



Written Testimony before the
House Education Committee

in support of

House Bill 2223 – Removing the sunset for the high-density at-risk student weighting under the Kansas school equity and enhancement act

by

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Chair Thomas, Members of the Committee:

[Game On for Kansas Schools](#) is a nonpartisan grassroots effort among Kansans who share a belief in high-quality public education as a right of all Kansas students. We advocate for Kansas public schools to ensure our teachers, principals, superintendents, and school board members have the resources necessary to deliver quality education to all Kansas students. We inform communities across the state about issues and legislation affecting their students, and our membership extends statewide.

The high-density at-risk funding is important to those school districts that receive it. It doesn't take a funding expert to understand that having a large number of at-risk students in a district has something of an exponential impact. This is funding, not for funding's sake, but to provide additional staffing and programs for students with greater needs. High-density at-risk funding helps ensure that districts can meet the needs of ALL students. Smaller class sizes don't just benefit at-risk students, for example. As districts grapple with greater needs than ever before among the students they serve, this funding is critical to ensuring the supports are available to meet these needs.

We note that this funding is existing and removing the sunset does not increase funding-it just avoids cutting it. We sometimes hear that the Gannon settlement was approved with a sunset in the bill. That may be, but it was a funding stream that was intact. We believe that removing high-density at-risk funding may violate Gannon.

One of the argument against continuing the at-risk funding we've heard is that school districts that are receiving it still have sub-par standardized test scores. Making that conclusion soon after experiencing a global pandemic and before the completion of the phasing-in of the Gannon funding is inaccurate. Although scores are not as high as we'd like, who is to say they wouldn't be worse, or that we might have more dropouts or other negative academic consequences if that funding had not been in place? We also must note that standardized testing is a problematic assessment of academic achievement. It is well-understood but not often stated that students don't always give their best effort on a test that they know has no real meaning to them. We urge you to support HB 2223.