

To: Senate Committee on Education

From: Courtney Lohmann

Re: Written Support of HB 2080

Date: March 7, 2023

Chair Baumgardner and members of the Senate Committee on Education:

My name is Courtney Lohmann of Olathe, Kansas. I am married and I have two boys. I have a bachelor's degree in Education. I am a trained educational advocate for children in the state of Kansas. I have experience teaching online and traditionally in person. Currently I work for a well-known curriculum company remotely from home. I am not only an educator, but I am a parent of students in k12.

My two boys are ages 11 and 13, 6th and 8th grade, respectively. They both started out in a traditional public school in person. My oldest son currently has a 504 plan and makes straight A's. During his past learning experiences in a traditional in person school he struggled with friends, distractions, and inconsistency in the classroom. Testing and individual educational help was lacking while he attended the in-person learning. When covid hit we tried homeschooling which went very well but he asked to try an online program so that he could be more involved with other students. My son was so excited when he got his books in the mail and was ready to learn. Currently he is involved in all classes, social activities, and clubs through the Insight School of Kansas. Our experience with this program has been nothing but wonderful! My son now has time to get work accomplished, talk to teachers one on one and create friendships without inconsistencies and distractions during classes.

My oldest has been on the Honor Roll since coming into the K12 program. One of the biggest issues that has always been difficult for my oldest son is testing. In a normal traditional setting, he would take tests on the floor lying down or sitting on a pillow. His testing would be more measurable when he was in a comfortable place. Currently he has shown a huge improvement in testing because he gets to sit comfortably in a familiar environment (our home).

In-person testing gives him a lot of anxiety. While my son is lucky enough to do many tests in his home, he is not able to take his state testing at home. Currently he must go to a local testing facility that is given to us. This creates anxiety not only because it is an unfamiliar environment but also because he has multiple new distractions and the worry of his surroundings in a new place. This bill would be able to give my child a chance to take a test and have a true current reflection of what he is capable of without distractions or an unfamiliar environment. Currently any other traditional student gets

to take their state testing in the classroom they are in every day. If we were to tell them they all had to go, take their tests in a random building, how do you think they would feel being put in an environment that is not familiar.

We have college level testing being done in homes across the United States. I know as a teacher I can take my state boards from home. My question is why it is okay for college students to take high level state standard tests at home, but my 8th grader must drive to a facility and doesn't get to be in the comfort of the area he knows while taking the test. Many students in his class tell him they must drive for hours to take this test. How much anxiety would that bring you as a child to have to drive hours away to take a test.

Ultimately, I would love to see that state testing can be done at home. My son would be able to take a test comfortably and do well showing his true progress, not just guessing answer choice C because he is in an uncomfortable environment and wants to be done. He is forced to take this test, please let him take it where he can be successful. If educators can take their state testing at home, why can't we find a way for k12 students too.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide support for HB 2080.