



Oral neutral testimony on

HB 2658

Authorizing school districts to require a student to attend virtual school when such student is returning to school after having been expelled.

In House Education Committee

By

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Mr. Chair and Members of the Committee,

KASB appears as neutral today on HB 2658.

We appreciate that the bill respects local control and does not mandate that school districts require an expelled student to only attend virtual school if returning from a 186-day (or a one-year) expulsion. And we acknowledge that some of our districts are interested in this option as the result of some very serious local circumstances.

We'd like to note, however, that virtual schools best serve students who are self-motivated and are choosing a virtual learning environment as the best fit for their learning needs. Most students who have been expelled for 186 days (a full school year) are struggling with in-person school for complex reasons and may not have the skills and supports required to succeed in the flexible environment of a virtual school setting.

We also must highlight for the committee that, where similar policies are being used in other states, parents and advocates have raised numerous legal concerns, including that these policies deprive students and families of their due process rights and infringe on their equal rights and opportunities to access an education. We note due process concerns with this bill, as it allows

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the decision to require a student to attend a virtual school to be made as part of the same proceeding as the decision to expel the student, rather than requiring an opportunity for a due process hearing to make this determination upon the completion of a student's expulsion.

We caution against setting up a system in which attendance in a virtual school becomes a form of further punishment for a student. Such a system will not serve either students or virtual schools well and could lead to further unintended negative consequences for all involved.

Thank you for considering these concerns as you evaluate the provisions of HB 2658.

KASB is a non-profit service organization built on an abiding belief in Kansas public schools. We have put the needs of students and K-12 leaders first since 1917.