



At-risk programs; accreditation

By

Leah Fliter

Assistant Executive Director for Advocacy

Kansas Association of School Boards

Lfliter@kasb.org

In

House K-12 Education Budget Committee

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee,

KASB appears today in opposition to HB 2650.

As always, our testimony is directed by our member-affirmed legislative policy, which states:

“We support general supervision of public schools under the State Board of Education, including setting standards for accreditation, learning standards, graduation, and licensure. We support management of public schools under locally elected boards of education, including setting curriculum, staffing, financial management, and policies, so that such schools can progress and meet State Board standards.”

HB 2650 usurps the State Board’s role by inserting the legislature into the development and implementation of learning standards and instructional strategies for at-risk students. It imposes lengthy and convoluted requirements that appear not to have been vetted by anyone directly involved in educating and supporting the at-risk students in Kansas public schools. It’s difficult to understand how arbitrarily imposing potentially unworkable and questionable standards will accomplish the legislature’s assumed goal of helping at-risk students.

Additionally, HB 2650 directs the State Board to cut at-risk funding to schools which don’t meet the arbitrary standards established by the legislature. It’s difficult to understand how this punitive measure would help our struggling learners receive the quality education they are entitled to, and that their taxpayer parents rightfully expect.

Finally, HB 2650 directly interferes with the State Board’s authority over the accreditation of public schools.

For these reasons, KASB opposes HB 2650.

Kansas public schools are graduating students at record-high rates.

Kansas Association of School Boards

1420 SW Arrowhead Rd, Topeka, KS 66604 • 785-273-3600 • www.kasb.org

Our public schools have helped Kansas students achieve a 128 percent increase in professional credentials since 2009. And the 2023 state assessments saw an increase in top performance levels in all grades for math, all but one grade in English, and no decreases in any grade. We have much to be proud of.

KASB shares the legislature's goal of improving academic achievement for at-risk students and their classmates across Kansas. Unfortunately, HB 2650 does not help us achieve that shared goal. We respectfully ask the committee to reject HB 2650 and instead work with Kansas school boards and educators in a sincere effort to serve all Kansas students.

Thank you.

KASB is a non-profit service organization built on an abiding belief in Kansas public schools. We have put the needs of students and K-12 leaders first since 1917.