



Spending is fine

Sunday, July 3, 2005

To the editor:

Your June 26 editorial on the legislative special session suggests that legislators are on the brink of abandoning “the state's commitment to properly funding K-12 education.” It is hard to see how this is so, given that statewide, taxpayer support for schools increased 22 percent from 1993 through 2004, and that is after inflation. (Our Web site, www.flinthills.org, has more details on state and district funding histories.)

The Supreme Court made much of the findings of a consultant’s report to conclude that the Legislature has abandoned its responsibilities. But as Gerrit Wormhoudt explained in a policy brief for the Flint Hills Center for Public Policy, previous rulings of the court correctly observed that “the legislature is prohibited from delegating legislative powers” to anyone, including consultants. A private report cannot be binding on this or future legislatures. Unfortunately, the court has also turned away from its previously articulated “principle of noninterference” in legislative functions to claim that legislative authority can be outsourced.

Finally, no consultant’s report can accurately assess the value that taxpayers and families place on education. We will know that value only when the forces of competition are more fully brought to bear on the provision of education.

John R. LaPlante,

Wichita