



**Proponent of SB 384  
For the Senate Education Committee  
February 11, 2026  
Dr. Tracy Frederick  
Executive Director, Kansas School Board Resource Center**

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony in support of Senate Bill 384 on behalf of the Kansas School Board Resource Center, Kansas school board members and superintendents.

When Senate Bill 176 was heard on February 20, 2013, and subsequently enacted to establish Public Innovative Districts, student achievement needed to be addressed. By allowing districts to employ new innovative techniques and have relief from regulations that hindered teachers from implementing the innovations. More than a decade later, that need has become urgent. Kansas students show persistent decline in student proficiency in foundational skills, particularly in English language arts and mathematics. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, one-third of Kansas students demonstrate limited reading ability, and only about one-fourth are proficient. In addition, college readiness has continued to decline over the past decade, dropping from 32 percent to just 17 percent of students deemed college ready in English, Reading, Math, and Science.

In response, some districts began the urgent work of improving student achievement right away. For example, USD 329 Wabaunsee has demonstrated immediate gains through the implementation of SMART goals and a focused, strategic approach to improving academic outcomes. Administrators and school board members heard Wabaunsee's story, attended Kansas School Board Resource Center workshops and listened to highly respected national consultants outline a clear and attainable path forward for immediate and significant gains in student achievement. They are ready to begin this important work.

We support the revision to SB 384 to move the application deadline from December 1 to May 1. This revision supports districts working toward improving outcomes immediately. The urgency cannot be overstated, and without this revision, districts will lose another year for the opportunity to implement best practices and proven innovations that improve academic achievement quickly. The opportunity has been presented to districts, and they are ready to begin the process for academic improvement without the extra burden of many state rules and regulations. School board members tell us that many teachers are frustrated by having to divert precious time from teaching to comply with unproductive rules and regulations. Innovative districts are excused from those regulatory burdens,

allowing teachers and administrators to focus on the district's purpose of improving student outcomes.

We also support the requirement that district applications be deemed approved if they are neither approved nor denied within 30 days of submission. This provision allows districts to plan proactively, move forward with implementation, or make necessary adjustments in a timely and efficient manner. Under the existing timeline, districts may be forced to wait an additional academic year to implement an innovative plan or, alternatively, may learn too late that they must pursue a different course of action because of an administrative process

I stand for questions.