

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS**

**March 16, 2016**

**HB 2729**

**Dr. Julie Ford, Superintendent  
USD No. 501, Topeka Public Schools**

Chairwoman Grosserode and Members of the House Education Budget Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to HB 2729 regarding procurement. I submit testimony today in order to provide feedback on our initial interpretation of the bill. As written, and barring other requirements in state procurement that I may be unaware of, it is unclear how the provisions of this bill would assist school districts in saving either time or money. We hope to gain better understanding of the proposal and how it would achieve expected efficiencies, and would welcome the opportunity to provide further feedback as you work on this proposal.

As to the transfer of some procurement decisions to the Department of Administration, HB 2729 does not appear to require the Department of Administration to ensure competition to achieve the best pricing available for the purchases and contractual agreements proposed in the bill. USD 501 uses state and cooperative contracts when it is to our advantage, and we use competitive bidding when we believe we may be able to obtain better pricing. If best pricing practices are not the aim of this proposal, it leaves it to question as to how you expect to gain efficiencies and savings.

We also ask for a point of clarification as to how the Secretary will handle this new authority. While it appears that the bill would have the Secretary of Administration take on these purchases directly, such an undertaking is likely not feasible. If the Secretary were to delegate this authority to the Division of Purchases, it would greatly slow down the business of all school districts and would require increased state staffing to accommodate the extra layers of state government inserted under the bill.

Our school board and citizenry feel strongly about the need for local control. Under this bill, our board would still have to approve expenditures to submit to the Department of Administration. To add another layer of government involvement at the state level would not only be inefficient, but would undeniably cause delays for procurement for schools districts that would result in unexpected and unwarranted ancillary costs.

For example, it appears that while fuel is included under the bill, it does not include fuel used for the transportation of children. Our district obtains a better price for all fuel by combining these purchases. We have a contract established for this expenditure that is based on competitive pricing.

Thank you, Madame Chairman, for the opportunity to participate in today's hearing. We look forward to working with you to ensure that efficiencies are achieved, as opposed to undone, in the school district procurement process.

## Five Shawnee County Public School Districts

# ONE UNITED VOICE



## Shawnee County School Districts

The 28,590 students of Shawnee County, Kansas, are served by five public school districts. Leadership from all five Shawnee County public school districts worked collaboratively to create our 2016 Shawnee County Legislative Positions. Our Legislative Positions were mutually created with the beliefs that Shawnee County students are our top priority, there are significant societal benefits gained by supporting exemplary public education, and all Kansas students deserve an adequate and equitable public education.

## Shawnee County Combined Facts

Student enrollment: 28,590  
Square miles served: 483  
Facilities:

- Elementary Schools 39
- Middle Schools 10
- High Schools 7
- Alternative Programs 7

Economic Impact on  
Shawnee County Economy:

- Total FTE Staff 4173
- Total Payroll \$204,489,201.00

# 2016 Shawnee County School Districts Legislative Positions

## Standards and Accountability

- We support implementation and assessment of standards adopted by the Kansas State Board of Education.
  - *We must raise education standards to help produce successful students who are prepared for life, citizenship, careers and able to compete in a global economy.*
- We oppose the use of public dollars and tax credits to fund private schools.
  - *Any school that receives public funds must meet state and federal accountability standards and provide programs/services required of public schools.*

