



HUGOTON USD #210

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Monday, March 23, 2015
Written testimony before the
Senate Education Committee
on SB 294

submitted by

Mark Crawford, Superintendent, Hugoton Schools, USD #210

Honorable Senator Abrams and members of the Senate Education Committee, the following is my written testimony related to the support I want to offer for SB 294.

Hugoton Schools is a district of just under 1,200 students in southwest Kansas. We are a property value wealthy, but demographically poor district, with a free and reduced student count of 60%, and an English Language Learner population of almost 40%. We have a thriving economy where an educated workforce and population is a necessity. The Kansas State Board of Education, admitted USD 210 into the Coalition of Innovative School Districts in September 2014, after our initial application in December of 2013. Our local Board of Education, and our stakeholders are supportive of our membership into this Coalition, made possible by HB 2319.

I am a proponent of SB 294 and its focus on post-high school success. I believe public education is an economic driver and SB 294 identifies specific, student indicators important to the Kansas economy. The "Success Index" embedded in SB 294 would also improve the health of Kansas, as more Hugoton students would have the diverse skills needed to step into the middle class as a young adult. Our locally adopted, district goals include the vision "to better prepare students for college, career and the workforce." These goals have led us to track the success of our graduates, and re-tool our 7-12th grades to guide students in determining their career interests earlier in their formative years. Individual plans of study, and relevant pathways are important for USD 210 students and their parents/guardians.

We appreciate the work of Senator Steve Abrams on this bill and his leadership and collaboration with the six "Coalition" districts. This bill could truly be a game changer at Hugoton public schools, as it would incentivize us to focus even more on post-high school student success. The movement among Kansas educators to define what a successful young adult looks like is a powerful conversation, and a dialogue this bill will propel. We recognize this bill would be a pilot for up to six districts and therefore, will need some modifications along the way. Please consider the following changes. One is the requirement to follow GAAP accounting procedures. This is not a cost efficient methodology for USD 210. Secondly, if a Coalition district does not have local Board of Education support to adopt this pilot funding mechanism, we do not want that district to be forced to leave the Coalition of Innovative School Districts.

We thank you for your continued support of education and for realizing the importance of investing in our schools. Preparing our children for a rapidly changing world requires a shared commitment, collaboration, and open dialogue among all stakeholders. Thank you for being partners in education.