

# KASEA

*The Kansas Association of  
Special Education  
Administrators*  
www.ka-sea.org

## **Senate Committee on Education**

**Terry Collins, Ed.S. Director of Doniphan County Education Cooperative #616**  
*on behalf of*  
The Kansas Association of Special Education Administrators (KASEA)

My name is Terry Collins and I am the Director of the Doniphan County Education Cooperative. Thank you for the opportunity to represent the Kansas Association of Special Education Administrators today as opposed to SB 444 as written. KASEA is neutral on the concept of a establishing a language assessment program, but does not believe that SB 444 effectively accomplishes this.

The Kansas Association of Special Education commends the committee for their concern regarding the language needs of children who are deaf or hard of hearing. We strongly believe and support the concept that all children have a right to a free and appropriate public education. The Kansas Association of Special Education Administrators is very concerned about several issues that may be inadvertently created by the bill as written.

- This bill appears to create an unfunded mandate for specialized assessment which will endorse a single methodology (ASL) in working with all deaf or hard of hearing children.
- The bill is solely focused on ASL and English. Students who are deaf and hard of hearing use a variety of communication methods that are not limited to just ASL and English.
- There are deaf and hard of hearing students who sign ASL, CASE, SEE , Fingerspell, and Pidgin Sign English (PSE) as well as students who receive the aural/oral approach.
- Special education law requires the IFSP or IEP team to consider the communication needs of each exceptional child.
- This consideration must include the unique communication needs of all exceptional children in order to help them achieve their educational goals.
- This consideration is not an administrative decision for only one particular type of sign language interpreting to be available.

- It is an IFSP or IEP team decision based on the unique communication needs of each child.
- A single methodology cannot accurately assess all individuals diagnosed within the hearing impaired spectrum.
- IFSP and IEP teams are required to consider multiple methods of communication for deaf and hard of hearing students.
- This bill takes away the right of the parent to have input on the decision for their child's method of communication.
- This bill does not address students who are deaf and hard of hearing and who may have other disabilities in addition to being deaf.
- It is very difficult to fill teachers of the deaf positions. Legislating that they have to sign ASL complicates the situation. There are currently no institutes of higher education in Kansas that offer a deaf ed. teacher training program in which to draw candidates.
- Kansas currently has a lack of personnel with specific expertise in ASL and English that would be needed to address the requirements of this bill.
- There is currently limited availability of standardized and normed assessments for students 3 through 8 specific to American Sign Language (ASL) (especially for preschoolers ages 3-5).
- This could potentially require districts to fund additional training and hire additional staff to meet any requirements set out by the advisory committee.
- Recommendations of the advisory committee could be in conflict with or duplicative to current federal and state special education requirements.

While the Kansas Association of Special Education Administrators is neutral on the concept of a language assessment program, we stand opposed to SB 444 as written. KASEA has a longstanding position to oppose legislation which would mandate a single methodology for working with students with disabilities. We strongly encourage you take this information into consideration and include multiple evidenced-based methodologies in the development of a language assessment program. KASEA also asks that the advisory committee be restricted from making recommendations that would duplicate or conflict with current special education law and refrain from recommendations that would result in unfunded mandates to school districts.

Thank you for your time.

Terry Collins Ed.S.  
Legislative Chair  
KASEA

