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Chair Erickson and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in opposition of SB49, amending K.S.A 72-1163. There is no doubt that the most important responsibility of local school boards is to work with their communities to improve student achievement in their local schools. K.S.A. 72-1163, amended in 2022, achieved the goal of getting local boards more involved in directing monies to areas of academic concern in the annual budgeting process using needs assessment and state assessment data. Amended language in Section 1(a)(3), “in the minutes of the meeting at which the board approves its annual budget, the board shall include that such needs assessment was conducted by the board...” would indicate that the Legislature expects the local board to organize and manage the needs assessment process. This language is unnecessary, add no additional value, and places an administrative task burden directly on local school board members, typically made up of individuals who volunteer their time to serve the students and families of their communities. Amended language in Section 1(c) adding “Any time moneys are allocated to a fund, or existing moneys are reallocated from one fund to another fund, such allocation or reallocation shall be identified in the budget and summary” is another administrative burden that is unnecessary and adds little value.

Wichita Public Schools will conduct 84 needs assessments when building the budget for the 2025-26 school year. Currently our Board of Education members are involved in the needs assessment process, but they do not “conduct” the needs assessments. Board members can attend the site councils, building leadership team meetings, and staff input meetings where data is collected, but to think that these seven people can “conduct” the data collection for 84 individual school buildings is simply not realistic. The administrative work is completed by our 84 principals and their respective staff members who collect data through meetings and other feedback tools. It takes every one of them, plus 6 Budget Department staff members, to compile all the data for the board’s review. The Board does hold an open meeting workshop to have robust conversation around budget alignment and needs. Each board member receives a complete set of needs assessment report so they have the knowledge of every school’s needs and can review all requests from all schools to make improvements in student achievement. This is the most efficient way to complete this process in a district our size. Under this bill, our 7 volunteer board members, charged with making decisions impacting over 46,000 students, would instead spend their time figuring out the logistics of attending between 250 and 350 meetings to “conduct” the administrative tasks involved in completing 84 individual needs assessments.

The additional identification of allocated and reallocated moneys between funds is unnecessarily burdensome as well. The state budget forms already identify budgeted transfers between funds, plus provides two years’ worth of actual data to compare. New allocations to funds come primarily from either increased student counts and/or increase base aid per pupil. Is it meaningful to identify those changes in multiple places when the Form 150 provides a one-page summary of how state aid estimates

are calculated per fund? Further, budget reallocations from the Needs Assessments mostly occur within a fund, not between funds, which makes this additional language meaningless.

We do not object to the amended language in Section 1(a)(1) defining sources of input and requiring the complete assessments be put online and we do not object to Section 1(b)(1) providing board with state assessment data for the school district. We respectfully ask the Committee to strike the “conducted by” language for board members and the strike the additional budget allocation disclosure requirements, both of which add administrative burdens to local boards with no significant value-added. Thank you for your time and consideration.