

# U.S.D. 312 HAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*"Where excellence is the expectation."*

414 W Main St.  
PO Box 130  
Haven, KS 67543

Craig Idacavage, Superintendent  
620-465-3445  
havenschools.com



Chairperson Williams and K-12 committee,

Thank you for taking time to listen to my written testimony on HB2612. I want to express my concerns regarding HB2612, a bill that mandates school districts to be in strict compliance with all state laws, rules, and regulations to maintain accreditation.

I advocate for the state legislature to empower the State Board of Education to fulfill its established responsibilities. School accreditation transcends mere numerical assessments or disputes over budget allocations or procedural protocols. It mandates adherence to policy and regulations set by the State Board of Education. When schools fail to demonstrate growth or meet expectations, districts have the opportunity to review the process, supported by guidance from the Kansas Department of Education (KSDE). Accreditation profoundly impacts every student within a district and should not be wielded as a punitive tool based on subjective interpretations of laws. Accreditation oversight should remain within the purview of the department, which possesses the requisite staff, expertise, understanding, and track record of working effectively with schools and districts, along with resources necessary to support them comprehensively.

Another issue raised by this bill is the requirement for a state audit conducted by KSDE to restore a district to accredited status. My experience with auditors has consistently revealed a narrow focus solely on numbers, with little consideration for the underlying reasons behind fluctuations in those numbers. Given the already burdensome caseload faced by auditors, imposing additional responsibilities would likely compromise the quality and thoroughness of their work.

I believe it is worth questioning why the legislature has consistently failed to fully fund special education for so many years. Given the historical context of the Kansas budget, why did it necessitate multiple lawsuits before the legislature finally allocated full funding for general education? Perhaps this delay stemmed from differing interpretations of what constitutes "full funding." It is imperative not to entangle schools in legal interpretations of laws, diverting them from their primary mission of educating students.

If it is the intention of the legislature that all schools be subject to increased accreditation standards, it would be hypocritical to not apply these same regulations to ANY educational organization receiving state funds, including private and parochial schools.

In conclusion, our schools are overseen by both the State School Board and locally elected boards of education that represent community values and priorities. It is vital to entrust our local boards with the responsibility of monitoring educators and their daily activities. If any educator is found to be intentionally violating the law, we have full confidence that our local board is capable of addressing and resolving the issue appropriately.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Craig Idacavage". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Craig Idacavage, Superintendent