



Dr. Michael Schumacher, Superintendent
Shawnee Mission School District
michaelschumacher@smsd.org

House Bill 2451 Government resources and ballot questions.

Opponent

Written

January 22, 2026

Chairman Proctor and Members of the House Elections Committee:

The Shawnee Mission School District opposes HB 2451. We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 2451, which prohibits the use of local assets in support or opposition of state constitutional questions or ballot initiatives. In short, HB 2451 infringes on local decision-making on questions of importance for municipalities (including school districts) and their citizens and attempts to restrain the content of information that should be made available to the public.

The law focuses on the election or defeat of a state or local political candidate and HB 2451 adds State constitutional amendments and local ballot questions.

The bill says school districts must “promote or oppose” state or local questions in a “neutral manner” and “neutral information,” but only on the official government website. The bill’s use of “neutral” is abstract and ripe for conflict and litigation. The second section prohibits school district from efforts to “conduct or authorize” mass communications via “flyers, physical signage and statements posted on social media.” These issues are of the greatest importance related to bond issues to address new construction and upkeep of existing facilities.

These two components of the bill result in ambiguity and likely misinterpretation. A public school board by necessity is responsible for explaining, detailing, and presenting a proposed ballot question for construction bonds for new schools. “Neutrality” itself is probably debatable related to a ballot question for example. Is a levy for a construction not described by its benefits, efficiencies, and contribution to the operation of the public school? Could that description be rebutted by potential critics who argue the language is “not neutral”? The designation can be subjective.

We support our elected leadership and administration’s capacity to truthfully and accurately explain ballot questions and trust our communities’ capacity to evaluate a non-partisan and political decision based on the needs for physical improvements, or other resources. An accurate and detailed description of a project and its benefits is not propaganda.

We oppose the imposition of the limitations in House Bill 2451 as unnecessary, unless there exists a deep and obvious legacy of local school board misuse of the process, that warrant some consideration of change. We do not believe there is and thus respectfully request the Committee oppose this bill.



If I can provide any additional information or answer questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Schumacher". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line underneath it.

Dr. Michael Schumacher
Superintendent