



900 SW JACKSON ST., STE 201
TOPEKA KS 66612-1235

Jake LaTurner
KANSAS STATE TREASURER

PHONE: 785-296-3171
FAX: 785-296-7950

This past week I added my testimony of support for a bill that was put forward in the House Education Committee requiring that financial literacy be added to the State's educational curriculum. As a former legislator, I was always somewhat reluctant of proposed legislation that added some sort of new regulation and/or requirement and I understand why some could be skeptical of the mandate HB 2166 imposes. However, after nearly two years serving as the Kansas State Treasurer, I have seen how families in our communities face a host of difficulties, many of which are rooted in a common source... Money.

Former Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan once said, "The number one problem in today's generation and economy is lack of financial literacy". I have come to strongly agree with Greenspan's statement. Educators who teach financial literacy witness the positive impacts of the knowledge they instill on their students and the financial skills they impart become a shield against many of the financial problems faced in our communities and our nation.

Imagine if every Kansas student who graduated was well-versed in interest rates. Would that knowledge make them a little more judicious when spending student loan money? Would it help them be a little more strategic in the homes or vehicles they purchase and from whom they make those purchases?

Imagine if every Kansas student was well informed of the practices of predatory lending. Would knowing and understanding these traps make them less likely to fall prey to predatory lenders?

Imagine if every Kansas student knew about credit scores? Would that knowledge help them make the kinds of behavioral choices that studies show could save them hundreds of thousands of dollars in the course of their lifetime?

Imagine if every Kansas student was aware of the benefits of a Learning Quest 529 education savings account. A generation who knows and understands the value of saving for the future and passes that knowledge on to their children perpetuates a culture of responsibility and increased opportunities. As Mothers and Fathers they will pass on the gift of planning ahead. By setting up 529 accounts for their children, they will help them alleviate massive student loan debt that stunts the professional and personal development of too many Americans.

Imagine if every Kansas student knew about compound interest and how to make their money work for them. Teaching our kids before graduation that investing as low as \$20 a paycheck from high school graduation until retirement can build them several hundred thousand dollars in savings thanks to the help of compounding interest. We can take big steps towards addressing our society's retirement savings problem when our teachers help create light bulb moments for students about how small investments over time return great dividends and create secure futures.

Imagine if every Kansas student knew the importance of creating a budget and balancing their household checkbook. More money smart households means Kansans who know how to live within their means and expect the same of their elected officials who are handling revenue and spending issues at the local, state and nation level.

This is our opportunity to get ahead of the curve. To give the next generation the proper tools that set them up for success. Everyone is going to face money problems throughout their lifetime, but there are so many money problems that can be avoided by first knowing the traps and the pitfalls. Mandating financial literacy before graduation is a gift not only to our kids, but also our state, and our nation.

While I certainly support HB 2166, I also stand ready to help advance other efforts to increase financial literacy in Kansas. Our children deserve every opportunity to succeed and taking steps to help them learn more about the financial sector will help on their path to success.

Jake LaTurner
Kansas State Treasurer