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Testimony in writing to the House Education Committee

In opposition to

House Bill 2233: Requiring school districts to provide a stipend for teachers to purchase classroom supplies.

Stand Up Blue Valley: Families for Our Schools

February 15, 2019

Stand Up Blue Valley: Families for Our Schools is a parent and patron advocacy group in the Blue Valley School District. We advocate for legislation that supports Blue Valley Schools and work to help our community understand the importance of their votes to our schools.

Stand Up Blue Valley opposes HB2233 for the following reasons:

- We believe local principals, district administrators, and elected Boards of Education are best positioned to decide how district operating expenses are spent. This bill would remove local control of millions of dollars statewide.
- We believe this bill places undue restrictions on the spending of our tax dollars, allocated for the use of school districts; districts should be able to spend in a way that best suits their needs and not a one-size-fits-all, unnecessarily restrictive prescribed way.
- We oppose unfunded mandates of this nature. This is purely a reduction in district operating budget to fund this mandate.
- The clause requiring expenditures to cover one-year-only use materials shows how poorly thought-out this bill is.
- An additional unfunded mandate comes in the form of requiring the District treasurer to account for (in the case of Blue Valley) over \$750,000 in expenses by over 1,500 teachers, which would likely amount to hundreds of thousands of individual transactions.

SUBV posted about this bill on our Facebook page - a place where our members share information and feedback. Here are some of the comments from Blue Valley voters about HB2233:

- If a legislator wants to support education funding, the formula and special education should be the focus of the KS legislature.
- (If legislators) want to run the schools this way, they need to run for their local school boards. End the micromanagement from Topeka!
- It doesn't sound like extra money for education. It sounds like legislators telling the schools how to spend money. It sounds like (the legislature is) trying to look like (they) support teachers.
- If I were a teacher in Kansas, I'd rather not be told what to spend my paycheck on...because ultimately that is where this money would come from.
- Our school PTO offers \$50 grants to teachers for classroom supplies and only about half are redeemed (receipts turned in for reimbursement) each year. Some teachers pool their money to buy durable equipment- and we think that's great.
- Purely political.
- (from a teacher) I would hate to see the budget cut elsewhere for this.
- Why is the money only meant for items that can't be used over time? This is a waste of money!
- (from a teacher) I have no idea how I would spend that money... just about everything I buy is meant for use over multiple years.
- It's sounds like a let's rob Peter to pay Paul attempt to circumvent funding schools adequately. It gives the appearance that the teachers are getting funding and supported but where and how will the inadequacy show up elsewhere?
- Unfunded mandates take away local control.
- The Blue Valley Educational Foundation funded 170 teacher grants this past year. When we review grants, one of the things we consider is longevity, number of students and academic/learning impact of the grant.

As of this writing, we have not yet had a comment supporting this idea. More comments are coming in, so feel free to check our Facebook page to read them for yourself.

Blue Valley voters support our children, teachers, and schools, and we want our schools funded. We do not want or need legislators telling our district how to use our tax dollars - that's why we elect a local Board of Education. Some districts may elect to fund classroom purchases for every teacher with operating budget monies. We support their right to do so. In Blue Valley, some of our 34 schools may choose to use operating budget monies in this way. We support the right of our district and school administration to make that decision. We do not support the legislature micromanaging district operating funds.

Sincerely,

Patty Logan

For Stand Up Blue Valley: Families for Our Schools