

Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in consideration of the requested changes for HB 2663.

USD 459 Bucklin Schools represents a reality shared by many rural school districts across Kansas. Due to limited enrollment, our district, and districts alike, face significant challenges in maintaining sufficient cohort numbers to meet existing data and accountability requirements. Without the requested flexibility, we will not be able to complete cohorts in a way that produces meaningful, reliable data nor the ability to set and obtain goals for our cohort groups.

The intent of data collection will be unfairly compromised when cohort requirements are applied uniformly without consideration for district size, therefore, unintentionally putting a disadvantage on small school districts. In these cases, the data will become statistically unreliable or incomplete, ultimately failing to reflect the true performance and growth of our students.

The requested changes would allow smaller districts to develop alternative cohort groupings, thus allowing equitable data to be collected. The fair and appropriate flexibility would not weaken accountability; rather, it would strengthen it by ensuring that the data collected accurately represents the district.

For these reasons, USD 459, strongly supports the requested changes and urges the committee's intentional consideration. Thank you for your time, consideration, and continued commitment to serving all Kansas students.

Respectfully,  
Morgan Ballard  
Superintendent of Schools  
USD 459 Bucklin Schools