

Organization: USD 308, Superintendent Dr. DM Johnson

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Bill: HB 2489. Short Title “Limiting the legislative option to purchase school district buildings to buildings that were formerly used as attendance centers.”

Position: Opponent

Date of Hearing: January 24, 2024 at 3:30 p.m.

I would like to start by stating I first believe we should rescind K.S.A. 2023 Supp. 72-1439.

HB2489 does not go far enough in returning local control to the elected Boards of Education and to the taxpayers in each community.

In the case of USD 308, due to declining birth rates in our county, our Board of Education would like to consolidate our buildings and be better stewards of our fiscal funds. We have an opportunity to create future economic development in Hutchinson with a school building; however, current and possible future statutes will hamstring our finances, our Board of Education’s authority, and local economic development.

The importance of local control in governance, particularly in education and community decision-making, cannot be understated. Local control empowers communities to tailor policies and practices to their unique needs and values. In the context of education, it allows school districts to respond directly to the preferences and requirements of their students and parents, fostering a more responsive and accountable system. Local control promotes community engagement and participation, enabling residents to have a direct say in matters that directly impact their schools and neighborhoods. Furthermore, it encourages innovation and experimentation, as local authorities can adapt strategies based on their firsthand knowledge of the community's dynamics. This decentralized approach recognizes the diversity among communities and encourages a sense of ownership and responsibility, ultimately contributing to the overall effectiveness and sustainability of local institutions and the betterment of the State of Kansas.

Dawn M. Johnson
Superintendent
USD 308