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Funding Plan Approved; KS Schools To Remain Open

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — Kansas legislators passed an education funding plan Friday night after top Republicans rewrote it to gain broad, bipartisan support so that it would satisfy a court mandate and end a looming threat that public schools across the state might shut down.

The votes were 116-6 in the House and 38-1 in the Senate, sending the measure to Republican Gov. Sam Brownback, who told reporters he would sign it. The GOP-dominated Legislature met for two days in a special session forced by a state Supreme Court ruling on education funding last month.

Lawmakers struggled with how to pay for a \$38 million increase in aid to poor school districts for 2016-17 — in a dispute that ultimately focused on less than 1 percent of what the state already spends. Brownback said lawmakers did “a fantastic job.”

Kansas is embroiled in a lawsuit filed by four school districts, and legislators were fashioning a one-year funding fix ahead of a potentially more contentious legal and political battle over schools next year. The immediate issue was complying with the Supreme Court’s mandate to make the distribution of state aid fairer to poor school districts.

Associated Press