

**Board of Education**

Amy Sudbeck - President  
Cara Baker - Vice President  
Kris Anderson  
John Deters  
Tory Jost  
Jason Kramer

Carol Kuckelman, Clerk  
Tracie Wagner, Treasurer

# NEMAHA CENTRAL SCHOOLS



**UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 115**  
318 Main Street  
Seneca, KS 66538-1924  
Ph: 785-336-6101 Fax: 785-336-2268  
**TAVIS DESORMIERS, SUPERINTENDENT**

**Nemaha Central High School**  
Benjamin Scism, Principal  
214 N. 11<sup>th</sup>  
Seneca, KS 66538  
785-336-3557

**Nemaha Central Elementary & Middle School**  
Amy Beck, Principal  
110 N. 11<sup>th</sup>  
Seneca, KS 66538  
785-336-2173

House K-12 Education Budget Committee  
Tavis Desormiers - [tdesormiers@usd115.org](mailto:tdesormiers@usd115.org)

*HB 2514, clarifies that nonresident students attending your school district in the 2023-2024 year shall be permitted to continue their enrollment until graduation from high school*

**Proponent**

January 25, 2024

Chairwoman Williams and Members of the House K-12 Education Budget Committee:

My name is Tavis Desormiers and I have been the Superintendent for USD 115 since 2022. I have been an educator and worked in the public school system for 27 years.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2514. Despite being a rural community school district, we have experienced tremendous growth in our enrollment in the last several years. A large part of this growth has resulted from the closure of small rural schools in our region. Currently, USD 115 educates 97 students that are considered “nonresident”, or out of district, students. This is not a new phenomenon; for the last 10 years we have consistently enrolled more than 80 such students annually. Largely due to this growth, USD 115 is currently operating at full capacity.

We realized the predicament we might be in with open enrollment and our capacity so we reached out to KASB for guidance. Their attorneys advised us

that under the current language in K.S.A. 72-3123 we would have to enter *all* of our out-of-district students into a lottery process, just like any other out-of-district student who may choose to apply for attendance under open enrollment.

If that were to be the case, high school juniors and twin siblings Lane and Maddie, who have been attending USD 115 since Kindergarten, would have to enter the lottery system to see if they are chosen to attend our district next year. If not chosen in the lottery, being forced to finish their senior year in another school would be devastating for them and we don't believe uprooting established students was the intent of open enrollment legislation. Thus, we strongly support the clean-up language included in HB 2514 that clarifies out-of-district students, like Lane and Maddie, *would not* be required to enter the lottery.

In closing, I also want to speak briefly to our growth and the impact it has had on our district. As small rural schools in our region have shuttered their doors, our student population has grown - particularly with out-of-district students. Because we are at capacity and still growing, our patrons passed a bond to add additional classroom space at our grade school and high school. That bond was necessary, in part, because our district is not receiving the property tax dollars of these out-of-district areas in our Local Option Budget. These are areas where students used to attend one district but after the closure of their school, came to USD 115. Unfortunately, the land mass in those areas is still retained by the closing district who continues to benefit from the tax dollars in their LOB. Many of those landowners want their property and their tax dollars to flow to USD 115, something not allowed under current law. I understand that fight is for another day but I thought it worth mentioning as an underlying cause of our student population growth.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony. I would be happy to stand for questions at the appropriate time.