

# USD #252 Southern Lyon County

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Dr. Michael Argabright, *Superintendent of Schools*

March 8, 2022

Dear House Taxation Committee,

I am testifying as a proponent for HB 2724 and thank you for your leadership with this bill. The remainder of this testimony, I want to make some comments about the impact of HB 2724.

Thank you, the House Taxation Committee members, for the foresight of excluding school districts in the initial Senate version of this bill last year. Committee members, thank you for allowing additional testimony on HB 2724.

I am providing testimony from a rural district perspective. Southern Lyon County USD 252 covers 295 square miles south and east of Emporia serving 560 students in Lyon County. USD 252 works with county officials in Lyon and Coffey Counties while building an annual published budget.

Rural districts do not have layers of support to comply in a timely manner with additional responsibilities, this falls upon employees already wearing several hats. In many cases school districts work with multiple counties in assembling annual budgets. This bill as amended, places additional layers of timely requirements to school districts working with multiple counties. The current legislation also places unintended consequences to the statewide 20-mill levy that allows for equity in funding across Kansas school districts.

Public budget hearings are comprehensive and thorough as we partner with large landowners in small communities that support public education. Currently, Lyon County and Coffey County newspaper publishing deadlines range from 3-6 days in advance. Building a budget, allowing for a board meeting to discuss the budget, publishing the budget for all patrons, a special board meeting for a budget hearing, and meeting the August deadline for submitting our budgets to KSDE is challenging on any given year. Late legislation also impacts these timelines. Removing the 20-mill levy will assist in less confusion by local taxpayers attempting to understand the revenue neutral rate on a levy that is required and local boards do not have control over.

Kansas schools continue to serve our students in person, while adapting to the challenges of this pandemic. We are requesting this committee to exclude the 20-mill levy from the RNR to reduce additional layers of reporting, requirements, and bureaucratic tasks. Thank you for your attention on this bill and your service to Kansas!

Sincerely,



Dr. Michael Argabright  
*Superintendent of Schools*

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