



**Oral Testimony – Proponent on House Bill 2081
House Committee on Education
Submitted on Behalf of Kansas NEA & KASB
By Lauren Tice Miller, KNEA Director Government Relations & Elections
February 15, 2023**

Chairman Thomas, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support House Bill 2081. I submit this testimony on behalf of Kansas NEA and KASB.

This is a bill that establishes a new scholarship program with the hope of creating the next class of teachers of the year, and we are thrilled to have an opportunity to support this effort.

With more teachers retiring or leaving the profession and steady decline in newly graduated teachers seeking licenses, Kansas NEA and KASB believe increasing the number of scholarships available to future teachers would help with recruitment. Additionally, we believe greater opportunities to receive financial assistance and reducing the student debt load of our new teachers will also help with retention.

House Bill 2081 won't solve the teacher shortage overnight, but it is certainly a positive step towards addressing the shortages that districts all across the state continue to face. These scholarships are particularly helpful for those with great financial need.

The success of this scholarship program is dependent upon an appropriation of funds that will allow for the creation of the program. At the appropriate time, we hope that due consideration will be given to finding funds for this valuable program.

We thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts on this bill and encourage you to pass House Bill 2081.