



Department for Children  
and Families

*Strong Families Make a Strong Kansas*

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## Senate Education Committee

February 13, 2018

*Testimony on:*

**SB 319**

Presented By:

Secretary Gina Meier Hummel

Kansas Department for Children and Families

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**Testimony of:**

Gina Meier Hummel, Acting Secretary  
Kansas Department for Children and Families

**Testimony on:**

SB 319

**Chair Baumgardner, Vice Chair Doll, Ranking Member Hensley and Members of the Committee:**

I am Gina Meier Hummel, Acting Secretary for Department for Children and Families (DCF). Thank you providing me the opportunity to speak about SB 319.

SB 319 amends education and residency requirements for children in the custody of the Secretary awaiting placement. The bill notes children in the Secretary's custody awaiting placement, "may attend school in the school district where the foster care contractor providing such services to the child is located."

DCF strongly supports children receiving quality education and recognizes the value and importance of education and educational stability for their well-being and long-term success. This best occurs in the child's community and school of origin. When the best interest of a child may be a different school district, federal law, commonly known as Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), requires a Best Interest Determination (BID) staffing be held when a child in the Secretary's custody changes placement to a different school district. DCF appreciates collaborating with the Kansas Department of Education, DCF Contractors and local school districts on implementing ESSA. As this group continues moving forward to streamline processes for children with an identified placement outside their home school district, the children in the Secretary's custody awaiting placement may find themselves in the unfortunate situation of not having a school.

DCF wholeheartedly supports this bill's desire to maintain education for children in the Secretary's custody no matter their situation. Ongoing education may be coordinated with the child's home school district, addressed through virtual school, or addressed in any other manner to avoid disrupting the child's education. DCF believes that focusing on the location of the Secretary's children in these situations may serve the bill better, rather than focusing on the location of possible DCF contracted providers. Focusing on the location of the Secretary's children awaiting placement may eliminate the need to address "Family foster home" and/or "Foster care contractor" in the bill.

DCF supports the continued improvement in processes related to quality education and educational stability for the Secretary's children. However, DCF is neutral regarding SB 319 for the concerns addressed above.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony to the Committee.