

Testimony before the

Senate Select Committee on Education Finance

on

SB 422

by

**G.A. Buie, Executive Director, United School Administrators of Kansas and the
Kansas School Superintendents Association**

**Testimony provided on behalf of the United School Administrators of Kansas and Kansas
School Superintendents Association**

March 20, 2018

Madam Chairwoman and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to address the committee.

Our organizations are neutral on Senate Bill 422.

Our organizations have had extensive conversations regarding the Local Option Budget (LOB) and firmly believe in the importance of this fund, along with having the ability to increase or reduce the LOB depending on needs of the district and community. In the recent past we still had member districts who chose not to utilize the LOB state aid or only accessed a small portion, but times have changed. As schools have tried to remain competitive with salaries and continue to meet the expanding program needs of students, most Kansas school districts have pushed their LOB to at least 29.

Our organizations cannot support a bill that would require school districts to max out their LOB. If this funding stream is going to continue to be called a "Local Option," it needs to remain just that, an option for local districts. Just because most districts currently have maxed out their LOB state aid, this should not be an indication of support for a bill of this type.

We have the same concern requiring school districts to use a portion of the LOB account to support a districts At-Risk program. Although many districts may currently have this practice in place, it does not make the practice of using LOB funds a fit in all districts. If districts are going to be allowed to have discretionary funds, it should be up to the local school district to identify the programs they choose to support with those funds.

We stand neutral on this bill because the bill provides that LOB state aid would be based upon the current year budget, rather than the preceding year's budget. This change would also address one of the court's four equity concerns regarding SB 19. We support this change. We strongly believe any Local Option Funding should remain the choice of the local community and not a state requirement.