

Testimony before the
Senate Education Committee

on
SB 405 & SB 473

by

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Madam Chair, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on two bills, either of which KASB believes would be a positive step for helping districts better prepare their students as they strive to meet the rigorous challenges that lie before them as they move from kindergarten towards their graduation. **SB 405** and **SB 473** both call for funding of all-day kindergarten, albeit using different approaches. **SB 405** has full-day kindergarten students moving incrementally from half- towards full-base aid per pupil funding over a five-year period. **SB 473**, starting in FY 10, calls for full-time funding over a three-year period, with buildings getting the funding based on percentages of students enrolled in free- or reduced-priced lunch programs.

As part of the School Finance Resolution for Student Achievement passed by our Delegate Assembly in December 2007, a call was made to fund all-day kindergarten. State funding for all-day kindergarten would allow districts that have already on their own picked up the tab for the program to direct more resources to other areas of need, such as broadening other early childhood learning opportunities; supporting high school reform efforts; or helping to raise teacher salaries. For the other districts, the additional funding could be the impetus to implement the program if cost constraints had been the barrier to such implementation. Obviously, districts that wanted to stay with half-day programs could do so if they chose.

Many boards, including the one on which I served, made the decision over 10 years ago to step up and finance all-day kindergarten knowing the doors it opened for all students, but particularly for students who come to school without all the requisite tools for school success. Over those years, a number of other districts have seen the wisdom and value of the programs, such that now almost 2/3 of kindergarten students statewide are enrolled in all-day programs. It only makes sense for the funding from the state to

match the reality of what Kansas communities have already deemed to be an essential part of their educational obligations.

Some will argue the approach outlined in **SB 473** is preferable as it, despite an implementation date of a year later, provides for full funding a year earlier than the approach taken in **SB 405**. Others prefer it for the fact it targets the funding to the buildings most in need. KASB is mute on which approach is the wiser; it firmly believes one or the other should become law this year.

Thank you for your consideration.