



KANSAS NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION / 715 SW 10TH AVENUE / TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612-1686

Timothy R. Graham
Director of Government Relations & Legislative Affairs
Written Testimony – **Oppose**
House Bill 2637
House Committee on Education
February 12, 2026

Chairperson Estes, members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to HB 2637.

Kansas NEA is a member-driven organization representing nearly 22,000 educators across the state of Kansas. Our members are organized into more than 265 local associations and work in schools and communities across nearly all 105 Kansas counties, serving students in urban, suburban, and rural districts alike.

The positions we advocate for are proposed, debated, and adopted by hundreds of educators selected by their peers to attend our annual Representative Assembly, reflecting the collective voice of education professionals of all political parties, beliefs, and backgrounds who are united by a commitment to Kansas public schools and the students they serve.

KNEA has a resolution addressing the issue of student food insecurity.

Resolution C-3-9, as reflected in the Kansas NEA Book of Resolutions, states:

Kansas NEA believes that food insecurity is a threat to both the health and academic success of students and that local and state governments should develop, establish and implement policies to ensure that all students have access to fresh and nutritious food. Local school boards should likewise support efforts to seek effective solutions to food insecurity.

KNEA further believes that possible solutions to food insecurity on all campuses include but are not limited to:

- a. Food pantries;*
- b. Meal donations;*
- c. Grocery store gift cards; and*
- d. Food and financial literacy programs.*

Kansas NEA is deeply committed to addressing student food insecurity because educators see its impact every day in the classroom. Students who are hungry struggle to focus, engage, and fully participate in learning. Ensuring that students have reliable access to meals is not just a health issue; it is directly tied to academic success, classroom behavior, attendance, and long-term outcomes. Policies that effectively reduce student hunger can strengthen the learning environment and better position students to succeed.

Kansas NEA's concerns with HB 2637 are not about the goal of addressing student hunger, but about the mechanism the bill uses to do so. The bill places new procedural and public-facing requirements on local boards around participation in a federally voluntary program, effectively pressuring districts into participation or requiring them to publicly justify non-participation. This approach narrows local decision-making, creates unnecessary administrative burden, and risks politicizing fiscal determinations that are best made based on local capacity, operational realities, and existing federal guidance.

It may be argued that HB 2637 does not conflict with federal CEP statute on its face, but it narrows local discretion in ways that are not contemplated by federal law or guidance and could create implementation and compliance challenges, particularly around voluntariness and fiscal determination standards.

In closing, Kansas NEA believes HB 2637 was written with the best of intentions and reflects a shared concern for student well-being. However, the approach outlined in this bill would benefit from additional input from education professionals, school administrators, and those responsible for day-to-day implementation. Taking the time to engage those experts would help ensure that efforts to address student food insecurity strengthen, rather than complicate, local decision-making and existing federal frameworks.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify in opposition to HB 2637.