



"Where Excellence and
Education Meet"

LABETTE COUNTY

Unified School District 506

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February 1, 2024

Chairperson Williams and the K-12 committee,

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my oral testimony regarding HB2612. As I reviewed this bill, it appears to assume that school districts are not following established laws which we do not believe is accurate, and therefore we stand opposed to this bill.

I believe that the state legislature should allow the State Board of Education to perform its established duties. School accreditation is more than a series of numbers or a disagreement on how funds should be used or how a report should be completed. Schools are required to follow state laws and State Board of Education regulations. If schools fail to show growth or meet expectations, districts are allowed to review the process while KSDE provides guidance and support. Accreditation affects every student in a school district and should not be used punitively based on the interpretation of a law.

Accreditation should remain in the hands of the department that has the staff, skills, understanding, and experience working with schools and school districts, and the resources to support all schools.

There is another issue with the bill which requires the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) to conduct a state audit before reinstating the district to its accredited status. The concern here is that the auditors only see numbers and do not pay attention to the reasons why the numbers might have changed. Moreover, the auditors are already overloaded with work, and adding more duties to their plate will only reduce the quality of their work.

It's worth asking why the legislature hasn't fully funded special education for so many years, and why it took multiple lawsuits before they fully funded general education. This could be due to a discrepancy in interpretation of what "fully funded" means. It's important to not burden schools with interpreting laws, as their role is to educate students.

In summary, the State School Board and locally elected boards of education govern schools. Local boards should be responsible for monitoring educators and their daily work. If any intentional law-breaking occurs, our boards can handle the issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Wyrick". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail.

Dr. John Wyrick
Superintendent of Schools
Labette County USD 506