



**Oral Opponent Testimony on  
HB 2637  
House Education Committee**

**By  
Leah Fliter  
Assistant Executive Director of Advocacy**

**Kansas Association of School Boards  
lfliter@kasb.org**

**Feb. 11, 2026**

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee,

KASB opposes HB 2637 as currently written. While we appreciate the focus on feeding hungry school children, HB 2637 was drafted without input from KSDE or the school boards charged with implementing the bill. As a result, HB 2637 is not only fundamentally flawed; it would also likely lead to a substantial cut in school districts' at-risk funding. Finally, it will likely force districts to tap into their general funds to compensate for lost federal dollars for school meals at a time when boards are backfilling nearly a half-billion dollars from base state aid and local property taxes due to state underfunding of mandatory special education programs that benefit all Kansas students.

Under HB 2637, each school board must determine how many students in each school qualify for free meals under the national school lunch program. Unfortunately, this methodology is flawed, because school boards don't have access to families' gross income unless families voluntarily make the information available through the application process. While there are other ways to qualify based on family participation in other benefit programs, the board will not have access to that information. This will likely result in artificially low numbers that a board can certify as qualifying under this bill.

As committee members no doubt are aware, the number of Kansas students who qualify for the national free lunch program currently serves as a proxy to determine the amount of at-risk funding districts receive under the Gannon school finance formula. The legislature's Education Funding Task Force is grappling with potential changes to that method of allocating at-risk funding, but at the present time Kansas schools will depend on the free lunch count as their at-risk funding qualifier in the upcoming fiscal year. HB 2367 would therefore cause significant financial hardship for Kansas schools in the near term.



KASB defers to the experts at the Kansas State Department of Education for their expertise on the complex logistical and financial sustainability challenges faced by districts whose schools qualify for the Community Eligibility Program. We trust that the Department's testimony will help the committee better understand the bill's fundamentally flawed underlying assumptions about how school districts operate school meal programs.

If HB 2367 were enacted in its current form, districts would be more dependent on state and local funds for food service. They'd likely have to backfill from their general funds or increase fees for families who pay for school meals to supplement the increased costs of the programs.

For these reasons, KASB respectfully urges the committee to reject HB 2367 in its current form.

Thank you.

***KASB is a non-profit service organization built on an abiding belief in Kansas public schools. We have put the needs of students and K-12 leaders first since 1917.***