



**House Financial Institutions and Pensions Committee
 Testimony on HB 2659, KPERS retirement for teachers
 Prepared by Dr. Brent Yeager, Superintendent
 March 6, 2024**

Chair Hoheisel and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2659, a bill that would transfer certified teachers from KPERS 3 to KPERS 2. First and foremost, we appreciate that this committee and, especially, members of the Olathe delegation have worked with us to better understand how the changes made in 2015 have impacted our ability to retain newer teachers and fill vacancies within the district.

In short, this proposal matters because:

- It positively impacts our ability to retain teachers who entered the profession following the changes made in 2015,
- It levels the playing field as we compete with neighboring districts in Missouri and, most importantly,
- It helps ensure that we can attract high-quality professionals to work with our students.

Olathe Public Schools is the second-largest school district in the state and the largest in the Kansas City metropolitan area, with a student population of approximately 29,000 students. The district employs 4,311 FTEs, including 2,706.25 certified FTEs (see the table to the right for a breakdown of district personnel).

In August 2023, Olathe Public Schools was named the No.4 [Best Employer in the state of Kansas](#) by Forbes Magazine¹. Olathe Public Schools was the highest ranked K-12 school district on the list. The district was also named No. 12 on Forbes’ list of best mid-size employers in the United States. These rankings come not just because of our compensation, but because of

District Personnel Staffing Levels		
	2022-23	2023-24*
Superintendent	1.00	1.00
Deputy/Assistant Superintendents	7.00	7.00
Principals	53.00	53.00
Asst Principals	43.00	44.00
Directors/Supervisors Special Ed	10.00	9.00
Directors/Supervisors of Health	1.00	1.00
Directors/Supervisors Career/Tech Ed	1.00	2.00
Instructional Coordinators/Supervisors	25.00	24.80
All Other Directors/Supervisors	6.00	9.00
Curriculum Specialists	51.50	45.55
Practical Arts/ Career/Tech Ed Teachers	7.00	12.00
Special Ed Teachers	349.20	351.50
Pre-Kindergarten Teachers	5.00	9.00
Kindergarten Teachers	107.00	108.00
All Other Teachers	1,663.60	1,598.90
Library Media Specialists	50.00	51.00
School Counselors	86.00	86.00
School Psychologists	35.80	34.80
Nurses	64.20	62.00
Speech Pathologists	69.60	75.80
Audiologists	2.00	2.00
School Social Workers	31.40	25.40
Reading Specialists/Teachers**	19.00	93.50
Other (Alt. Ed, Homebound, e-Academy Teachers)	0.00	0.00
Total Certified	2,688.30	2,706.25
Non-Licensed Support Staff	1,355.66	1,355.00
Maintenance/Custodial	262.00	249.75
Total Classified	1,617.66	1,604.75
Total Staff	4,305.96	4,311.00

*Projected.
 **Reading Specialists were previously misclassified and counted with “All Other Teachers”.

¹ Forbes partnered with market research firm Statista to survey 70,000 workers at companies in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Participants were asked if they would recommend their employer to others, and to evaluate their employer based on working conditions, diversity, compensation packages, potential for development, company image and more. Participants also assessed employers beyond their own. All surveys were anonymous to encourage candor.

the investment we make in our teachers – targeted and meaningful professional in-service opportunities, robust mentoring programs, and opportunities for growth. We invest heavily in our teachers because we know that the return on that investment has a direct impact on student learning and success.

Olathe Public Schools is among the top five employers in the City of Olathe. As the Olathe and Johnson County economies continue to grow, the district often finds itself not only competing with other school districts for employees but also with a diverse workforce that offers competitive compensation plans for individuals of varying skill levels and backgrounds.

I raise these issues because it is a necessity – not a preference – that our district offer a competitive retirement plan for our teachers and staff. On behalf of the Olathe Board of Education and the many teachers our district employs, we ask that you pass HB 2659 out favorably.