

March 8, 2023

House K-12 Education Budget Committee

Written Testimony Neutral on House Bill 2444

Chair Williams and Members of the Committee:

The Shawnee Mission School District (SMSD) appears today in a neutral position. While we support the objectives of HB 2444 we are unable to fully support without amendments. We support every resource the state has to invest in addressing mental and behavioral health issues for our students. Our investment in district resources and utilization of local and community partnerships demonstrates our commitment to addressing this issue. This bill sets a policy that supports and funds resources and services in one system as defined “Community mental health center” and does not reflect the reality of how to best serve the behavioral health needs of our students and families when additional community resources may be available. It is necessary for us to use every system we have to address this crisis.

While the SMSD has not participated in the pilot program, as a district we have addressed the increasing mental and behavioral needs of our students and families by expanding internal resources and strengthening community partnerships with a number of qualified mental and behavioral health organizations. The SMSD has developed partnerships and Memorandums of Understanding with several community health centers, including Johnson County Mental Health, the Sunflower House, and First Call. Building principals, social workers and counselors work regularly with these organizations to ensure we are providing the greatest level of school-based services to any students and families who need assistance.

In an effort to provide greater access to integrated health care and behavioral health services, the SMSD opened a clinic within a school managed by the Health Partnership Clinic, one of our federally qualified health centers. Having a Health Partnership Clinic embedded within one of SMSD’s six high schools allows students and staff members greater access to integrated healthcare, including behavioral health services.

We greatly appreciate the Johnson County Mental Health Center and their vital, important work in the community. Of course, our intent will be to continue our current partnership even if HB 2444 were to become law. However, the structure of HB fails to support relationships with our other health care providers who can and do help SMSD students and families. There are more than 95,000 students in Johnson County public schools. It’s difficult to imagine that one system under massive pressures and demands can be the only solution we need.

In conclusion, we support choice and flexible responses rather than limiting support to only one system of care. The SMSD supports the work of all community mental health organizations and know from experience there are many more who can and do help. To be sure, a district like the SMSD is different from others in the state, with access to more resources and options, but



restricting any district to a one provider system will not and cannot meet the many and ever-increasing needs of all students and families.

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

Dr. Michelle Hubbard, Superintendent, Shawnee Mission Public Schools

913-993-6200 MichelleHubbard@smsd.org