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To: Rep. Troy Waymaster and the House Committee on Appropriations  
From: John Hess, Director of Fiscal Services and Operations, KSDE  
Date: February 2, 2022  
Re: Opponent Testimony to HB 2548

Chair Waymaster and members of the House Committee on Appropriations:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in opposition to HB 2548. The Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) supports efforts to modernize the State's information technology system and to ensure proper cybersecurity practices. However, KSDE is concerned about the implications of the provisions in HB 2548 which would amend the process through which certain information technology projects must go through the office of the executive branch chief information technology officer (CITO). Specifically, KSDE is concerned about the number of agency projects impacted by the proposed changes to statute, the potential impact on KSDE's project schedule, and the amount of funding required to comply with such changes.

KSDE manages approximately 150 different IT projects and applications each fiscal year. These applications serve a variety of functions for KSDE and school districts, which include reporting non-personally identifiable data on state assessments, collecting data on school district expenditures, and allowing school districts to access federal grant funds. These applications are largely built and managed by KSDE's in-house IT staff. Additionally, any updates or changes to these applications generally fall well below the current \$250,000 threshold for CITO approval. Based on our understanding of the language included in HB 2548, as introduced, all of these projects would have to go through the CITO process.

KSDE believes that such a change would hamper the agency's ability to make necessary adjustments to many of our applications by requiring all projects, no matter how small, to go through one centralized process. The current process allows KSDE to efficiently manage a wide array of applications and projects to meet the unique needs of K-12 education. We are concerned that a single, centralized process would create inefficiencies in KSDE's IT project management system and would risk putting KSDE projects behind schedule. Delays in projects could impair the ability of school districts to report necessary data or to access their federal grants.

Finally, KSDE is concerned about the amount of funding required to comply with such changes. The current CITO process can be quite time-intensive for current IT staff, taking up 40 to 50 percent of a project manager's time. The KSDE IT department is staffed to comply with current statutory requirements. Requiring all agency projects to go through the CITO process would require up to eight additional IT project managers, based on KSDE's prior experience with the process. Based on a salary of \$65,000 per project manager plus fringe benefits at the FY 2023 rate, hiring up to eight additional IT project managers would cost up to \$700,000. KSDE does not have the financial resources available to hire the staff that would be required to comply with the changes proposed in HB 2548. While KSDE does

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have a large budget, the vast majority of our financial resources are dedicated to state and federal aid programs from K-12 education. The agency's State General Fund operating budget for FY 2023 is fully obligated for existing costs, particularly salaries and wages and contractual services. Additionally, federal funds for agency operations are either limited to certain programs or have been fully obligated. KSDE could not comply with the provisions of HB 2548, as introduced, without additional funding for the agency's operating budget.

KSDE understands the importance of modernizing the State's information technology infrastructure. However, the agency believes that a single, centralized system will create inefficiencies in KSDE's IT project management system, delay the agency's IT project schedule, and will create costs the agency cannot absorb within existing resources. Instead, KSDE supports leaving the current threshold of \$250,000 in statute.

Thank you for your time. We will stand for questions at the appropriate time.

**For more information, contact:**

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