



February 4, 2020

Senate Education Committee
Honorable Chair, Senator Molly Baumgardner
Amy Robinson, Committee Assistant - (785) 296-7368, Amy.Robinson@senate.ks.gov
Room 224-E, State Capitol Building (Sen. Baumgardner's Office)

Bill Number: SB 271
Testimony by: Liz Benditt - Education First Shawnee Mission
In Support Testimony: In-Person
Hearing: Tuesday, February 4, 2020, 1:30 PM Room 144-S

Dear Chair Senator Baumgardner and Members of the Senate Education Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding SB 271, which refers to repealing the sunset provision for the high-density at-risk weighting. On behalf of Education First Shawnee Mission (EFSM), I am writing to voice **our support of SB 271**. EFSM is a parent-led, volunteer, education advocacy group in Shawnee Mission, and our group is comprised of members from all over our diverse school district. The Shawnee Mission School District is the third largest school district in Kansas, with more than 27,500 students and 3,800 employees, in an area spanning 14 municipalities. At Education First Shawnee Mission, we care deeply about protecting the value of our community's number one asset by advocating for fully-funded, excellent public schools.

SB 217 affects approximately 70 districts across the state of Kansas, and it brings \$1 million annually to the Shawnee Mission School District. We strongly believe that the at-risk high density funds should be made a permanent part of the school finance formula.

EFSM firmly believes in an equitable and adequate education for all children, as it is stated in the Kansas Constitution. In our District, we serve a wide range of children from different backgrounds and socioeconomic situations. Members of EFSM have children who attend some of the Shawnee Mission School District's Title 1 schools, and we see first hand what at-risk funding can do for our children and their classmates. As a parent of an elementary and middle school student in the Shawnee Mission School District, I have seen firsthand the damage that has been done to our schools due to lack of steady, dependable funding. If we are a state that values education for ALL children, we must make this at-risk funding a permanent part of our school funding formula to ensure school districts can serve our most vulnerable children. As parents and a Kansans, the moms of Education First Shawnee Mission are firmly **in support of SB 271** and I encourage you to support this bill as well.

Regards,
Liz Benditt
Shawnee Mission School District Parent and Member of Education First Shawnee Mission