



**House K-12 Education Budget Committee
Testimony on HB 2561**

Presented by John Allison, Superintendent
Thursday, March 8, 2018

Chairman Patton and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity provide testimony **in support of HB 2561**, which amends the transportation funding formula and codifies the current practice of distributing transportation dollars based on a “curve of best fit. “

Olathe Public Schools is committed to the safety of our students and to providing transportation options for families that need them. As a large and growing district in a heavily traveled metropolitan area, we regularly assess parent needs and safety concerns.

Our total headcount for the 2017-2018 academic year is 30,054 students and of that number, 25,790 (85%) of those students live less than 2.5 miles from their attendance center. In 2017-2018, we provided transportation services for a total of 9,345 students living within the district.

- Approximately 4,300 of those students living within the 2.5-mile radius rely on transportation provided by the school district. *The district does assess fees for families utilizing the pay-for-ride service, however, it covers only a portion of the overall cost to the district.*
- Nearly 2,000 students who qualify for free transportation services within the 2.5-mile radius because of their free and reduced lunch status. *These students and their families are exempt from paying the fees above.*

In the 2017-2018 fiscal year, Olathe Public Schools transferred approximately \$1.8 million from the general operating budget to cover transportation costs not funded by the state. If this bill is not enacted, the Olathe school district would lose another \$860,000 in transportation funding, bringing the total transferred from the general operating budget to nearly \$2.7 million a year.

Every dollar transferred from the general operating budget to cover transportation costs is a dollar that we cannot use for student learning and support services.

The curve of best fit offsets some of the additional costs associated with providing transportation for students in growing, densely populated areas. The Legislative Post Audit Report on K-12 Transportation Funding (December 2017) acknowledges that “a funding minimum that benefits large, densely populated districts might be appropriate.”

The Olathe Board of Education urges your support of HB 2561. If you have any questions, please contact John Allison at (913) 780-8022 or John Hutchison at (913) 780-8034.