



House K-12 Education Budget Committee
Written Testimony on HB 2636
John Hutchison, CPA, SFO | Chief Financial & Operations Officer
Monday, March 12, 2018

Chairman Patton and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity provide testimony **in support of HB 2636**, which would repeal the statutory limit on school district bond issuances.

The Olathe school district is situated in a densely-populated metropolitan area that continues to experience rapid growth. We are the second largest school district in the state with a student population of more than 30,000 students. This growth did not happen overnight; rather, the district has grown each year since 1965.

The district currently has 57 attendance centers, including: 35 elementary schools, 10 middle schools, 5 high schools, and 7 specialty/early childhood centers. The most recent high school opened this school year.

The process for building new schools and facilities does not occurs over a short period of time. Our board carefully studies the demographics in the community and surrounding areas and works to anticipate changes in enrollment that may result from new home construction or business relocation. The planning process can span years and input from stakeholders and community members is sought well before going to a bond election.

The Olathe community takes pride in its schools and has repeatedly supported efforts to provide high-quality academic centers for students and families. Part of our success is due to clear communications about the process, the cost, and the outcome for our bond initiatives. Unfortunately, the cap implemented as part of the School Equity and Enhancement Act removes the ability to plan and creates the same uncertainty for districts that policymakers are hoping to resolve for the legislature.

Safe and high-quality learning environments are essential for our students and our community. We appreciate the legislature's commitment to these same shared goals, but also recognize the need to better understand the impact these projects will have on state resources and the need to be able to plan accordingly. As a district, we would be happy to work with you to address these concerns.

The Olathe Board of Education urges your support of HB 2636 and would be happy to work with you to address any concerns you may have. If you have any questions, please contact John Allison at (913) 780-8022 or John Hutchison at (913) 780-8034.