



Opponent Testimony before the
Senate Committee on Education

On

SB 499 - Requiring a second student count for virtual school enrollment, increasing certain virtual school state aid amounts and providing for additional state aid for certain students who transfer to virtual schools

by

Mark Tallman, Associate Executive Director

February 21, 2022

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on **SB 499**. As we understand the bill, it has three major components. First, it moves funding for virtual schools to a fall and spring count system. KASB has no position on the first provision.

Second, it raises the per pupil funding for virtual school students age 19 and under. While KASB does not have a specific position on this issue, it would seem to make sense that virtual funding be adjusted as costs increase.

Third, when high school students transfer from a non-virtual school to virtual school in another district, the bill would provide the virtual school with additional funding for students who either do not have sufficient credits to be expected to graduate in the same school year as such student's cohort at the time such student first enrolled in grade 9; have failed two or more courses; or have scored below grade level on any state assessment given to such student. It would remove an equal amount of funding from the non-virtual district.

We oppose this provision for several reasons. We do not believe it is appropriate to reduce funding for districts based on individual student measures that cannot be solely controlled by the district. A student may be behind in credits prior to entering the non-virtual school, or because of actions by the student or circumstances such as health issues. The same is true for failing courses. A student may test lower on a single day because of other factors in the student's life. (We would also note there is no defined "grade level" score on the state assessments.)

There is no requirement that the virtual school correct any of these deficiencies. The virtual school is not penalized for students to fail to graduate, or who fail courses, or who fail to score at minimum levels on state assessments – even if the schools received additional funding because what the student did or did not do at the non-virtual school.

As a result, KASB would urge you to remove this provision if you advance this bill. Thank you for your consideration.