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### Written Proponent Testimony

HB 2626 – An Act concerning the teacher service scholarship program; making and concerning appropriations for the fiscal years FY23, FY24, FY25, FY26 and FY27 for the state board of regents to fund such scholarships

Presented to the House Appropriations Committee  
Thursday, March 17, 2022

By

Deena Horst and Ben Jones, Legislative Liaisons  
Jean Clifford, Member, District 5  
Kansas State Board of Education

Chairman Waymaster, Vice-Chairman Hoffman, Ranking Minority Member Wolfe Moore and members of the House Appropriations Committee:

Thank you for allowing us to share our thoughts in regard to HB 2626.

Kansas has a teacher shortage and all indications are that it will worsen. The applicants for the teacher service scholarship far outnumber the scholarships awarded. Increasing the funding for this scholarship will allow more individuals to fulfill their desire to become teachers and/or earn the credits necessary to become a special education teacher. All recipients are required to teach a year in Kansas for each year they accept the scholarship, thereby increasing the possibility recipients will remain teaching in Kansas once they've graduated. Because we are currently only able to fund half of the eligible recipients, this bill doubles the appropriations for the scholarship, approximately \$1.5M a year, sunseting in five years.

Teachers who are licensed to teach in a hard-to-fill discipline, such as math or science, can teach anywhere in Kansas to meet their obligation. Teachers obtaining a license to teach in other areas can meet their obligation by teaching in underserved areas, which includes the entirety of the Kansas State Board of Education District 5, nearly the western one-third of Kansas. Other underserved areas include the Topeka (USD 501), KCK (USD 500), and Wichita (USD 259) school districts.

Jean Clifford, State Board District 5 representative, provided the following information. *"The Teacher Service Scholarship Program has brought State Board of Education District 5 alone 67 desperately needed teachers in a variety of areas:*

- *35 Underserved*
- *16 Elementary*
- *4 Special Education*
- *4 Math*
- *3 English Language Arts*
- *2 Pre-K*
- *2 Science*
- *1 Social Studies*

*These teachers are serving in 24 of the 84 school districts in SBOE District 5 and they are making a significant difference in the ability of local districts to fill teaching positions. This allows local districts to keep class sizes lower and ensures students have the best opportunities to learn.*

*But many more teachers are still needed and there are more applicants who need this scholarship to ensure they have the financial ability to complete their programs. This program greatly helps applicants finish their program and step into those unfilled positions in local districts."*

We urge you to assist in the quest to raise the number of individuals qualified to be teachers by increasing the funding for the existing teacher service scholarship. This is a program that is working. Now, more than ever, Kansas needs to increase its capacity to provide more scholarships to more potential teachers!

Thank you for your consideration.