

Neutral Testimony of SB479

For the Senate Education Committee March 5, 2024

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Employees

Chair Baumgardner and Members of the Education Committee,

I thank you for the opportunity to testify neutral on SB 479. I am grateful that the legislature recognizes the weaknesses in KPERS 3. But, all school employees are in the “School group” of KPERS and ALL should be moved into KPERS 2.

From my experience of 36 years as a “teacher”, in most school districts there are three categories of employees: Administration, classified and members of the bargaining unit.

ALL of us are here for the students: The bus drivers get them to school, we teach them, lunch is served by the cooks, para educators assist in the classroom, media specialists help with reading and research. Students go to the nurse if they get ill. Social workers find services in the community for struggling families; the work is endless.

Most administrators were licensed teachers that got their masters/doctorates and got an administrative license. Administrators are on a contract with fringe benefits; car allowance, additional insurances, etc. Many are on 10+ month contracts.

As far as Directors/Supervisors, some like General Elementary Director would have a teaching license and maybe an administrative license as well. The Director of Building and Grounds may have trade certification. The Finance Director may be a CPA. The Director of Food Service may be a registered dietitian.

Classified employees are paid hourly, and often just when students are present (about 160 days a year) and work maybe a 5 hour day. These are our para educators, custodians, cooks, bus drivers, secretaries, and etc. Larger districts may “contract out” these services.

Teachers require a license, are working under the contract negotiated with the district. The bargaining unit members also include media specialists, counselors, social workers, nurses (RN), speech pathologists, PT, OT, psychologists, etc. are ALL in this group. Often the specialists are educated/trained/licensed in other disciplines as well.

All three categories have employee shortages!!!

Please do not be short sighted and only move “teachers” from KPERS 3 to KPERS 2. All these school employees are now in the “School group” of KPERS and ALL should be moved into KPERS 2.