

**House Committee on Education, March 5, 2015**

In opposition to  
**HB 2345 – Prohibiting School Board Members From Having a Conflict of Interest**

**By Amy Martin, School Board member Olathe USD 233  
Region 15 Vice President KASB, President Elect Designee KASB**

Mr. Chair, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 2345 and share information about my local district that is relevant to your decision. Olathe USD233 does not have an official position on this bill, however it is important you know how this would affect us.

Olathe District School policy (BCBG, adopted in 1998 and revised and reviewed as recently as 2011) is expressly designed to address conflict of interest and situations where a “Board member is in a position where his or her interest in service to the Board of Education, and his or interest in private employment with a business or corporation that may be considered for a contract, might conflict.” Policy dictates that “any board member may declare a conflict of interest in a particular issue that is subject to a board vote and shall leave the meeting until the matter and respective board vote is concluded. The minutes shall reflect the fact that a particular member has declared a conflict of interest, abstained from issuing a vote and removed themselves from the ensuing board discussion and potential vote.”

Olathe District School policy (BH, last reviewed in 2011) further addresses school board member ethics. Among other things, it states board members will “render all decisions based on the available facts and my independent judgment, and refuse to surrender that judgment to individuals or special interest groups” and “avoid being placed in a position of conflict of interest and refrain from using (their) board position for personal or partisan gain”

With 4,442 people on staff, our school district is one of the community’s largest employers and, likewise, neighboring school districts hire a substantial number of people who live within our boundaries. While I am not personally impacted by this proposed change, several of my fellow board members are. One has a child employed by the district, one has a spouse employed by the district, and one has a child who has previously been employed by the district but recently had a baby. Additionally, we have one candidate in the upcoming school board election who is employed by a neighboring district, one who is married to an employee of a neighboring district, and one who is employed by a bank used by the district.

Board members must be held to a high standard and endeavor to make decisions that best serve the educational welfare of the students in our care. This proposed law adds nothing to our existing policy in that respect and serves only to severely limit the ability of citizens to serve their community.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.