

Testimony before the

Senate Select Committee for Education Finance

On

SB 44

by

Mike Mathes, Interim Superintendent: USD 251 North Lyon County

Dear Madam Chair and esteemed members of the committee,

I am here as a proponent for Senate Bill 44. North Lyon County is a small school district with 347 students spread out over 386 square miles. Our newest facility was built nearly 60 years ago, is in sad condition, and we haven't been able to pass a bond issue in over 25 years. Because of our lack of quality facilities and a location that is nearly 30 miles away from the nearest city, Emporia, added to the fact we have a low starting salaries, we have a very difficult time hiring and retaining teaching staff.

If this bill is passed, it will provide our district with an additional \$156,000. With this money, we will be able to provide our staff a raise of nearly 6%. It will give us the ability to hire a social worker or school nurse, neither of which we currently have, but desperately need. Our base salary is currently \$36,600 with limited housing availability, competing with larger districts such as Emporia with a \$40,000 base. It is imperative we be able to raise our base salary to be better able to compete for teachers and other staff.

Along with salaries and needed health staff, we are just beginning summer programs to work with at risk students who are not reading or computing at grade level, and a credit recovery program for high school students to keep them on pace to graduate. These

programs are being funded with a one-time grant that will need to be replaced with local money in the future.

I strongly urge you to support this bill to help us continue our march toward leading the world in the success of each student.

Respectfully,

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