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House Educational Committee  
January 24, 2023  
House Bill 2040

USD 323 Rock Creek Schools  
Testimony in Support

Thank you for allowing USD 323 to offer testimony in support of HB 2040, which would allow Kansas School Districts to use current-year student enrollment to determine state foundation aid.

USD 323 Rock Creek is in the heart of Pottawatomie County. The communities of Westmoreland and St. George make up this proud school district. Ten years ago the district had a student population of 871 with our current student count at 1,332. The Rock Creek Community is very proud of the academic and athletic strength of its school district and is committed to continuing that tradition with strong community support.

Rock Creek has been experiencing healthy growth for the past ten years. We are up approximately 100 students this year from the 2021-22 school year. This is an exciting opportunity for our district and one filled with challenges.

Our needs assessment indicates that our growth is spurring the need for more teaching staff, transportation, support staff, and spaces for learning. While our base state aid is used for some of these needs, it is becoming more and more difficult to stay ahead of the growth without the state aid being received in the year the growth is realized.

HB 2567, which was passed into law in May of 2022, has the potential to add student population to districts across the state. Adding even a few students to our growing school district places the weight of the additional funding needed directly on the Rock Creek School District taxpayers. This will only exasperate the problem of the student

population increase in our district. Rock Creek is experiencing growth on the HWY 24 corridor without realizing any industry tax base within the district. The weight of student support is felt directly by our agricultural population and homeowners. House Bill 2040 will help ease some of that pressure on our local taxpayers.

Considering HB 2040, benefits would not just be for the patrons of USD 323, but for other growing districts across the state. The House Bill would ensure that any unintended consequences of growth that open enrollment could cause would be funded by the State and not by local entities.

USD 323 Rock Creek supports HB 2040 and respectfully asks the committee to recommend this bill favorably. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Joan E. Simoneau  
Superintendent, USD 323  
Rock Creek Schools