

Jeff Colyer sworn in as 47th KS governor

(AP)-- Republican Jeff Colyer promised a "new day" of openness shortly after taking the oath Wednesday as Kansas' governor, addressing the public and a GOP-controlled Legislature that is deeply divided over a court order to increase state spending on public schools.

Colyer, the state's longest-serving lieutenant governor, replaced former GOP Gov. Sam Brownback immediately after Brownback stepped down to become U.S. ambassador-at-large for international religious freedom. Colyer, a 57-year-old surgeon, took the oath for his new office in a ceremony inside the Statehouse.

Colyer largely avoided policy issues in his inaugural address. He is expected to give a longer and more detailed speech to a joint session of the Legislature in the near future.

But ahead of the ceremony, a top Republican lawmaker urged him to push for a long-term settlement of ongoing legal battles over education funding that led to the Kansas Supreme Court's mandate.

Senate Majority Leader Jim Denning, who is influential among GOP conservatives, said Colyer should either support rewriting the state constitution or initiate settlement talks with four school districts suing the state.

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