



Testimony: KSDE Budget (In-person, oral)
House K-12 Education Budget Committee
February 13, 2023
Presented by: Jeremy McFadden, Director of Finance
USD 229 Blue Valley Schools

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. My name is Jeremy McFadden and I am the director of finance at USD 229 Blue Valley Schools. I'm here today to discuss the **cost of living weighting** (weighting, not the annual CPI-U adjustment) contained in the school finance formula and, specifically, to urge you to amend that weighting as detailed in our booklet that has been distributed to all of you..

The cost of living weighting is designed to allow districts with an average appraised home value more than 25% higher than the statewide average to apply for additional funding, not to exceed five percent of the district's foundation aid. Districts utilizing the weighting must be using their full local option budget (LOB) and the entirety of this weighting is financed by local property taxes. It is subject to protest petition from the voters in the district.

We are here today asking for **three amendments to COLA, contained in K.S.A. 72-5139:**

- Increase the cap from 5% to **7%**;
- Reduce the eligibility factor from 125% above the average property value, to 115% which would allow more districts to be eligible; and
- Have the COLA cap increased annually based on the Midwest CPI-U.

Our district does not come to you lightly. We do so only to provide salary increases to those teaching in our district, who are finding it increasingly difficult to live in-district due to the high cost of living (e.g., in Blue Valley the average appraised home value is \$500,000). As one of the largest districts in the state, we are facing the same factors as in other districts of our size—including attracting qualified teachers—but without benefit of most of the weightings based on free lunch status.

You should each have a spiral-bound booklet in front of you, related to the Cost of Living weighting, detailing our proposed changes.

[Please refer to booklet.]

Again, we thank you for the opportunity to come before you, to urge a measure we believe will assist us, **as we continually seek to provide the highest quality educational opportunities and outcomes for our students.** I thank you for your consideration today and am happy to stand for questions at the appropriate time.



USD 229 Blue Valley Schools: Quick Facts

K-12 Student Enrollment	21,858	ACT District Composite Average*	23.6
Early Childhood—grade 12 Enrollment	22,412	ACT Statewide Average	19.8
Average Daily Attendance	91.7%	SAT District Average	1297
Graduation Rate	97.5%	SAT Statewide Average	1243
Teacher's with Master's Degree or Higher	74%	*with 92.3 % taking ACT	