



Ell-Saline Unified School District Number 307

(785) 225-6813 • FAX (785) 225-6815

412 East Anderson • Brookville, Kansas 67425-0157

February 2, 2016

Mr. Chairman and Members of the House Committee on Education

As the superintendent of USD 307 Ell-Saline, I am writing in reference to HB 2504 District Realignment. Ell-Saline is one of the smaller districts that would be merged with a larger one, in our case USD 305 Salina.

Local control—governing by individuals who are familiar with the community and who know and understand the values of the patrons. That is how school districts are currently governed. Under the proposed reorganization in HB 2504 local control is eliminated. It is placed in the hands of individuals who likely are far removed from where some of the schools are located and, therefore, won't know the values of that community.

School choice—the opportunity parents have for their children to attend, or at least apply to, the school of their choice. The Ell-Saline district has a common boundary line with the Salina district. Our elementary school sits at the east edge of our district and is well-known by parents in Salina for its lower student-teacher ratio and high quality education. For those reasons there is a large number of those parents who apply for their children to attend Ell-Saline rather than to attend their neighborhood school in Salina. With this reorganization of districts, those parents will lose that opportunity of school choice and their children will have to attend their neighborhood school.

Community pride—school districts are the heart and soul of a small town and community. They are what holds the community together and gives them a sense of pride. It is what the community identifies with in contrast to a larger district. If you haven't seen examples of this then I say you have missed out on a tremendous experience. To witness this attend a basketball game at a small school and attend one at a large school. Or just watch the highlights on the Tuesday or Friday night television sports show. I think you will see the stands basically full for the small school game and hardly anyone at the large school game. The reorganization of district offices is likely just the first step in closing buildings and in communities losing that sense of pride.

For the previously stated reasons, I urge you to oppose HB 2504. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely

Jerry L. Minneman
Superintendent