

**To: House Committee on Education**  
**From: Cassandra Barton, Head of School for Insight School and Kansas Virtual Academy**  
**Date: January 31, 2023**  
**Re: Support of HB 2080**

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee,

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to offer remarks on HB 2080. I am the Head of School for Insight School of Kansas and Kansas Virtual Academy; both are virtual schools authorized by the Spring Hill School District and currently serving many students and families across this great state.

I stand in support of HB 2080, which would authorize students enrolled in a virtual school to take virtual state assessments.

In-person testing is not what is best for our virtual students. It forces our students to face obstacles as they are assessed that are not present for their brick-and-mortar peers: virtual students must test in an unfamiliar setting, they must complete testing in a manner that does not align with how the assessments were designed to be completed, and their family sustains a financial impact due to state assessments.

It is a known best testing practice for students to take assessments in the environment in which they learn material on the subject(s) assessed. Our students do their schooling 100% virtually and are able to choose the physical setting in which they school on a daily basis. Some students school at their kitchen table, some from a dedicated school room in their home, some from a quiet workspace at their parent's workplace. Our students should be able to take their state assessments in their preferred location, where they are comfortable. In-person testing causes our students to have to navigate the distraction of being in a location new to them, with other students and proctors that they may or may not know. This substantial change in setting causes anxiety for many students, which can impede their ability to focus on their assessments and do their best work, leading to inaccurate outcomes.

Due to the logistics of having to gather virtual students at in-person testing sites, our students must complete their assessments in less testing sessions than their brick-and-mortar peers. In brick-and-mortar schools, state assessments can be easily spread out over days and weeks; students may take one assessment per day, or even per week in a brick-and-mortar setting. This approach is not logistically possible for virtual schools and, therefore, virtual students must complete multiple, if not all, of their required state assessments on one day. Doing so is exhausting for students and leads to testing fatigue, which impacts the outcomes for virtual students.

Finally, the in-person testing requirement comes at a financial cost for virtual students' families. The families must provide transportation for the virtual student(s) to and from their testing site. In order to do so, some guardians must take a day off of work, which can mean a day of lost wages in addition to the cost of gas to get a student to their testing site. Depending on the distance to the testing site, the amount of time the student needs to complete the assessments for the day, etc., meals can become an additional expense for the family as well.

Allowing virtual students to be assessed virtually would be best for them. It will allow them to test in a familiar environment in which they are comfortable, reducing distractions, stress, and anxiety, and, in turn, giving students a better opportunity to truly demonstrate their knowledge and produce accurate outcomes.

I respectfully urge you to support HB 2080 and allow virtual students to take virtual state assessments.

Best regards,



Cassandra Barton