



January 31, 2022

Written and Oral Testimony: Opposition of HB 2553

AN ACT concerning education; relating to school attendance; allowing students to transfer to and attend school in any school district in the state; requiring school districts to set transfer capacity and adopt certain transfer policies; establishing an appeals process if a transfer request is denied; amending K.S.A. 72-13,101, 72-3122, 72-3123, 72-3124 and 72-3125 and repealing the existing sections.

Members of the House Committee on K-12 Budget Committee,

On behalf of the Valley Center Unified School District No. 262, we urge the members of this committee and the Kansas Legislative body to **oppose** HB 2553 as introduced on January 26, 2022.

Valley Center School District is located north of Wichita, Kansas. We serve students from portions of the Kechi, Park City, and Wichita communities and all of Valley Center and surrounding rural areas. The district's enrollment is currently greater than 3,100 students. From 1992 to 2006, the district's enrollment increased by 15%. From 2007 to current the district's enrollment increased by 18%. The district is undergoing an enrollment projection study, as hundreds of new homes will be constructed within our district's boundaries in the next few years. This bill, as written, would further hinder our ability to plan and serve the growing needs of our students and potentially establish legal repercussions for all districts if they deny access.

Over the last decade, the USD 262 Board of Education has voted on two separate occasions to allow out-of-district open enrollment. On both occasions, the board voted NOT to change our current practices. To attend our district, you must rent/lease/own property within our district's boundaries. There are limited exceptions under our current policy, including probationary limited out-of-district status for children of staff members or those who once resided and attended our district, then moved outside of the district's boundaries.

The district typically increases enrollment by double digits throughout the school year. We receive and deny hundreds of out-of-district requests a year. Taxpayers and Board Members have shared their concerns that local property taxes would increase for constructing new facilities being used to serve families who do not contribute towards those taxes. This is particularly true since legislators chose to place an additional burden on property taxes for those districts like Valley Center that are property poor per pupil (current equalization aid is at 24% on bonds and dropping versus 60% equalization on bonds passed before 2016).

We appreciate your service to our great State and encourage you to keep our students in mind when making this vital decision.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cory L. Gibson, Superintendent

Dr. Cory L. Gibson

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