



Oral proponent testimony on

HB 2703

relating to at-risk programs and services; including placement in the custody of the secretary for children and families as a criteria for eligibility for such programs and services

By

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March 12, 2024

Mr. Chair and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2703.

As always, our testimony is directed by our member-affirmed legislative policies. Our 2024 State Resolutions express our support for: *Improved collaboration across agencies and with the Legislature to support educational outcomes for students in foster care or experiencing homelessness.* Our Permanent Policies state: *KASB supports comprehensive programs to deal with students who are at risk of failing regular education programs, regardless of why the child is at-risk.*

We know that children who are in DCF custody have many factors that put them at risk of failing in school. These include extreme mobility, inadequate family support, and mental health challenges. We applaud Rep. Estes for requesting this bill and support the legislature specifying that students in DCF custody should be eligible for at-risk services.

We would be remiss, however, if we didn't express grave concern about the future availability of at-risk funding in Kansas public schools. Our schools strive mightily to equip our at-risk students with the knowledge and skills they need to overcome difficult circumstances. Conversations in other legislative committees, however, indicate that at-risk funding, and the flexibility districts need to use these funds to meet specific student needs, is in peril this session. We urge the committee to commit to working with us to ensure that children in DCF custody and all at-risk Kansas children receive the support they need to thrive and succeed.

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.

Kansas Association of School Boards

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