To: Rep. Jason Goetz and Members of the House Committee on K-12 Education
             Budget
From: Kevin Walker, Executive Vice President and Chief Policy Officer
             Overland Park Chamber of Commerce (Kwalker@opchamber.org
Date: 5 February 2025
Subject: Proponent Testimony, 25 RS0630

Rep. Goetz and committee members, I am Kevin Walker, Executive Vice President and Chief Policy Officer for the Overland Park Chamber of Commerce. I am pleased to submit testimony in support of 25 RS 0630, a bill to authorize a statewide longitudinal data system in Kansas.

With this system, policymakers, educators, and employers can work together with meaningful data to better align our educational outcomes with the expectations of tomorrow's high-demand careers. Further, the data will assist in developing career pathways and training programs needed to support a successful school-to-work transition.

The skills needed to be successful in whatever career a student pursues are evolving rapidly, and the data from an ongoing data system such as this will allow stakeholders to make informed, impactful decisions that will serve our future workforce well. This coordinated approach allows for evidence-based decision-making by all stakeholders, which is why we support the legislation.

What is being proposed is not new. Forty-two other states have similar systems, and Kansas must join them. At the risk of sounding melodramatic, the future success of our state and our workforce depends on ensuring that today's students leave school with the skills and support they need to successfully transition to their chosen career path.

Lastly, I want to point out that the proposal includes legislative oversight and strict safeguards for data privacy and security. These are essential issues, and this legislation acknowledges that.

We believe creating a statewide longitudinal data system is essential to the future of our state, and we encourage your favorable action on this bill.