assistance.

Our position is broad enough to support additional factors beyond non-proficiency on test scores if such factors can be identified.

Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions.