



Re: Testimony in Support of Kansas HB 2669 - Mental Health Intervention Team Program Act

Dear Madam Chair Landwher Members of the Committee:

I am the Associate Superintendent for Student Services in the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas Catholic Schools. Our Catholic educational institution is dedicated to nurturing the spiritual, academic, and emotional well-being of our students. I am pleased to express our unwavering support for Kansas House Bill 2669, the Mental Health Intervention Team Program Act.

Our mission is grounded in the teachings of compassion, empathy, and community service. We believe that the proposed Mental Health Intervention Team Program is not only aligned with our core values but also represents a crucial step forward in addressing the mental health needs of our community. We have many students who have special needs: We have a current enrollment of 13,980 students. We have 2125 students who qualify for Free and Reduced Lunches. There are 673 students where English is their second language. There are also 590 students who are currently under an Individual Education Plan. There is a total of 2,923 students who are in need of special accommodations and require Title Services. All of these students require counseling services on a regular basis. This does not include the enormously growing number of students who have mental issues.

The provisions outlined in HB 2669 reflect a thoughtful and comprehensive approach to mental health intervention. The creation of trained Mental Health Intervention Teams, collaboration with law enforcement and emergency services, and public education initiatives are particularly commendable. These measures not only support individuals in crisis but also contribute to fostering a more compassionate and understanding community.

As educators, we witness firsthand the impact that mental health challenges can have on our students. By supporting HB 2669, we believe we are investing in a program that will provide timely and specialized support to those in need, ultimately creating a safer and more nurturing environment for our students to thrive.

Furthermore, the emphasis on training and certification standards for the intervention teams is crucial. Ensuring that team members possess the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate sensitive situations with empathy and effectiveness is paramount to the success of such a program.

In conclusion, we urge the committee to support Kansas HB 2669 and its vision for a more robust mental health intervention system. By doing so, we believe we are taking a significant step towards creating a community that reflects the compassion and care inherent in our Catholic values.

Thank you for considering our testimony and for your dedication to the well-being of our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lorenzo Rizzi".

Dr. Lorenzo Rizzi
Associate Superintendent- Student Services
Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas