



Written Testimony on HB 2613
Creating a statewide D.A.R.E. program education position
Senate Education Committee
Dr. Brent Yeager, Superintendent
February 20, 2024

Chair Baumgardner and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of creating a statewide drug abuse resistance education (D.A.R.E.) program educator position.

Olathe Public Schools is the second-largest school district in the state and the largest in the Kansas City metropolitan area, with a student population of approximately 29,000 students. Our vision is to prepare all students for *their* future from early childhood all the way to our 18-21 programs.

The Olathe Board of Education is committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students. As part of our ongoing commitment, the district has initiated a number of programs to promote safe and drug-free schools for children of all ages. The programs include school-focused policies and curriculum, student and parent-focused initiatives, and participation in community programs.

Among the school-focused initiatives related to drug and substance abuse, we:

- offer Project Alert, an 11-week substance abuse prevention course for sixth graders, with supplemental lessons in seventh- and eighth-grade health classes. Middle school students are also involved in an evidence-based curriculum titled Second Step. The lessons revolve around bullying and substance abuse prevention. Freshmen receive alcohol prevention lessons in their health curriculum called Alcohol.Edu.
- partner with the Olathe Police Department's School Resource Officers to provide on-site security in each school, education in the classroom and routine canine searches.
- provide funding for drug evaluation for any student in activities or athletics who has been involved with alcohol or drugs. Many schools and alternative programs have on-site support groups for those dealing with substance abuse or for students whose families are dealing with drugs and alcohol.

These efforts sometimes fall short, however, as new and harmful substances are introduced into our community by individuals seeking to prey upon and profit off of our students. That is why **we are constantly seeking out new partnerships and opportunities to provide school- and community-based educational resources and supports for children and families.**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Olathe Public Schools remains committed to working with you to support Kansas students. Please feel free to contact me at byeagerec@olatheschools.org or (913) 780-8132 if you have any questions.