

Testimony before the

House Committee on K-12 Education Budget

on

HB 2612

by

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Testimony provided on behalf of USA-Kansas and Kansas School Superintendents Association

Madam Chair and members of the committee:

Our organizations stand in opposition to this bill as it is presented today.

I believe the state legislature should allow the state board of education to perform their established duties. School accreditation is more than a series of numbers or a disagreement on how dollars should be used or how a report should be completed. Schools are already expected to follow state law and State Board of Education regulations. Accreditation affects every student in a school district and should not be used as a punitive punishment.

The responsibility of developing the criteria for accrediting schools should lie with the Kansas State Department of Education, rather than the random thoughts and ideas from a legislative body not directly involved with the daily happenings of education. Accreditation is a complex process that requires expertise and in-depth knowledge of the education system. The State Department of Education is better equipped to evaluate schools based on a comprehensive set of criteria and make informed decisions regarding their accreditation status. We ensure a more streamlined and effective accreditation process by entrusting this responsibility to the appropriate educational authorities.

If the legislature or those who advise legislators want to help and support public education, I encourage them to sit down and learn, visit, and get involved with what happens in public education. Don't make judgments from a single story or two; stories are often told from a single perspective and not until both sides are heard does the reality of the truth prevail. Not that either side is lying, but the story is interpreted by what they hear or feel. The committee gathers information from sources who reviewed numbers or heard random stories, but 99 out of 100 times, I don't believe committee members have gone to the school to listen, learn, and understand the rationale behind the decisions. It's just easier to make a negative assumption and generate a bill to repair the fringe, but fixing the edges too often can affect the integrity of the middle.

I encourage the members of this committee to refrain from passing this bill out of committee, and, rather than fighting to repair the rough edges, decide to sit down and work together to continue growing public education.