

FIVE SHAWNEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS ONE UNITED VOICE

March 6, 2019

Chairwoman Baumgardner and Members of the Senate Select Committee on Education Finance:

For four years, the five Shawnee County school districts have collaborated and mutually developed our legislative positions. Each of the five locally elected school boards considered those positions and approved a legislative platform, establishing a unified Shawnee County legislative platform.

We are united in the belief that our students and staff are the top priority for Shawnee County. Our community supports our schools and relies on the societal benefits that are gained from a quality public education system. Through partnerships with private industry, we have developed a system that maximizes public dollars and provides students a pathway into the workforce. Shawnee County students and families are dedicated to their local public schools, and we believe all Kansas students deserve an adequate and equitable public education.

We supported SB 44 and likewise support SB 142, which would fully fund our schools at a funding level that takes in to consideration annual inflation and would allow us to continue to address the growing needs of our school districts, while also continuing to improve teacher recruitment and retention. New state aid for the 2018-2019 school year has impacted learning in Shawnee County schools in a variety of ways, including:

- An increase in teacher salaries across Shawnee County to attract and retain highly qualified educators.
- A focus on at-risk student programs including summer school and after school programs.
- Expanded preschool opportunities across Shawnee County.
- Expansion of Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) programs.
- Expanded social-emotional services delivered to students on-site by counselors , psychologists and social workers.
- Expanded career pathways, JAG-KS, internships, and other vocational-technical opportunities to assist career readiness.

For Topeka Public Schools, 85.2% of the new funding for the 2018-2019 school year was utilized for Topeka Public School teacher salaries. Our educators make up 30% of full time staff in all five school districts in Shawnee County. Our 1,333 Topeka Public School educators generate an economic impact worth \$233 million to Shawnee County. With the new funding for

2018-19, we provided a 6.8% full time teacher average salary increase. Our average teacher salary is now \$55,772, which has improved our ability to attract and retain quality teachers. For our community, each full time teacher generates an economic impact of \$174,793.70.

With one united voice, we support the concepts that have been laid out in SB 44 and draw your attention to the attached positions on school funding, which were mutually created with the beliefs that Shawnee County students are our top priority and that there are significant societal benefits gained by supporting exemplary public education. We ask you to support the passage and implementation of SB 44 for the benefit of the students and families of Shawnee County.

RESPECTFULLY,

Dr. Michael Morrison, Topeka Public School District #501
Frank Henderson, Topeka Seaman School District #345
Eric Deitcher, Shawnee Heights School District #450
Tom Bruno, Auburn-Washburn School District #437
Randy Matzke, Silver Lake School District #372