From: William Clark
To: K12 Budget
Subject: HB2612
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Chairperson Williams and K-12 committee,

Thank you for taking time to listen to my written testimony on HB2612. As I reviewed this bill, there must be an assumption that school districts are not following established laws.

As a life-long Kansan with more than 25 yrs in public education, I believe the state legislature should continue to allow the State Board of Education to perform their established duties of their oversight of education in Kansas. School accreditation is so much more than a series of numbers, a disagreement on how dollars should be used or how a report should be completed. Public schools in Kansas are required to follow federal laws, state laws as well as the regulation set forth by the State Board of Education.

If schools don't show growth or meet the expectations, districts are provided the opportunity to review the process while KSDE provides guidance and support. Public schools constantly monitor their effective levels through examining academic monitoring, attendance, graduation, discipline, and through multiple surveys that are sent out to our parents and patrons. Accreditation affects every student in a school district and should not be used as a punitive punishment based on the interpretation of a law. Accreditation should remain in the hands of the Kansas State Board of Education and the Kansas State Department of Education who have the staff, skills, understanding, and experience working with schools and school districts.

Another concern with the bill is a state audit must be performed by KSDE to reinstate the district to accredited status. In my current position, every auditor I have ever come in contact with only sees numbers. It is the duty of the auditor to "audit" not to evaluate why student performance has changed. The auditors are already overwhelmed with their caseloads, so adding to their duties will only diminish the fidelity of their work. School districts receive multiple audits (State Audit, Special Education Audits & Compliance Checks, and their own financial audit). This does not count for any special audits that are sometimes requested/required.

Please do not get schools caught up in the middle between the legislature and the Dept of Education/State BOE of interpreting the laws and diverting them from their role of educating the students. The jobs and the roles of the proud Kansans that are down in the trenches every day, working with students from various backgrounds; rather it is ethnic backgrounds, socio-economic backgrounds, family backgrounds, intellectual backgrounds, etc... are already challenging enough.

In summary, the schools are governed by the State School Board and LOCALLY elected boards

of education. Please allow our local boards to monitor our own educators and the daily work they perform. There are already processes in place for families and patrons to use if they feel that laws and regulations are not being followed. I feel confident that with all the resources available to the board of education, that they can handle any issue thrown at them.

Respectfully,

William J. Clark
USD 330 Mission Valley
Patron, Parent, and Staff Member