

February 3, 2017

Dr. Tiffany Anderson
Superintendent
Topeka Public Schools
Unified District No. 501
SB 95, Testimony for Public Health and Welfare Committee

Chairman Schmidt and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to share my support for the common sense improvements to the safety net proposed in SB 95.

We see every day the impact that poverty and hunger have on the children of our community. When they are worried about having their basic needs met, they simply cannot thrive in the classroom.

Knowing that 22.6% of children (1 in 5) in Shawnee County are food insecure, we do everything we can to help the children who are struggling with hunger and food insecurity.

We offer meals through the federal School Breakfast and Lunch programs, and we try to fill in the gaps by partnering with nonprofits that provide additional supports. We partner with Harvesters to distribute BackSnacks to over 1,000 students (among 18 schools) to provide supplemental meals over the weekend. We also partner with Harvesters for 7 school-based food pantries to distribute fresh produce and healthy items to families in need each month.

But it is not enough to help only the children. If they are growing up in food insecure families who struggle to put food on the table, those stresses and nutritional deficiencies will be felt throughout the family. We must ensure that all of our families who are eligible for federal nutrition benefits and child care supports receive them.

The safety net programs are an important part of keeping our community strong. We support removing unnecessary barriers to participation and ask for your support of SB 95.

Respectfully submitted,



Dr. Tiffany Anderson, Superintendent
Topeka Public Schools

Senate Public Health and Welfare