



Oral opponent testimony before the  
House K-12 Education Budget

On

HB 2650 - Requiring each School District to establish an at-risk student accountability plan and show academic improvement in certain student subgroups.

By

Jim Karleskint, United School Administrators  
February 7, 2024

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on HB 2650. As we understand the bill it would require school districts to establish an accountability plan to show academic improvement in certain subgroups as eligible for at-risk programs.

United School Administrators of Kansas supports the concept of improving academic achievement for all students to include at-risk students. However, we are opposed to this bill primarily based on the fact that we feel it is unrealistic. Having been a member of the House K-12 Education Budget Committee in 2017 and 2018 I am fully aware of attempts that has been made to improve academic performance for at-risk students.

In 2017 & 18 the legislature voted to add significant funding to schools (approximately \$500 million). It was not till 2022 that the funding amount the Kansas Supreme Court accepted due to the Gannon case was received by schools. Also keep in mind the West Ed study that was commissioned by the legislature stated the amount schools were to receive would provide maintenance for schools in meeting academic achievement. The funding would not move at-risk students to levels 3 and 4 on the Kansas State Assessment.

We would also remind committee members that COVID-19 had a devastating impact on students especially at-risk students. Family income had different outcomes during the pandemic to students. Many homes did not have the technology that was necessary to provide the instruction that was being provided. Getting students caught up for the learning loss will take years.

There is also the consideration of the various levels of scoring on the State Assessment Test. Many professionals that look at the assessment consider students scoring at Level 2 to have a basic understanding of meeting standards and are at grade level performance. Attaining a score of 3 or 4 for most at-risk students is not realistic.

There are things that are being done to give one hope. We are now beginning to see academic improvement since students are back in classes from COVID 19. Programs like LETRS and training teachers in the Science of Reading are showing promise that will benefit our youngest learners. There is a great deal of work to do to bring all students to higher academic achievement. Taking resources from schools and districts that do not bring scoring on state assessment test to a 3 or 4 is not feasible and will not provide the desired outcomes.