

1. Claim: "With the block grant bill passed this year, OSD's funding from the state actually went up by \$450,000. From 2014-2017, the state aid to OSD is an increase of 8.7%. OSD even reports the increase to the department of education in the link below (see page 7)."

Analysis: The claim that OSD received an additional \$450,000 this year is supported by a [funding spreadsheet](#) titled "SF15-144.xlsx" prepared by the Kansas State Department of Education. When comparing General State Aid from the 14-15 school year (column 2) and General State Aid for the 15-16 school year (column 9), we can see that funding increased by \$449,335. That is an increase in funding of .23% from the previous year. For year 2, the funding increase is \$789,872, or .61%. That is a far cry from an 8.7% increase in funding. Rep. Schwab provides a link to a document called "[Budget at a Glance](#)" to support his claim of an 8.7% increase in state funding. The Budget at a Glance is a document created by each school district in the state to provide a snapshot of some relevant financial data. In reviewing page 7 of the document, we have been unable to identify anything that indicates an 8.7% increase in state aid between 2014 and 2017. There is no funding information provided at all beyond the 2014-2015 school year. Another issue is that the document Rep. Schwab referenced was for last year. More current information is available through the [2015-2016 Budget at a Glance](#), which is posted on USD #233's website.

2. Claim: "The district actually added only 138 new students. That is not even 1/2 a student per classroom. So the idea of the increased costs due to increased enrollment does not exist."

Analysis: KSDE is yet to post student enrollment numbers for the current school year, but enrollment growth of 138 students matches information provided by USD #233 representatives at previous school board meetings. Rep. Schwab chose to address how student growth may or may not affect district expenditures, but failed to mention how it would have affected school district funding if the block grant hadn't been approved by the Kansas Legislature. In previous school years, prior to the implementation of the block grants, school funding was determined by a formula based upon student enrollment. If you added students, you received more funding. There was a base calculation, and then additional "weightings" could result in additional funding for each student. Those weightings included things like if the student received free or reduced lunch, attended vocational school, was bilingual, etc. During the 2014-2015 school year, for the base funding calculation, schools received [\\$3,852 per student](#). If the previous funding model were applied to this year, the higher enrollment would have resulted in at least \$531,576 in additional state funding. Compare that amount to the actual funding increase of \$449,335 and it becomes obvious that USD #233 lost revenue through the implementation of the block grant. The district also would have been eligible to raise roughly \$190,000 in additional local funding through the Local Option Budget thanks to the growth in student enrollment, but the implementation of the block grant prevented them from realizing that revenue growth as well.

3. Claim: "The district actually cut property taxes which decreased it's own funding. The school board, influenced by the superintendent, actually cut taxes to their own hurt."

Analysis: USD #233 has posted its [current school year's budget](#) on the district website. Current tax levies are shown in Code 99 on pages 75 and 76 of the document. Line 100 on page 76 of the Code 99 shows total taxes levied for each of the last three school years. They are as follows:

2013-2014: 69.486 mills
2014-2015: 67.868 mills
2015-2016: 67.768 mills

The school district has reduced its mill levy each of the last two school years.

4. Claim: "The district could increase the local option by 2 mills raising over \$4MM to help in aid."

Analysis: For the most part, with a few limitations, the district can set the local mill levy as high as it wants. The limitations are on the district's spending authority. It does no good to raise taxes if the district doesn't have the authority to spend the tax money. When the Kansas Legislature adopted the block grant funding mechanism, they froze spending authority through the Local Option Budget (LOB) for the 2015-16 school year at the spending cap that had been in place for the previous school year. In [USD #233's budget](#) document for the current school year, looking at line 08 of the Code 99 on page 75 of the document, you'll see that the expenditure level for both the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years are expected to be \$64,120,804. That amount indicates the maximum the district can spend out of that fund. The district did not forfeit any spending authority out of the LOB.

5. Claim: "Another advantage of the block grant is now the term 'Capital Outlay' is irrelevant... That excuse is now gone, and the district can now move the money where they need to in order to make sure you are compensated fairly."

Analysis: Capital Outlay funds are still legally required to be [used for Capital Outlay expenditures](#). The only exception is Capital Outlay funding a district receives from the state, which can be used for general expenditures. USD #233 receives state funding in the amount of \$2,170,433 (column 4 of the spreadsheet referenced in Claim #1 above) of its total Capital Outlay budget of \$23,853,212 (line 170 in Code 16 on page 36 of the [USD #233 budget document](#)). Only that \$2,170,433 could be used for general expenditures.

6. Claim: “Because of these reasons, other districts like Topeka are increasing teacher and staff compensation.”

Analysis: Here is a comparison of the contract settlement ratified by Topeka and the tentative agreement reached in Olathe –

Topeka – step and column movement, \$380 added to each cell on the [salary schedule](#), monthly health insurance contribution by the district of \$493.94 (does not cover a full single policy)

Olathe – step and column movement, no increase to cells on the [salary schedule](#), monthly health insurance contribution by the district of a minimum of \$669 (covers full single)

While Topeka’s contract settlement did include increases to the salary schedule and Olathe’s did not, Olathe’s tentative agreement provides a greater contribution towards health insurance.