



House K-12 Education Budget Committee
Written Testimony on HB 2143
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February 1, 2017

Chairman Campbell and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written comments on HB 2143, a bill relating to school district procurement. Olathe Public Schools is a growing district with nearly 30,000 students. We are committed to providing high quality education programs and services for each student in the most efficient manner possible.

Olathe engages in a competitive bidding practice that includes:

- evaluating product options and pricing available on the state contract, through cooperative purchasing programs and through shared agreements with other local government entities *and*
- ensuring procured products and services meet our specifications and best meet the needs and expectations of our students.

Among our concerns with HB 2143:

- **Olathe is often able to negotiate better prices than those on the state contract list.** Given the size and location of the Olathe School district, we are often able to purchase goods and services regionally – at rates lower than those available on the state contract. By establishing relationships with vendors, we are often able to negotiate more favorable terms and pricing, while still complying with state law.
- **This bill only allows a 1% deviation for local purchases.** When our school district contracts with local vendors, those dollars are often reinvested in the community and in our schools. The 1% deviation for local preference seems low and may discourage small, “growing” companies from bidding or conducting business in the community.
- **This bill removes “services” from the list of exceptions.** The process for identifying, negotiating and contracting for professional services is most effectively managed through a process established by the local school board. These services are sometimes limited in both time and scope. Examples may include accounting or auditing services and specialized legal services.
- **School districts are already able to purchase through the Department of Administration.** In KSA 72-6760 currently provides the necessary flexibility for school districts to procure goods and services that best meet the district’s need at the most competitive price. Olathe has a number of options available to us, including purchasing from the state contract. We are also able to independently negotiate rates with vendors, participate in a cooperative purchasing program or enter into a purchasing community contract ~~(?)~~ with other local entities. As previously mentioned, some of these other options provide Olathe with better pricing for preferred products and services.

In addition to providing high quality programs and services for our students, Olathe Public School is committed to being good stewards of taxpayer dollars. We routinely evaluate contracts, pricing and specifications because identified savings may be reinvested in other areas throughout the district. Again, thank you for the opportunity to offer feedback on HB 2143 and please feel free to contact me at 913-780-8034 or jhutchison@olatheschools.org if you have any additional questions.