



Making public schools great for every child

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**Terry Forsyth, Testimony
Senate Education Committee
February 12, 2013**

Senate Bill 103

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to share our thoughts on Senate Bill 103.

We characterize KNEA's position on at-risk weighting as "free lunch plus."

KNEA believes that poverty is a strong indicator of the potential for being at-risk of falling behind, failing academically, and even dropping out of school. For that reason, the use of poverty as a method of funding at-risk programs is appropriate.

We also realize that some school districts with low numbers of students in poverty also may have significant challenges meeting the needs of all students. It is appropriate that there be funding for special programs to meet the needs of those students who are not proficient in math or reading.

That is why we supported the implementation and extension of the non-proficient at-risk weighting in past legislative sessions.

We also believe that non-proficient at-risk weighting and regular – or free lunch based at-risk weighting – should be the same. At the same time, we support the position that a child should not generate both the poverty based at-risk weighting and the non-proficient at-risk weighting.

We oppose SB 103 because this bill substitutes non-proficiency as the only indicator for at-risk funding above grade three. We would suggest that it is better policy to adopt the "free lunch plus" approach.