



## Proponent Testimony in Support of HB 2320

February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2026

Chairman Goetz, Vice Chair Hill, Ranking Minority Member Winn and Members of the House Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony in support of House Bill 2320. My name is Angela Hedrick, and I am honored to serve as **Vice President of Operations of KVC Kansas, a nonprofit organization that has partnered with the State of Kansas for more than 50 years to serve children, teens and families involved in the child welfare system.** At KVC Kansas, we work alongside children and teens in foster care and the adults caring for them across this state. Through that work, we see how placement changes, while sometimes necessary, can unintentionally disrupt a child's education when systems are not aligned.

We believe we all need connection, and school is often where children and teens find it; through trusted adults, supportive peers, and consistent routines. We are here in support of HB 2320 because **placement changes should not sever those connections or interrupt learning.** This bill helps keep students connected to their education through timely records transfer, uninterrupted enrollment, and support for remaining in their school of origin when it is in the child's best interest.

### The Impact of School Disruption: Teens Awaiting Placement

When a child or teen in foster care changes schools mid-year, the impact goes far beyond learning a new classroom. Enrollment can be delayed. Records may not arrive on time. Services—such as special education supports, counseling, or transportation can pause or restart. During that gap, the child is expected to adapt academically and emotionally **without the information or continuity educators need to support them effectively.** Research consistently shows that school mobility is linked to disrupted academic progress



and a higher risk of falling behind<sup>1</sup>. When moves happen repeatedly, that disruption compound<sup>2</sup>.

This challenge is **especially acute for older youth who are awaiting identification of a long-term placement provider.**

To illustrate how this works in practice, consider the following real-life scenario:

A high school-aged youth in DCF custody does not yet have a long-term placement provider. During this interim period, the youth receives consistent daytime supervision through a foster family providing day **respite, but moves between short-term overnight arrangements in different counties** with caregivers who are willing to help temporarily but cannot commit long term.

Without a single, stable placement, the youth cannot attend the high school closest to where they spend their days. Current enrollment requirements tie school access to formal placement agreements and residency, leaving the youth without a clear path to enrollment. As days turn into weeks, missed class time, inconsistent attendance, and growing gaps in learning begin to accumulate—**at the very moment when structure, routine, and connection are most needed.**

HB 2320 would allow the child welfare team to enroll the youth in the school closest to where they receive consistent daily support, ensuring educational stability and continuity during a period of housing instability.

We see how quickly stability supports learning and how quickly its absence creates setbacks that could have been prevented with better coordination.

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<sup>1</sup> American Institutes for Research.

*Improving Educational Stability and Outcomes for Students in Foster Care.*

<https://www.air.org/project/improving-educational-stability-and-outcomes-students-foster-care>

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Research.

*Students in Foster Care: The Relationship Between Mobility and Educational Outcomes.*

<https://nces.ed.gov/use-work/awards/students-foster-care-relationship-between-mobility-and-educational-outcomes>



## Educational Stability and Outcomes for Teens

For teens, the consequences of school disruption are especially pronounced.

A high school student in foster care may be only a few credits away from graduating. A placement change across district lines can result in delayed enrollment, credits that do not transfer, or gaps in access to transportation, special education services, counseling, or mental health support. **Even one interruption can place graduation further out of reach.**

**In Kansas, fewer than two-thirds of students in foster care graduate on time—64.6 percent<sup>3</sup>.** These outcomes do not reflect a lack of effort or potential. They reflect how easily educational progress can be derailed when continuity is lost.

## Why Timing Still Matters for Younger Children

While the immediate concern driving this legislation is educational stability for teens awaiting long-term placement, it is also important to recognize that timing matters for younger children as well. Kindergarten through second grade is typically when children learn to read, build self-control, and begin to trust adults outside their home. A mid-year school change during this developmental window can interrupt foundational learning and emotional growth.

School mobility at this age is associated with lower academic achievement and slower progress, and repeated moves intensify those challenges. These outcomes are not a reflection of a child's ability; they are the result of instability during a critical period of development.

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<sup>3</sup>Kansas Department for Children and Families & Kansas State Department of Education. *Kansas Foster Care Annual Academic Report Card (2022–2023)*.

<https://www.dcf.ks.gov/Agency/Testimony/Documents/2024/Foster%20Care%20Report%20Card%202023%20-%20Final%20Accessible.pdf>



## What the Data Shows

Kansas data reinforces what we see in practice. According to the Kansas Department for Children and Families Foster Care Report Card, children and teens in foster care experience lower academic outcomes than their peers, including lower graduation rates. These numbers point to interrupted opportunity, not diminished capacity<sup>4</sup>.

## How HB 2320 Addresses These Challenges

HB 2320 responds to these realities in a practical and child-centered way. It prioritizes educational continuity by creating clear expectations and shared responsibility across systems, schools, child welfare professionals, and caregivers without adding unnecessary administrative burden.

Specifically, this bill:

- **Protects timely access to school records.** When a child’s placement changes, HB 2320 requires the school in possession of records to transfer them **no later than two business days** after notice, so educators can quickly understand a child’s needs and continue supports without unnecessary delays.
- **Prevents enrollment delays.** School districts may not deny or delay enrollment and attendance because records have not yet arrived, ensuring children and teens do not miss instructional time due to administrative barriers.
- **Creates flexibility for school enrollment.** Children and teens in the custody of the Secretary for Children and Families may enroll in and attend school in any Kansas school district, reducing barriers when placements change.

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<sup>4</sup> Kansas Department for Children and Families & Kansas State Department of Education. *Kansas Foster Care Annual Academic Report Card (2022–2023)*.

<https://www.dcf.ks.gov/Agency/Testimony/Documents/2024/Foster%20Care%20Report%20Card%202023%20-%20Final%20Accessible.pdf>



- **Preserves the option to remain in the school of origin.** When the Secretary determines it is in the child’s best interests, the child may remain enrolled in and continue attending their school of origin, even if placement changes.
- **Requires transportation planning that is intentional, not reactive.** When a child remains in their school of origin, the bill requires coordination between the school district and the Secretary to establish a transportation plan, including how costs will be covered or shared. This promotes clarity, reduces last-minute disruptions, and helps prevent missed school days.

When educational stability is preserved, the benefits are very clear. Attendance starts to improve, relationships with teachers remain intact, and classroom disruptions start to decrease. For younger children, stability supports early literacy and the development of coping skills, while for teens, it can mean staying on track for credits and graduation rather than losing momentum at a critical time.

### **This is not about convenience. It is about equity.**

Children and teens in foster care should not lose access to education, services, relationships, or opportunity because systems fail during times of transition. **HB 2320 strengthens that alignment and reflects what we already know works.**

**Our mission at KVC Kansas is rooted in safety, connection, and stability for children, teens, and families across the state.** HB 2320 aligns with that mission by treating education as a stabilizing force rather than a casualty of placement change.

On behalf of the children and teens we serve across Kansas, we respectfully urge your support of HB 2320.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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