



Testimony before the
House Education Committee
in **OPPOSITION** to
**House Bill 2233 — Requiring school districts to provide a stipend for teachers to
purchase classroom supplies**
by
Game On for Kansas Schools
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Mr. Chairperson, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to House Bill 2233.

Game On for Kansas Schools is a nonpartisan, grassroots advocacy effort among Kansans who share a belief in high-quality public education as a right of all Kansas students. We advocate for Kansas public schools to ensure our teachers, principals, superintendents, and school board members have the resources necessary to deliver quality education to all Kansas students. We inform communities across the state about education funding and policy issues and legislation affecting our students. The Game On team includes members representing the spectrum of education stakeholders (parents, educators, and other community advocates), and our membership extends statewide.

We would first like to state that we support providing teachers with funds for classroom supplies. We know many teachers spend their own money outfitting their classrooms and support efforts to alleviate this financial stress. However, we strongly believe this is not the proper mechanism. This bill is an unfunded mandate and improperly ignores local control. It does not include an appropriation and merely requires school boards to decide what in their budgets they must cut in order to provide this funding. The legislature should not force school boards to prioritize classroom supplies over other funding demands, such as additional staffing, programs or supplies. Local boards should maintain the ability to determine what's best for their districts. For larger districts, this total can come to hundreds of thousands of dollars which boards could rightfully decide could be better used in multiple other ways. According to House Bill 2233's fiscal note, this bill would cost districts \$17,350,000 for which "school districts would have to make budget adjustments to fund within existing resources of its local general funds" each year.

Additionally, some organizations and community members already give teachers funding for classroom supplies. These groups cannot spend money in all of the ways a school board can. For example, a community group could give teachers at a local elementary school monetary assistance in purchasing school supplies. They cannot give districts money to hire an additional teacher. Thus, if school boards now take over the funding of these stipends, the outside groups may not be able to fill the hole created and districts will be left with a net loss.

Our schools have substantial unmet needs and a degree of fiscal uncertainty as the overall school funding budget remains unresolved in this session. We urge legislators to focus on addressing those larger issues, and we urge this committee to avoid creating another unfunded mandate and limiting local board discretion at this time.