

Testimony before the

**House Committee for K12 Education Budget**

on

**HB 2636**

by

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**Testimony provided on behalf of the United School Administrators of Kansas and the Kansas School Superintendents Association**

**March 12, 2018**

Chairman Patton:

Thank you for this opportunity to address the committee.

Our organizations stand in support of House bill 2636

Kansas schools have undergone a number of changes over the last 25 years which have required a host of bond issues across the state. When you simply look at the number of students, the population hasn't seen much of a change. Those numbers have taken a roller coaster ride over the years, yet the state has seen a minimal increase in the total number of students. The bigger challenge with student population in Kansas has been the shift from our rural communities to families moving closer to the urban and suburban core.

As some rural districts have closed buildings, others have chosen to consolidate with near-by school districts. While once small school districts, locations such as Andover, De Soto, Goddard, Gardner, Spring Hill, Maize, and others have exploded with students. Let's not forget about the

continued growth in Blue Valley, Dodge City, Garden City, and Olathe. So even though we've only seen a moderate increase in the student population across the state, where kids go to school has changed dramatically. These population shifts have created a need for additional classrooms or in many situations brand new facilities, but this is only one factor when it comes to bond issues. With more than half of our schools built in the 1950's, 1960's, and early 1970's, the upkeep for our aging buildings requires support as well. Often times the cost of modernizing an older building can cost more than the original building cost 60-70 years ago. All of these factors and maybe a few more have pushed the need for local districts to pass bond issues so these projects could be completed in our local communities.

As you can see on the graph below, it is very difficult to predict when school districts are going to need bond projects. With the passing of SB19 last session, a monetary cap was placed on the dollars the entire state could spend on school bonds passed at the local level. This includes both districts who receive state aid and those who don't. The cap is set each year by the bond dollars retired from the previous year (bonds that were passed 20-25 years ago to support building projects). Our concern is if this cap isn't removed, local school districts are going to be unable to build and maintain the schools our state needs. When companies are looking to move to Kansas, they look for access to transportation, a capable workforce, and communities in which their employees can live and grow their families. Schools are also at the center of those conversations. As a state, over the last 25 years, we have done an amazing job of building a strong infrastructure of schools across the population. We are asking for HB 2636 to be passed, removing the cap so we can continue to maintain a competitive balance for all of our students.

	Bond Elections	Bond Elections Successful Past	New Schools	Bond Amounts
2011	7	3	2	\$50,629,000
2012	16	14	6	\$527,965,531
2013	22	17	5	\$624,890,000
2014	24	15	5	\$539,960,000
2015	26	19	4	\$464,672,000
2016	17	8	3	\$291,105,000
2017	16	13	8	\$888,070,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>33</b>	