

MYTH BUSTERS

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**Kansas
PTA**

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Advocacy

Chronic Underfunding of the Base State Aid

FACTS: The 2006–2009 increase to the state’s education budget was the legislature’s correction for their nearly billion dollar shortfall to our public schools that accumulated over a 15 year period.¹ Failure to keep up with inflation and to allocate funds based on actual costs severely eroded funding for classroom instruction as measured by Base State Aid Per Pupil (BSAPP).²

MYTH: Why not cut education funds? Everybody needs to tighten their belts and sacrifice. Besides, education just got a huge budget increase a couple of years ago. The public schools already have billions of dollars.

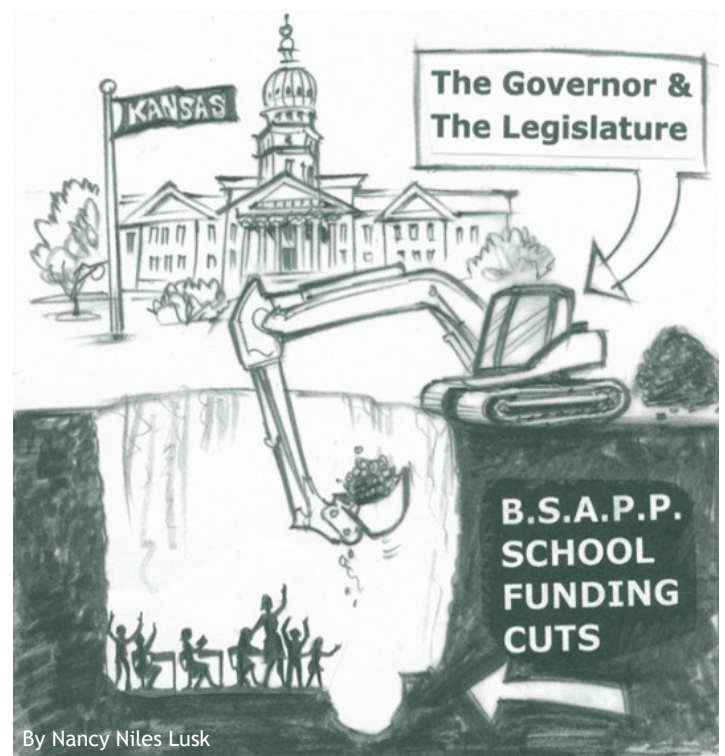
BSAPP—Base State Aid Per Pupil is the starting amount of state fiscal aid each school district receives per student. Your legislators and the governor decide what this amount will be each spring.

FACT 1. Base aid is short \$712 per pupil according to law.³

Before the national economic downturn, K-12 base state aid funding was already in the hole. This hole grew so deep over many years that a lawsuit was brought to the Kansas Supreme Court.¹ Kansas legislators were found to be out of compliance with their own laws in 2005 for failing to “make suitable provision for finance” of public schools as required by our Constitution. The statutory base state aid was set at \$4,492 for FY2010 and beyond, in alignment with cost estimates found in the bipartisan 2006 Legislative Post Audit study. Today’s base is \$3,780. **According to law then, the Legislature has underfunded our public schools by at least \$712 per pupil.** The \$750 million dollar correction made between 2006 and 2009 has been eliminated due to cuts, even though the state is currently projecting a surplus in received revenues.

FACT 2. Base aid is short \$1,961 per pupil according to inflation.⁴ Our elected officials have cut the operating budgets for our classrooms by about 34%, when the purchasing power of today’s base state aid is adjusted for inflation. Beginning in the 1992–93 school year when the school finance formula was first overhauled, the equivalent base aid for FY2011 would be \$5,741. Today’s base is \$3,780. **According to inflation then, our the Legislature has underfunded our public schools by at least \$1,961 per pupil.**

FACT 3. Base aid is short \$2,797 per pupil according to actual costs.² If our elected officials adhered to the cumulative evidence validated by the Division of Legislative Post Audit and continued to adequately fund our classrooms, base aid for outcomes this school year would be \$6,577. Actual costs are nearly double what our remaining teacher’s, resource staff and administrators have at their disposal today to fulfill educational expectations that continue to rise. Today’s base is \$3,780. **According to rigorous bipartisan research then, the Legislature has underfunded our public schools by at least \$2,797 per pupil.**



FACT 4. Public education is the primary responsibility of the states. “Educating children is to the state government as national defense is to the federal government: it is the state’s primary function and the lion’s share of the state’s budget. And that is as it should be. ... we need to make sure we target our funding in the right places to give children the foundation they need for success” (Governor Brownback, 2011).⁵ But the opposite has occurred – classrooms have been stripped of adequate resources. Will the Governor fulfill his stated objective? If so, when? By speaking up, we can help hold him to his promise.

www.kansas-pta.org

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¹Kansas Supreme Court Decision, Montoy v. State (2006). http://skyways.lib.ks.us/ksleg/KLRD/Publications/2006_SupremeCtDecisionSum.pdf

²Legislative Division of Post Audit (2006). http://www.kansas.gov/postaudit/audits_perform/05pa19.pdf

³HB2005 http://kslegislature.org/li/b2011_12/year1/measures/documents/hb2005_00_0000.pdf

⁴Bureau of Labor Statistics. http://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm

⁵State of the State Address (Jan 2011). Governor Brownback. <https://governor.ks.gov/media-room/speeches/2011/01/12/2011-State-of-the-State-Message>