## School Funding

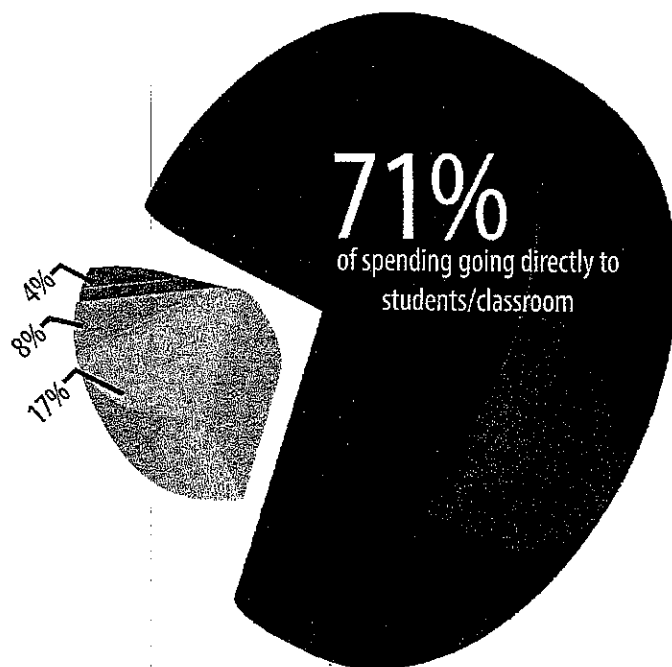
*We support:*

- A school finance formula that supports the implementation and assessment of standards adopted by the Kansas State Board of Education and is designed to address the needs of students and ensure each student and school have the capacity to meet the Rose Standards.
  - *A formula must account for changing student needs, higher student expectations, and increasing costs. Given the significant statistical relationship between socio-economic status and students found to be at-risk of academic failure, reliable measures for poverty, such as Free-Lunch status, must be the indicator for allocating funds intended to address the needs of at-risk students, especially where there is a high density of poverty.*
- A school finance formula that provides adequate and equitable funding for public schools is one that:
  - *is based on a per pupil amount for each district*
  - *fully funds early childhood education*
  - *fully funds all-day kindergarten*
  - *fully funds special education*
  - *considers high and low enrollment*
  - *supports at-risk needs*
  - *provides equalization aid for Capital Outlay*
  - *continues Local Option Budget and*
  - *funds Bond and Interest at the full percentage required by law.*

## School Efficiency

*We support:*

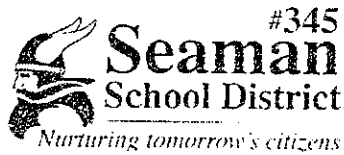
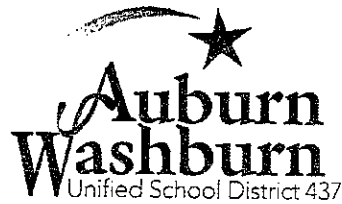
- Allowing districts increased flexibility in allocating funds to support student learning and oppose arbitrary requirements to direct funds into certain functions, including instruction.
- *Allocation of Kansas K-12 public education spending in 2015 (Percent of spending going directly to students/classrooms, percent of spending indirectly supporting students):*
  - Teachers, paraprofessionals, books and classroom materials (51%)
  - Building administration and support staff (5%)
  - Transportation (4%)
  - Student Services – counselors, psychologists, speech pathologists, nurses, social workers (4%)
  - Instructional Support – librarians, technology support, professional development (3%)
  - Food Services (4%)
  - Capital Expenses – construction, building repair, payments for bonds & interest (17%)
  - Maintenance and Operations – utilities, custodial, insurance, security (8%)
  - District administration and contracted services (4%)
- Each of these areas provide meaningful support directly to students to ensure each student is safe, engaged, learning and prepared for success.



## Teacher Recruitment

*We support:*

- Local boards of education hiring the most qualified candidate, and if necessary, to pay any additional actuarial cost established by KPERS if a KPERS retiree is the most qualified candidate.
- Alternative methods for obtaining professional licensure and increasing reciprocity with other states.
  - *To increase the number of qualified candidates for licensed positions.*



## Approved by each Board of Education

Auburn-Washburn School District #437  
Shawnee Heights School District #450  
Silver Lake School District #372  
Topeka Public Schools #501  
Topeka Seaman School District #345

Jim Gartner  
Eric Deitcher  
Randy Matzke  
Patrick Woods  
James Adams