

February 10, 2023



### Written Testimony: Neutral - HB 2271

An ACT concerning education; relating to the enrollment and attendance of non-resident students in school districts; authorizing any student whose parent or guardian is employed by a school district to enroll and attend such school district; exempting any such students from a school district's open-seat lottery process; amending K.S.A. 72-3123, as amended by section 16 of chapter 94 of the 2022 Session Laws of Kansas, and repealing the existing section.

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 **support components of** HB 2271 and consider additional amendments to K.S.A. 72-3123.

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 3,200 students. From 1992 to 2006, the district's enrollment increased by 15%. From 2010 to the present, the district's enrollment increased by 20%. There are nearly 1,800 new homes planned to be constructed within our district's boundaries within the next several years.

Over the last decade, the USD 262 Board of Education has voted on two occasions to consider 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 in and attended our district, then moved outside of the district's boundaries. **It is for that reason that I support HB 2271.**

This law, as approved last legislative session, hinders our ability to plan for and serve the growing needs of our students and may establish legal repercussions for all districts if we deny access. The district typically increases enrollment by double digits throughout the school year. It is possible we'd have limited seats available in specific classrooms in August, only to have them overcrowded by January. 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 the need to construct new facilities that would 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 state aid is at 21% on bonds and dropping versus 61% equalization on bonds passed before 2016). **For these reasons, I do not support the original bill and recommend that additional amendments be considered for growing districts, particularly those entitled to additional equalization in funding for bond projects.**

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

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Cory L. Gibson'.

**Dr. Cory L. Gibson**

*Superintendent of Valley Center Schools – USD# 262*

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