



**House K-12 Education Budget Committee
Representative Fred Patton, Chair**

Testimony on HB 2561- March 8, 2018

The Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools (KCKPS) is pleased to testify in support of HB 2561, a bill which will place in state law the long-standing practice of providing a minimum funding level for transportation reimbursement. This reimbursement recognizes the fact that the transportation formula does not sufficiently account for the costs necessary to transport students to and from school in a dense urban environment like Kansas City, Kansas.

The KCKPS Board of Education is committed to the safety and security of all 22,000 students served by the district, and that commitment begins with ensuring that they are able to get to and from school safely. Despite being an urban community, vast areas of Kansas City, Kansas do not have sidewalks, and forcing students to walk in the street would put them in significant physical danger on a regular basis. In addition, the community is bisected by three interstate highways, along with five major transportation arteries. It is critical that the district provide transportation to students whose routes to school are impacted by those hazards.

These and other physical infrastructure challenges have led the Board to conclude that the state eligibility limit (2.5 miles) for transportation reimbursement does not adequately serve the needs of district students and families. Thus, Board policy is to transport all elementary students who live beyond .8 miles from their school, and all secondary students who live beyond 1.5 miles from their school. An additional 413 students who live inside those boundaries are transported because their route to school is bisected by a major hazard.

The district currently transports 10,957 students a day, of whom 4642 (42%) live beyond the 2.5 mile boundary. (In addition, elementary students who can walk to a bus stop without crossing a major thoroughfare are picked up and transported). KCKPS spends approximately \$6.8 million a year to transport students to and from school, of which \$2 million is reimbursed by the state of Kansas. The minimum funding level reimbursement we receive is \$550,000. It is an important piece of the funding that the district uses to transport students to and from school safely.

KCKPS has a singular goal: "Each student will exit high school prepared for college and careers in a global society." To reach this goal, it is critical that students be able to get to and from school safely and reliably. Our working-class families frequently must rely on the district for support in getting their children safely to and from school, due to challenges with transportation, work schedules, etc. Providing transportation support to our families is not only the right thing to do for both moral and safety reasons, but it also supports the district goal, by ensuring that children are able to get to and from school every day. Enshrining in state law the long-standing practice of providing a minimum funding level for transportation reimbursement is a critical component that allows the district to support its students and families. Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.