

Written-Only Testimony as a **Proponent**  
for

**SB 532** - Establishing a blueprint for literacy to create a literacy advisory committee, appoint a director of literacy education, require the state board of regents and the state board of education to collaborate on a literacy micro-credential and professional development, authorize the state board of regents to recommend diagnostic and formative literacy assessments, authorize university presidents and deans of education oversight over postsecondary literacy courses and require a plan to establish centers of excellence in reading.

before the Senate **Committee on Education**

by

**Torree Pederson, President/CEO, Aligned**

March 7, 2024

Chairman Baumgardner and members of the committee:

Aligned is a proponent of **SB532**. As a **coalition of business leaders** committed to improving Kansas's education system, **Aligned** was founded on the premise that the business community has the obligation, opportunity, and capacity to increase the **workforce** readiness for all Kansans. We are laser focused on supporting the improvement of the education system, cradle to career. Today, I urge leadership to consider strengthening the focus on literacy for our Kansas students.

First and foremost, **literacy is the foundation** upon which all other academic and professional skills are built. Without strong literacy skills, individuals face significant barriers to accessing education, securing meaningful employment, and fully participating in civic life. As such, it is imperative that we prioritize literacy education from early childhood through adulthood.

The proposal to create a literacy advisory committee is a crucial step in ensuring that our efforts to improve literacy are well-informed and effectively coordinated. By bringing together stakeholders from across the education, business, and community sectors, this committee can provide valuable insights and guidance on best practices, emerging research, and innovative approaches to literacy instruction.

Furthermore, appointing a director of literacy education will provide much-needed leadership and accountability in this important area. This individual can spearhead efforts to develop and implement evidence-based literacy initiatives, coordinate professional development opportunities for educators, and ensure that resources are allocated effectively to support literacy instruction in schools and communities.

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Collaboration between the state board of regents and the state board of education on a literacy micro-credential and professional development is essential for ensuring that educators have the knowledge, skills, and support they need to effectively teach literacy. By offering specialized training and credentials in literacy instruction, we can empower teachers to meet the diverse needs of their students and deliver high-quality instruction that promotes literacy development.

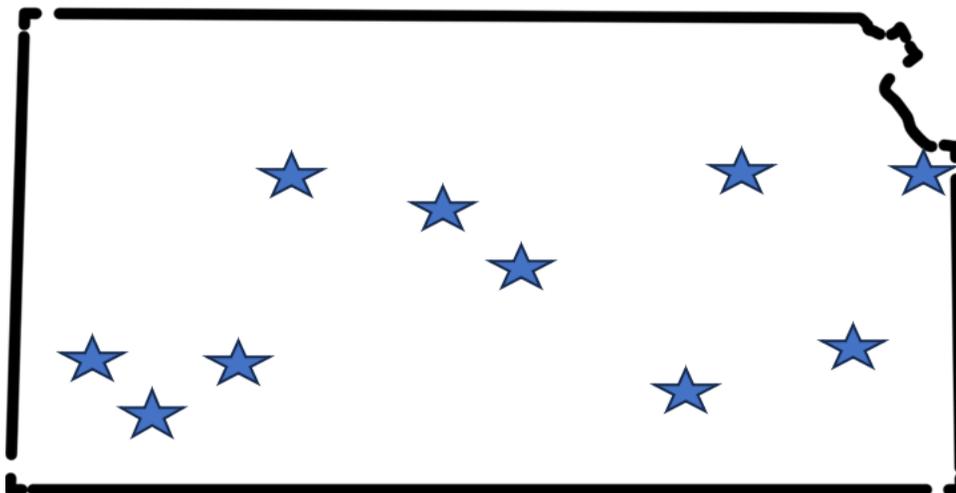
Finally, authorizing the state board of regents to recommend diagnostic and formative literacy assessments will enable us to better understand students' literacy strengths and weaknesses, identify areas for improvement, and track progress over time. These assessments can inform instructional decision-making, support targeted interventions for struggling readers, and ensure that all students receive the individualized support they need to succeed.

In conclusion, I urge you to support the establishment of a comprehensive blueprint for literacy that includes these key components. By investing in literacy education, we can empower individuals, strengthen communities, and ensure the long-term prosperity and vitality of our state.

I would be happy to respond to any questions and assist the committee in continuing to study this issue.

Thank you.

Torree Pederson  
President/CEO Aligned



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