

January 23, 2012

TO: Senate Ways and Means Committee

FROM: Dr. Michelle Sedler, Superintendent, Turner USD 202

SUBJECT: Senate Bill 259

My name is Michelle Sedler, Superintendent in Turner USD 202 in Kansas City. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before this Committee on behalf of the Turner School District.

The Turner School District supports extending Senate Bill 259. This bill, if enacted, would allow state retirees to continue to be employed by their retirement district, especially in hard to fill areas such as, but not limited to, math, science and special education.

Passage of this bill is extremely important to Turner USD 202. Currently, we employ several retired educators to meet the needs of the students in our school system, mostly in special education. Had we not been able to hire retirees, we would not have been able to fill these positions. Historically, we have needed to hire multiple retirees to fill our open vacancies. If this law were to expire July 1, 2012, the Turner School District, like many other districts in the state, would be hard pressed to employ teachers in areas very difficult to fill. Unfortunately for students in Turner, as well as other parts of the state, many hard to fill teaching positions will not be filled with highly qualified teachers.

It is always the intention of the Turner School District to employ the most qualified person for each vacant position. We want the best teachers for our students. Sadly in the educational field, we are experiencing a shortage in the number of highly qualified teachers, especially in hard to fill areas. It is important for the Turner School District to maintain every opportunity to hire the most qualified teachers for our students, even if that means they are currently retirees in the state of Kansas. To my knowledge, hiring a highly qualified retired teacher to meet the needs of our students does not cost the state any additional money.

Turner USD 202 strongly supports the extension of Senate Bill 259.