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**Oral, Proponent Testimony before the
Senate Committee on Education
on
SB 144 – making the high-density at-risk student weighting permanent
by
Mark Tallman, Associate Executive Director
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February 19, 2021**

Madam Chair, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify as a proponent of SB 144, which would permanently remove the “sunset” on the high density at-risk weighting.

As we indicated on our testimony on SB 173, there is clear evidence that districts with higher percentages or concentrations of low-income students face greater challenges in helping those students reach academic standards.

This need was identified in the 2006 Kansas Legislative Post Audit K-12 cost study, which recommended an additional weighting factor beyond the regular weighting based on the number of free lunch eligible students. Currently, this factor provides over \$50 million in state funding targeted at the state’s highest poverty districts.

There are a number of possible reasons why high poverty districts have these additional challenges, but one thing is clear: allowing the high-density weighting to expire will remove resources from students who need it most.

There is no “sunset” on any other weighting factor in the school finance formula. Nor is there a sunset on any provision in the private school tax credit program this committee has voted to expand. We do not believe this program, and the students it supports, should be singled out.

Thank you for your consideration.