



# SHAWNEE MISSION

## SCHOOL DISTRICT

March 14, 2019

House K-12 Education Budget Committee  
**Testimony in Opposition to House Bill 2395.**

Chairwoman Williams and Members of the Committee:

This testimony is submitted in opposition to House Bill 2395. The Shawnee Mission district believes that the specific funding and policy components included in House Bill 2395 do not address the issues raised in the most recent Gannon decision. The Legislature has worked diligently over the past decade to secure adequate funding for public schools in Kansas. In previous sessions, lawmakers have crafted a revised funding formula, and secured sufficient revenue to address funding equity. The remaining challenge is to meet the constitutional requirement for adequacy. House Bill 2395 does not complete the process.

Our legislative platform, attached, reflects the school finance policy priorities of our Board and our District. In the Shawnee Mission School District, we have invested the most recent restoration of funding into our schools, and into people and resources that directly benefit students. The base funding increases provided over the last two legislative sessions have helped us begin to improve outcomes again, increase teacher/student support, and provide better pay for teachers. Our Board, our teachers, and our parents continue to push for additional counselors, nurses, and social workers, in order to provide necessary support for students' behavioral health needs. In our district, the additional funding for inflation provided in SB 44 will allow us to directly address these needs, in order to continue our academic improvement.

Shawnee Mission School District supports the current Kansas Constitution and the additional resource the Kansas Supreme Court has identified as necessary. The Johnson County public schools collectively have endorsed joint legislative priorities that include support for the current Kansas Constitution, behavioral health funding for all, the



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provision of funding inflation as the Supreme Court has approved, and the elimination of the bond cap.

We appreciate the difficult decisions you are required to make this legislative session. Still, after the work and resources invested in the last few years, resolution of the issue of adequacy is at hand. We supported the solution provided in Senate Bill 44, which gets us to adequacy, as defined by the Supreme Court. We cannot support House Bill 2395, because of specific issues in the bill:

- The funding amount to schools for base services is \$48 million, not the \$90 million the Court expects to fulfill the prior year formula changes.
- The BASE funding amounts have been reduced from the plan the Supreme Court and the State Department of Education accepted as adequate, and the final years of the plan are unfunded.
- At-risk funding has been changed, and funds are earmarked for specific programs that may raise equity questions with the Court.
- Various components of the bill infringe on local elected board authority in matters such as mandating cash balances be capped at 15 percent and directives from the state regarding the type and installation method of roofing materials, among other issues.
- The components creating non-public school vouchers related to the issue of bullying are contrary to the District platform's opposition to voucher programs, which divert state funds to non-public entities.

If I can provide any additional information or answer questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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## **Shawnee Mission School District Legislative Platform 2019**

The Shawnee Mission School District will advocate for all our students, employees, and district. We recognize, however, that the school district boundaries are not the limits of our support. The Shawnee Mission School District joins other districts in supporting constitutionally suitable funding of public education to serve our kids, our community, our economy, and our state.

1. Protect the authority of the Kansas Constitution that ensures suitable provisions for the equitable and adequate finance of public education for all students in Kansas.
2. Support increased funding and increased access to mental health and behavioral health services for students and families.
3. Support a response to the Gannon decision of 2018 that addresses the remaining Court concern that adequacy will require additional resources to address inflationary increases from prior year funding.
4. Support greater opportunities for communities to utilize operational and capital funds at the local level with equalization.
5. Support rigorous academic standards to prepare students to meet or exceed the Rose Standards in preparation for success in a globally competitive workforce.
6. Support a stable school finance formula that covers the costs of providing every student the opportunity to be college and career ready, that is financially sustainable, promotes efficiency, accountability, greater local funding flexibility, target students at risk with supports for teachers and students, and ensures educational excellence for all students in Kansas.
7. Support special education services and state funding at the required 92% of excess cost and mitigate the wide variance in reimbursements.



8. Expand funding for early learning programs to recognize and address academic and social needs as quickly as possible for all kids, particularly children at-risk.
9. Support fully funding local, state, and federal mandates.
10. Support legislation to repeal or reduce the private education tuition tax credit program, and oppose vouchers, or similar programs.
11. Support maintaining non-partisan school board elections and seek resolution to the challenges created by the fall election cycles.
12. Support the sole authority of locally elected school boards to approve charter schools, as granted by state statute in accordance with the Kansas Constitution and require charter schools to operate with the same requirements as public schools.
13. Support the authority of the State Board of Education and locally elected school boards to adequately measure student achievement and educational success as granted by state statute in accordance with the Kansas Constitution and in conjunction with legislative oversight. Grading schools and districts based on measures such as standardized tests or other static measures do not accurately reflect performance.
14. Support policies and actions to recruit and retain educators and support staff including fully funding KPERS, returning to a KPERS Tier 2 structure and the associated benefits therein for employees hired after January 2015, and restoration of statewide due process.