

HB 2069 Testimony from Amy Drinnon, KASP Past President

Good Afternoon Chairman Carpenter and members of the Commerce, Labor, and Economic Developmental Committee. My name is Amy Drinnon and I am the Past President and Western Region Director for the Kansas Association of School Psychologist (KASP). On behalf of KASP, I would like to thank Committee for introducing and giving consideration to House Bill 2069.

I wish to voice KASP's strong support for House Bill 2069. School psychologists are uniquely trained to help children and youth succeed academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally. In collaboration with families and school staff, we help create learning environments in which all students can thrive. Trained in 10 Domains of Practice with expertise in learning, behavior, mental health, and school systems, school psychologists are most effective when working proactively to support schools, teachers, and families, to anticipate and quickly intervene on barriers to student achievement. However, this proactive school psychological service model can only occur when school psychologists are hired to serve within the recommended ratios.

The National Association of School Psychologists recommend a ratio of 1 school psychologist for every 500 students; however, recent data shows that the current ratio here in Kansas is 1 school psychologist for every 1,106 students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2024). Further research by KASP indicates that we would need to double the number of school psychologists working in our state to reach the recommended ratio and, in looking beyond the ratio, there are additional factors unique to our state that continue to inhibit school psychologists from providing all the services they are trained and capable of providing (Drinnon et al., 2024). As such, it is imperative for us to work on final multi-faceted solutions to address retention, training, and recruitment locally, regionally, and nationally.

The Interstate Compact for School Psychologists is one such solution. This Compact will streamline the systems of licensure mobility in members states while upholding a high standard of school psychology practice and would benefit the state of Kansas, the Kansas Department of Education, school psychologists, and ultimately the students and families we serve across Kansas. This legislation would specifically target recruitment efforts within our state, increasing our ability to recruit school psychologists. Similar to the Compacts for Teachers, Social Workers, and Nurses, this compact would allow mobile professionals, such as military spouses like Allyson Baloga, who you will hear from today, to fill gaps in our school psychology workforce without the burden of applying and maintaining multiple state licenses.

Streamlining the licensure promotes efficiency within KSDE, our state licensing agency, and enables school psychologists who move to Kansas to begin providing services more quickly, which in turn allows our school districts and students to immediately benefit from these services. Importantly, this legislation benefits our military families and enables military connected school psychologists to easily continue in their career following a permanent change of station.

I urge you to support this legislation. Thank you for your time; I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.