



**House K-12 Education Budget Committee
Written Testimony on HB 2526**

John Allison, Superintendent, Olathe Public Schools USD 233
February 12, 2020

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today in support of HB 2526, a bill amending capital improvement state aid by excluding USD 207, Fort Leavenworth.

Olathe Public Schools is the second largest school district in the state with a student population of more than 30,000 students. The district currently has 58 attendance centers, including 36 elementary schools, ten middle schools, five high schools, and seven specialty/early childhood centers. This growth did not happen overnight; rather, **the district has grown each year since 1965.**

The process of building new schools and facilities does not occur over a short time. Our board carefully studies the demographics in the community and surrounding areas. They work to anticipate changes in enrollment that may result from new home construction or workforce changes in the surrounding area. The Olathe Board of Education began planning for our next possible bond election last year – even though that election may not be for another 12-18 months. During the planning period, we work closely with our bond consultants and actively solicit input from stakeholders and community members.

The change proposed in this bill would positively impact our students and our community. Because Fort Leavenworth operates within a federal military installation, they have little assessed valuation on which to levy taxes, effectively lowering the starting point for the capital improvement state aid calculation. This adjustment in the calculation would result in a 17 percent increase in capital improvement state aid for Olathe Public Schools and support high-quality learning environments for students.

Moving forward, we believe the net cost to the state should be minimal as old debt is retired, and new debt is approved.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your work on behalf of Kansas public schools. Please feel free to contact me at jallison@olatheschools.org or (913) 780-8022 if you have any questions.