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## House K-12 Education Committee Representative Larry Campbell, Chair

Darren Muci, Wichita Public Schools  
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Good afternoon, Representative Campbell and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to share with you the procurement practices used by USD259-Wichita. Our goal is to provide the best service and product for the education of students. We pride ourselves in fine tuning our procurement strategies to get the best value for taxpayers' dollars.

We already use some of the State's Purchasing contracts that are available and make sense for us. We also use many other regional and national cooperative purchasing contracts that are to our benefit. And we also use contract pricing from some of the educational service centers. And finally, and perhaps most importantly to us, we have three times facilitated, and managed, national purchasing contracts for roofing supplies and materials, and educational furniture. The latter saved our School District, many USDs in Kansas, and school districts and regents institutions nationwide, thousands of dollars.

Mandating our use of the State's Purchasing department will not provide for efficiencies as our sheer size, technical expertise, and professional capabilities allow us to be efficient and expeditious for our customers: the ninety-three schools and special programs serving over 50,000 USD 259 students.

### Information Technology, Equipment, Services and Software -

We have negotiated an agreement for the purchase of computers and laptops through the Western States Contracting Alliance agreement and directly through Dell. Last year we compared our pricing point strategies to that on the State's contract with MHEC and found that it was not comparable to what we are doing. The prices would be a minimum of 50% more per unit.

District-wide network software that we purchase must be robust and designed to provide services for a large organization. We have developed our own bids for the purchase of software for – student information, managing job applications, transportation services, textbooks inventory, nutrition services programs, and building repair and maintenance work orders. For IT services we would have to contact the State to advise them of our needs. The State would contact our local vendors to solicit pricing, and then forward that information back to us. We could have completed this process ourselves.

#### Food -

The State currently has two contracts available for food purchasing. We currently have ten contracts and annually process over 300 purchase orders for our nutrition services operation. It requires a team of Nutrition Services and Supply staff members to work with Purchasing to facilitate the orders and shipments of food throughout the year. Transitioning these to the State would still require us to source pricing to ensure that we will receive exactly what has been planned and approved for our menus. Last year we compared our pricing point strategies to the open market through a national contract and found that we are saving over \$800,000 annually on our top 100 food items. Our process is saving the district money and getting the best value for the price.

#### Fuel -

We purchase fuel 2-3 times weekly for our vehicles and school buses and solicit the pricing from vendors that will deliver to the Wichita area. Prices fluctuate hourly and can be dependent upon the needed volume and delivery location. We use multiple vendors. Even if the State were to implement contracts, we would still have to call each individual fuel supplier to identify the current pricing.

#### Services –

This bill requires USDs to solicit bids or proposals for services that are currently exempt from such processes. We require a variety of specialized, or non-traditional, services such as: Equipment repair, subject matter experts in areas such as engineering, auditing, IT, and specific project services (e.g., single-stream recycling, composting, dust mop rental, etc.). We have contracts for such services from vendors that are almost always locally based. By contacting them directly we can move expeditiously to receive the necessary services.

#### Our Volume -

We annually process nearly 5000 purchase orders and have hundreds of contracts already in place. The logistics to process purchase orders and contracts will still need to be staffed. The local level will still need to provide information and identify the needs of the organization, then transfer this information to the State who will likely have to communicate back with the USDs during the process. This seems inefficient at best.

#### In conclusion -

USD259-Wichita has worked in concert with other local units of government in our area, including the City of Wichita, Sedgwick County Kansas, Wichita State University, and the McConnell Air Force Base 22<sup>nd</sup> Contracting Squadron. These are our peers. The purchasing professionals of these organizations meet twice monthly to strategize, discuss best practices, and implement solutions that can be beneficial. We work closely together to provide the best services at the best price for our constituencies.

Mr. Chairman and Committee Members, we respectfully doubt there are significant savings, if any, for USD 259 and are concerned this bill would impede our ability to best serve our schools. We believe the needs of school districts would require additional personnel in the Department of Administration to manage the influx of specifications from 286 school districts. We urge the Committee to oppose HB 2143. Kansas school districts are pursuing the best value for their students, taxpayers and communities.