

# MYTH BUSTERS

August 2011 Issue 1

**Kansas  
PTA**

*everychild.one voice.*  
**Advocacy**

## Public School Funding

**MYTH:** Parents and teachers should not worry about public school funding, because the state education budget was increased for both this year and next.

**FACTS:** *Devil is in the details.*

Yes, the total state budget for primary and secondary education (the K-12 budget, excluding higher education) has increased the past few years. However, the apparent increase in total funds obscures the fact that key line items within the budget – those that support classroom instruction – have seen sharp declines. Moreover, the current total budget is actually down from its peak in 2009, when dollars were allocated based on the actual costs to our public schools rather than on the amount of funds available.<sup>1</sup>

### FACT 1. Total K-12 Budget is Up

**and Down.** The State's total portion of the K-12 budget is up from fiscal year (FY) 2010, but was cut from over \$3.1 billion in FY2009 to less than \$2.7 billion in FY2010 – a reduction of over \$435 million.<sup>2</sup> Recent increases in the State's total budget have yet to reach the 2009 allocation, nor have they kept pace with cost of living increases.

### FACT 2. Instruction Line Item

**Decreased.** The major portion of the State's K-12 education budget that can be used to support instruction has been severely cut by the legislature and Governor (measured by base state aid per pupil – BSAPP) to levels well below 1992 allocations. How is that figured? BSAPP was reduced to \$3,780 for the 2011-12 school year. The equivalent buying power of \$3,780 in 2011 would be about \$2,350 in 1992.<sup>3</sup> So today's BSAPP has even less purchasing power than was allocated in 1992, which was set at \$3,600. Moreover, the bipartisan cost study of 2006 (and state law), determined that the base cost per pupil is \$4,492.<sup>1</sup> Thus at a minimum, our classrooms are underfunded by \$712 per student relative to the actual costs for a school to meet education standards required by law.

**What do these cuts mean?...** more teacher layoffs, increased class sizes, increased fees, school closings, elimination of resources that help to keep youth engaged and on track to graduate and fewer students meeting standards to name a few. Meanwhile, education standards continue to rise yearly, in alignment with

state and national mandates designed to prepare all our youth to participate in a global society as well as compete in regional markets.

### FACT 3. State Employee Pension Line Item Increased.

The Governor's increase in the State's portion of the K-12 budget is directed primarily to public employee retirement funds (which includes teachers) and to bond payments for

buildings or equipment. This recent increase to KPERS serves to shore up the State's pension fund and protect our State's bond rating. Nonetheless, the State needs to find a way to honor its commitment to KPERS, without jeopardizing the instruction our youth receive in Kansas public schools.

### FACT 4. What's in a Budget?

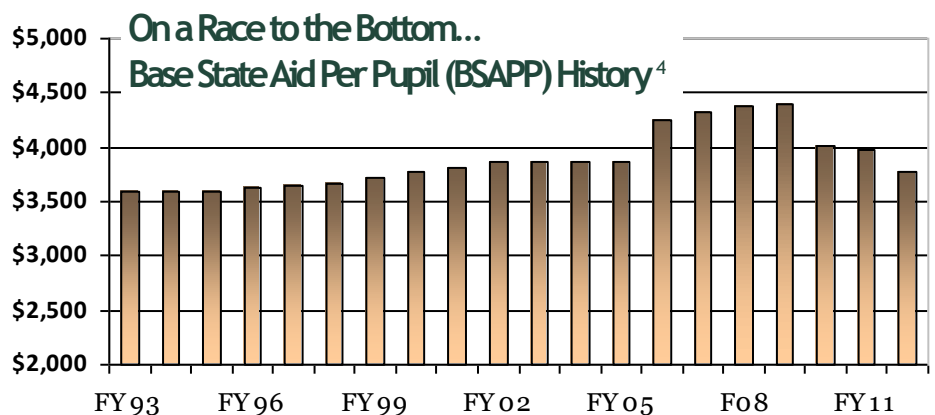
The bulk of state aid to school districts that comprises the total K-12 budget falls under one of the following categories (or line items): general state aid (used to support instruction), supplemental state aid (referred to as the Local Option Budget and also used to support instruction), special education (used to support instruction), KPERS (for Kansas public employees retirement system, including teachers), capital outlay aid and capital improvement aid (used primarily for buildings and equipment).<sup>5</sup> About 60% of the total K-12 budget comes from the State General Fund and the other 40% of revenues are primarily from federal and local sources.

### We're Still Playing Catch Up

#### Total Primary & Secondary Education (K-12) Budget - State Portion (in billions)<sup>2</sup>

- \$2.819 FY 2007
- \$3.067 FY 2008
- \$3.135 FY 2009
- \$2.698 FY 2010
- \$435 million cut
- \$2.959 FY 2011\*
- \$3.038 FY 2012\*

*\*legislative approved*



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<sup>1</sup>Legislative Division of Post Audit (2006). <http://www.kansas.gov>  
<sup>2</sup>Kansas Division of the Budget, Comparison Reports (2012, p.71; 2011, p.54; 2009). <http://budget.ks.gov/comparis.htm>  
<sup>3</sup>Bureau of Labor Statistics. [http://www.bls.gov/data/inflation\\_calculator.htm](http://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm)  
<sup>4</sup>Kansas Department of Education (2010). <http://www.ksde.org>  
<sup>5</sup>Kansas Education Budget (2012, p. 125-129). <http://budget.ks.gov/publications/FY2012>