



February 7, 2024

Written Testimony: HB2650

Submitted by: Kansas Association of Special Education Administrators (KASEA)

Chairperson Williams and K-12 Education Budget Committee Members,

The Kansas Association of Special Education Administrators (KASEA) appreciates your time to consider our concerns on HB2650 as outlined in this written testimony. HB2650 would require schools to be in compliance with all state laws, rules and regulations in order to be accredited. In addition, districts would be required to ensure by 2030 that at least 75% of all students have attained a level of proficiency of 3 or 4 in both English Language Arts and Mathematics. Districts that do not meet these goals will have funding reduced accordingly or may lose accreditation.

In review of this bill, it would appear that school districts are currently not following established laws, rules and regulations. In reality, every Kansas school district and school makes a good faith effort to be in compliance with all state and federal laws, regulations and rules. A system of identifying and correcting noncompliance is already in place within the KESA accreditation process as well as other KSDE programs.

Kansas districts currently receive federal at-risk funds as part of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). ESSA requires districts to review data for each subgroup while completing a needs assessment and developing improvement plans with rigorous goals that include evidence-based strategies and practices. The Kansas Department of Education analyzes and posts building report cards for every school and district in Kansas on KSDE's website on the Data Central webpage. As part of each district's accreditation plan, districts and schools are required to have district and building leadership teams. In addition, most if not all schools have site councils to engage and inform parents to be school partners and advocates for children. Therefore, KASEA opposes HB2650 as it is unnecessary and would create more burden than improvements in overall student performance. Most importantly, HB2650 is harmful to children as it requires at least 75% of all children to perform at a Level 3 or 4 on both English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics assessments.

There is a great deal of ambiguity in HB2650 about what it means to be in compliance with ALL state laws, regulations and rules. For example, in IDEA alone, there are over



700 compliance components in each IEP. While in most instances, compliance is easy to identify and correct, some laws and regulations are so complex that determining compliance and correcting is a very difficult and tedious process. School accreditation is more than a series of numbers on a report or a disagreement on how dollars should be used. Currently when noncompliance is identified by KSDE, schools and districts are provided the opportunity to review and make necessary changes while KSDE provides guidance and support prior to implementing a corrective action plan. Adding extensive requirements to KSDE staff and school teachers will only diminish the fidelity of their work.

HB2650 would take us back to the days of No Child Left Behind. Implementing punitive measures when students can not meet unrealistic standards is neither fair to students or the teachers. Teachers will be teaching to the tests and students will receive double doses of ELA and Math classes most of their school day instead of opportunities to gain a well rounded education. Students will be “tracked” by those that perform on the ELA and Math assessment at Levels 3 and 4 and those that score at Levels 1 and 2.

KASEA is most concerned about the students with disabilities and at-risk students who may not learn at the same pace as their peers. HB2650 does not meet the learner where they are at, but instead assumes that a student who is significantly below grade level can “catch up” with their peers if they just try harder or receive a specific intervention. HB2650 does not take into consideration the large and growing number of students who are transient, attending two or more schools over their educational careers. As soon as a district attains success with one student, a new student or two moves in with significant at-risk needs. HB2650 assumes that children attend school everyday and that children remain at the same school throughout their educational career. Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs suggests that before learning can occur basic needs such as food, love and belonging, safety and security must be met. HB2650 does not take into consideration there are many factors at play which are out of the school’s ability to control. KASEA supports initiatives designed to improve the health and well being of our children and families.

Keep in mind, accreditation affects the community, as well as each student and school district. Kansas schools are the cornerstone of many Kansas communities. Taking a hardline to accreditation based on minor infractions or procedural errors, which can be quickly remedied, could have a dire impact on property values in our Kansas communities. HB2650 could also cause irreparable harm to students and the Kansas education system. What happens to the high school senior whose school district loses accreditation during his/her senior year prior to graduation? What is the impact for this student to access post secondary entrance requirements?



In summary, the schools are governed by the State School Board and LOCALLY elected boards of education. Please allow our local boards and KSDE to monitor school compliance with federal and state laws, regulations and rules.

Thank you for your time,

Sincerely,

Patty Carter, KASEA Legislative Committee Chair

Director of Special Education, Greenbush

P: 785-862-7840 ex 412 / M: 785-248-1184 / patty.carter@greenbush.org

6822 SE Ross Street Topeka, KS 66619

Dr. Lena Kisner, KASEA President

Executive Director, Reno County Education Cooperative Interlocal 610

P: (620) 663-7178 / lkisner@rcec610.org

2500 E 30th Ave, Hutchinson, KS 67502