

House Education Committee

HB 2504

Rod Stewart, Board of Education Member, USD 108 Washington County Schools
Past President, Kansas Association of School Boards

Dear Committee Members,

I oppose HB 2504, forming one school district per county.

USD 108 is in its ninth year since consolidation. It consists of 5 communities. Representation on the board of education is very important to these communities. The decision to consolidate was very emotional and took several years to accomplish. The communities have to be ready to take the step. It is a local decision and not one to be legislated. If Washington County were to be one district, it would consist of 4 high schools, 4 elementary schools and 12 communities. It would be impossible to represent all communities on a board of education. With declining budgets, the number of staff has decreased and the responsibilities have increased. Services and operations have already been consolidated and some shared between districts. Forming one district won't save much. There will still be the same number of students and services to provide. Local boards have done a great job of managing the available funds and are doing more with less. This is about what is best for the students!

Public Schools in rural Kansas are the lifeblood of their communities. Most of them are the largest employer in the community and are a source of economic development. Removing the school extinguishes the spirit of the community.

Thank you for your consideration.

