

KS Supreme Court: School funding is adequate

(AP)--The Kansas Supreme Court has approved an increase in spending on public schools that the Democratic governor pushed through the Republican-controlled Legislature.

But the high court declined in its ruling Friday to close the protracted education funding lawsuit that prompted the decision.

The school finance law boosted funding roughly \$90 million a year.

The court declared the new money is sufficient under the Kansas Constitution but said it was keeping the underlying lawsuit open to ensure that the state keeps its funding promises.

Democratic Gov. Laura Kelly had hoped the Supreme Court would end the lawsuit. Four local school districts sued in 2010.

The districts' attorneys argued the new law would not provide enough new money after the 2019-20 school year. Education funding tops \$4 billion a year.

“After seven rounds of arguments at the Kansas Supreme Court and legislative responses to each prior decision, the Court today unanimously ruled the Kansas school finance system complies with the requirements of the state constitution. I am relieved this litigation has ended and should not recur as long as the Legislature and governor fulfill the promises they have made. At the end of the phase-in period, Kansas taxpayers will be spending – and public schools will be receiving – roughly \$1 billion more each year than when this began. With this lawsuit now behind us, it’s time for a thoughtful conversation about whether this process we have witnessed over the past decade is really how Kansans want school finance decisions to be made.” -Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt

“The Kansas Supreme Court's ruling in the Gannon lawsuit is a victory for Kansas, our kids, and the future of our great state. Gov. Laura Kelly promised she would be the Education Governor, and she's delivered just months into her first year. We hope the overwhelming bipartisan support in the Kansas Legislature for fully funding our public schools remains strong as we work to fulfill our promise to the court to continue to increase funding.” -KS Democratic Party Chair Vicki Hiatt