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Informational Testimony for HB 2639 and HB 2593
Presented to the
House Committee on Insurance and Pensions
Monday, February 14, 2022
By
Dr. Randy Watson
Kansas Commissioner of Education

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for allowing the Kansas State Department of Education to present testimony that is intended to provide the committee background information on how the pandemic has tremendously affected the number of licensed teachers, substitutes, staff, principals and superintendents.

The charts on the next page indicate the number of retirees reported to our agency and the number who are returning in any capacity. In addition, we are including the number of substitute teacher licenses that have been issued to help with the shortage of staff. From 2020 to 2021, we experienced a 63% increase in the number of teacher vacancies. The greatest number of this increase was with special education and elementary teachers. This year, we experienced a 17% increase in the number of teacher licenses processed by our agency.

During the month of January, many school districts were forced to temporarily close their doors because of a lack of certified staff and substitute teachers available to teach on any given day.

We are anticipating the greatest retirement of all types of staff occurring at the end of this school year. With a shortage of new teachers, principals and superintendents coming into the profession, we anticipate that we will have the greatest shortage of qualified staff in 2022-23.

To help alleviate the teacher shortage, the State Board of Education took emergency action in January of 2022 to allow people with the following qualifications (see attachment) to work with a Temporary Emergency Authorized License (TEAL) until June 1, 2022. In just a couple of months, our agency has issued over 600 of these types of licenses to assist schools.

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The majority of educators retire over the summer months. Approximately 13% decide to return to work after retirement. By changing the waiting period to return to work and to substitute, this bill would enhance the opportunity to have educators available at the start of the 2022-23 school term.

This proposed bill is one of many solutions to assist in keeping our schools open with qualified personnel. It is not the only solution, but could assist in helping ease the educator shortage in the next few years.

Thank you again for the opportunity to discuss the problem with the committee.

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Total Substitute Licenses:

2019-20 - 12,312

2020-21 - 12,634

2021-22 - 14,893

Total Temporary Emergency Authorized Licenses:

600

School Year	Number of Educators Reported as Retired
2011	1273
2012	1306
2013	1164
2014	1621
2015	1254
2016	1158
2017	1191
2018	929
2019	965
2020	1125
Total	11986

School Year	Number of Educators Reported as Retired & Re-hired
2012	163
2013	203
2014	184
2015	160
2016	125
2017	132
2018	159
2019	143
2020	140
2021	106
Total	1515

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Assignment Vacancy Top 5	Fall 2020	Spring 2021		Assignment Vacancy Top 5	Fall 2021
		Filled	Not Filled		
Special Education	157	29	181	Special Education	269
Elementary	142	30	131	Elementary	233
Science	76	8	66	English Language Arts	90
Mathematics	57	11	82	Mathematics	83
English Language Arts	51	11	59	Science	80
Total – ALL reported Vacancies	771	174	839	Total – ALL reported Vacancies	1253

*2013-2014 – 44,152 FTE Educators reported, as compared to 43,197 FTE Educators in SY 2020-2021

