

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

1st Session of the 46th Legislature (1997)

HOUSE BILL NO. 2037

By: Smith (Dale)

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to schools; amending 70 O.S. 1991, Section 18-101, which relates to school funding; clarifying statutory language; and providing an effective date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 1991, Section 18-101, is amended to read as follows:

Section 18-101. The Legislature ~~hereby~~ declares that this act is passed for the general improvement of the public schools in the State of Oklahoma; to provide the best possible educational opportunities for every child in Oklahoma; and to have a more beneficial use of public funds expended for education; ~~and this.~~ This act shall be liberally construed to attain these goals within the purview of the following principles and policies:

1. The education of our children is more than the performance of a duty or act of love. It is these things and also the highest expression of enlightened self-interest by the people of Oklahoma. Education is our finest investment.

2. The system of public schools should be designed to strengthen and encourage local responsibility for control of public

education. Local school districts should be so organized, financed and directed that they can provide full educational opportunities for all children. The maximum public autonomy and responsibility for public education should remain with the local school districts and the patrons of such districts.

3. It is the responsibility of the state on behalf of the people of Oklahoma to establish, maintain, and continually improve the public schools of Oklahoma. In furtherance of this responsibility, the people of Oklahoma through the state have the responsibility to support financially the public schools.

4. Effective local control requires that local school districts contribute to the support of school budgets in proportion to their respective abilities.

5. The system of public school support should assure that state and local funds are adequate for the support of a realistic foundation program. It is unrealistic and unfair to the children of the less wealthy districts to provide less state support than is necessary for full educational opportunities.

6. The system of public school support should encourage local school districts to provide and support improved educational programs.

7. The system of public school support should make provisions for the apportionment of state funds to local school districts on a strictly objective basis that can be computed as well by the local districts as by the state.

8. The system of public school support should effect a partnership between the state and each local district, with each participating in accordance with its relative ability. The respective abilities should be combined to provide a financial plan between the state and the local school district that will assure full educational opportunities for every child in Oklahoma.

9. State support should be extended to all local districts regardless of wealth, for this not only develops a sense of broader responsibility, but also creates flexibility taxwise permitting the exercise of local initiative. State support should, to assure equal educational opportunity, provide for as large a measure of equalization as possible among districts. The taxing power of the state should be utilized to raise the level of educational opportunity in the financially weakest districts of the state.

10. The system of public school support should provide for an equitable system of state and local sharing in the foundation program. The degree of local sharing should be based, as nearly as possible, on the true ability of the local district, so that each may contribute uniformly to the foundation program.

SECTION 2. This act shall become effective November 1, 1997.

46-1-5651

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