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**February 3, 2020**

**In-Person Testimony to Senate Education Committee**

**Honorable Chair, Senator Molly Baumgardner**

Cyndie Rexer, Committee Assistant

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Room 445-S, State Capitol Building

**Support [Senate Bill 271](#) – Repealing the sunset provision for the high-density at-risk weighting.**

Hearing: Thursday, February 4, 2020, 1:30 PM Room 144-S

Honorable Chairman Baumgardner and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding SB 271 – repealing the sunset provision for the high-density at-risk weighting. **The Kansas PTA supports this bill.**

The high-density factor targets resources towards a population of schools and students who have significant educational needs. While the formula for computing the actual dollar amount is based on a proxy, free lunch, the factors that place students at-risk -- and lead to absenteeism, course failures, behavioral challenges and dropping out -- are many. These factors include homelessness, language barriers, bullying, trauma, stress, mobility whether moving from family to family through the foster care system or geographic mobility, opioid addiction – just to name a few. Our teachers and principals are working to meet our childrens’ unique needs every day, individualizing instruction, meeting in teams to develop plans, lending an ear, going the extra mile, caring and teaching.

Kansas public schools are just now receiving funds that have been withheld for a decade. Full restoration of state aid won’t be implemented until 2023. Now is not the time to pull back on our students, especially our students who come to school, odds against them, at-risk for educational failure. Multiple studies have demonstrated the significance of the high-density factor, most recently from Dr. Lori Taylor (2018) on back to the 2005 Augenblick and Meyers study. These studies are based on highly rigorous research designs and based on analyses of our own state’s data.

We ask that you affirm your commitment to the [Gannon agreement \(June 2019\)](#) and fully implement the school finance formula resolution, including the high-density at-risk weighting. Not only does this component account for \$50 million of the funds allocated to K-12 public schools, the high-density weighting directs these dollars towards schools with the highest percentage of low-income students, who on average experience the greatest obstacles to learning and are in greater need of support to successfully meet the Kansans Can state education standards.

SB 271 is in alignment with the first two [Kansas PTA Legislative Priorities](#):

**Priority 1 – Kansas Constitution.** Kansas PTA supports efforts to preserve the Kansas Constitution. This includes Article VI, regarding public education, to protect non-partisan elections of local school board members, to retain legislators’ obligation to provide suitable finance for ongoing educational improvement, as well as State Board of Education oversight of state education standards and accreditations.

**Priority 2 – Investing in Public Education.** Kansas PTA supports a balanced tax policy to ensure that our state has enough funds to deliver core services, for which public education is about half of most state budgets. Tax policy based upon a balanced combination of income, property and sales taxes has a history of reliability and fairness.

We urge you to vote yes for SB 271. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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#### ***THE PTA POSITION***

*Kansas PTA is a [nonpartisan](#) association that promotes the welfare of children and youth. The PTA does not endorse any candidate or political party. Rather, we advocate for policies and legislation that affect Kansas youth in alignment with our legislative platform and priorities. [PTA mission and purpose](#) have remained the same since our inception over 100 years ago, focused on facilitating every child’s potential and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.*