



**Testimony: SB 479 (Proponent)
Senate Committee on Education
March 5, 2024**

By: Dr. Tonya Merrigan, Superintendent (written only)

Chairman Baumgardner and committee members,

Thank you for conducting an informational hearing and for the opportunity to enter written testimony in support of SB 479, transferring teachers from the KPERS 3 cash balance plan to the KPERS 2 plan and defining teachers for purposes of KPERS.

The primary goal of the Blue Valley district is **to ensure every student attending our schools has the educational programming and opportunities, delivered by quality educators, to allow them to thrive long after they leave our doors.** We embrace every student who walks through our doors and always work to provide them with the tools to succeed. Blue Valley has a student population of more than 21,800 and consistently ranks in the top tier of high performing schools, both in the state and in the nation. (See "Quick Facts" at the end of testimony.)

The Blue Valley School District employs over 3400 FTEs, including 2,026 certified employees. To further our goal of delivering exceptional educational opportunities by quality educators, we must continue to invest in our teachers. HB 2659 positively impacts our ability to retain teachers. As our local economy continues to grow, Blue Valley often finds itself competing with not only other local school districts for employees, but with districts in Missouri as well as the private sector. If we want to remain competitive, we **must** continue to offer robust retirement plans as part of our compensation package for teachers and staff.

We thank you for your ongoing support of teachers and your efforts to consider transferring teachers pensions from KPERS 3 to KPERS 2.

USD 229 Blue Valley Schools: Quick Facts

K-12 Student Enrollment	21,858	ACT District Composite Average*	23.6
Early Childhood—grade 12 Enrollment	22,412	ACT Statewide Average	19.8
Average Daily Attendance	91.7%	SAT District Average	1297
Graduation Rate	97.5%	SAT Statewide Average	1243
Teacher's with Master's Degree or Higher	74%	*with 92.3 % taking ACT	