

Testimony before the  
**House Committee on Education**  
on  
**HB 2504 – School district realignment**  
by

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**Today in speaking on behalf of, the Kansas School Superintendents' Associations and the Kansas Association of Special Education Administrators**

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Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. We stand opposed to HB2504

The Kansas State Board of Education has created a vision for Kansas and as part of that future Kansas educators, administrators and parents are outlining a plan to carry out that vision. The timing of this bill could not be worse. During a period of possibility, excitement and commitment from KSDE, this bill is asking KSDE to tear down the very structure they are relying on to implement the new vision.

The contents of this bill focuses on the efficiencies of the state rather than the quality of education of our students. Efficiencies have long been a goal of local school districts, 20 years ago Kansas had 304 school districts. Ten years ago we supported 300 districts and today Kansas has 286 districts. Communities are making these difficult decisions on their own. They are creating relationships that make the most sense for their students as well as their communities.

Consolidation isn't the only way Kansas school districts are looking for efficiencies, we have two different sets of districts who are currently sharing a superintendent. We have school districts

who share career and technical programs, districts who share teachers and others who work together to provide professional development for staff. Each of these programs were initiated and established to serve the students of those schools taking full advantage of the unique skills of the teachers of each district.

Kansas has a number of special education interlocals/cooperatives, one more local program created to more efficiently serve our Kansas students. The structure of this bill would cause serious challenge to many of our special education interlocals, in a few cases such as [Doniphan County Education Coop.](#) the interlocal would be eliminated, causing [Riverside](#) to be 100% responsible for the interlocal expenses. Yes, those interlocal district lines could be re-drawn with the approval of the State's Attorney General, but re-drawing lines may cause excessively long bus rides for preschoolers and multiple handicapped students who are being served.

Yes, it is easy to look at a map and make decisions on why districts should share services, but without investigating each situation, understanding the community, and asking critical questions it is difficult to realize any savings that wouldn't create unnecessary challenges within each of the communities.

During the last 10 years 30, plus school districts have made the decision to join forces and work together, utilizing the financial incentive to ensure the consolidation was managed appropriately and student services were not interrupted but possibly enhanced. We have a structure in Kansas to help districts think about boundaries, services and staffing. Please allow our local districts to make these difficult decisions.

I'm happy to stand for questions when appropriate: Thank You