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Dr. Michael Argabright, *Superintendent of Schools*

March 18, 2021

Dear Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee,

I am testifying as a proponent for SB 277 and thank you for your leadership with this bill. The remainder of this testimony, I want to make some comments about the impact of SB 13 which did not include school districts when passed by this committee earlier this year.

Thank you, Madam Chair and the Assessment and Taxation Committee members, for the foresight of excluding school districts in the initial Senate version of this bill. Committee members, thank you for allowing additional testimony on SB 13.

I am providing testimony from a rural district perspective. Southern Lyon County USD 252 covers 295 square miles south and east of Emporia serving 550 students in Lyon County. USD 252 works with county officials in Lyon and Coffey Counties while building an annual published budget.

Rural districts do not have layers of support to comply in a timely manner with additional responsibilities, this falls upon employees already wearing several hats. In many cases school districts work with multiple counties in assembling annual budgets. This bill as amended, places additional layers of timely requirements to school districts working with multiple counties. The bill also places unintended consequences to the statewide 20 mill levy that allows for equity in funding across Kansas school districts.

Public budget hearings are comprehensive and thorough as we partner with large landowners in small communities that support public education. Currently, Lyon County and Coffey County newspaper publishing deadlines range from 3-6 days in advance. Building a budget, allowing for a board meeting to discuss the budget, publishing the budget for all patrons, a special board meeting for a budget hearing, and meeting the August deadline for submitting our budgets to KSDE is challenging on any given year. Late legislation also impacts these timelines. Additional requirements would place school districts on a pathway that is not realistic or likely, as many of these stipulations are not in our control.

The fiscal notes on SB 13 include an additional 2 million dollars to Kansas to comply with this bill. After the second year, school districts will encumber these expenses. School districts request these dollars to fund public education and not additional layers of bureaucratic red tape.

Kansas schools continue to serve our students while adapting to the challenges of this pandemic. We are requesting this committee to exclude school districts from this bill with additional layers of reporting, requirements, and bureaucratic tasks. Thank you for your attention on this bill and your service Kansas!

Sincerely,



Dr. Michael Argabright
Superintendent of Schools

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