

Testimony before the
Senate Committee on Education

on
HB 2734 – School District Consolidation; State Aid

by
Mark Tallman, Assistant Executive Director/Advocacy
Kansas Association of School Boards

March 13, 2008

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments today on **HB 2734**. KASB's position on school district consolidation is very simple. We support incentives to encourage school districts to consider consolidation when it makes educational and financial sense, and seek to remove barriers that discourage consolidation. However, we oppose measures that directly force districts to consolidate, or indirectly pressure districts to act through financial penalties.

As a result, we support passage of **HB 2734**, which provides financial incentives for consolidation by allowing the new district to maintain its budget for several years at the previous level. Specifically, this proposal provides greater incentives for districts to act before their enrollment further declines. In other words, as your enrollment continues to decline, the financial advantages under this bill would also decline. We think that might have more appeal than a previous state package of incentives, which has since expired, and which required districts to act by a certain date.

Thank you for your consideration.