



February 7, 2025

House Committee on K-12 Education Budget
Opponent Testimony (Written Only) **HB 2650**
Submitted by: Dr. Tonya Merrigan, Superintendent
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Chair Williams and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these written comments in opposition to **HB 2650** in its current form.

The primary goal of the Blue Valley district is **to ensure every student attending our schools has the educational programming and opportunities, delivered by quality educators, to allow them to thrive long after they leave our doors.** We embrace every student who walks through our doors and always work to provide them with the tools to succeed. Blue Valley values our partnership with the legislature, knowing we share similar values and hopes for student achievement in Kansas. It is in that spirit of partnership that we ask that this committee work with us to determine the best ways to address the educational needs of our at-risk students.

For the 2022-2023 school year, the percentage of students in Blue Valley who achieved a level 3 or 4 on state assessments is 56.5% for ELA and 55.8% for Math. It is my understanding that with this legislation, state funding would be lowered for districts who do not reach 75% proficiency for identified sub-groups. Currently, Kansas does not fully fund our district's costs for at-risk students. Over the past 5 years, we have had to use our general funds or other resources to supplement anywhere from \$3 million to \$1.5 million annually for these expenses. Should we not succeed in a 20% increase in these sub-groups, the State would contribute even less to the cost of helping these students. This seems counterintuitive to everyone's goals of helping these students improve in these critical areas of language and math.

For our most vulnerable students, we would encourage the committee to look for solutions that are corrective and collaborative, rather than punitive. It is with this hope for more collaboration that we oppose HB 2650.

USD 229 Blue Valley Schools: Quick Facts

K-12 Student Enrollment	21,903	ACT District Composite Average*	22.9
Early Childhood—grade 12 Enrollment	22,322	ACT Statewide Average	19.4
Average Daily Attendance	95.6%	SAT District Average	1330
Graduation Rate	97.4%	SAT Statewide Average	1245
Teacher's with Master's Degree or Higher	76%	*with 95.9 % taking ACT	