

Emporia, KS 66801
www.usd253.org

Mary Herbert
Education Center
1700 W 7th Avenue
PO Box 1008
Telephone 620-341-2200
Fax 620-341-2325

Flint Hills Special
Education Cooperative
1700 W 7th Avenue
Telephone 620-341-2325

Emporia High School
3302 W 18th Avenue
Telephone 620-341-2365

Emporia Middle School
2300 Graphic Arts Road
Telephone 620-341-2335

Flint Hills Learning Center
1624 Industrial Road
Telephone 620-341-2251

Jones Early Childhood
Development Center
327 S Walnut Street
Telephone 620-412-8150

Logan Avenue Elementary
521 S East Street
Telephone 620-341-2264

Riverside Elementary
327 S West Street
Telephone 620-341-2276

Timmerman Elementary
2901 Timmerman Drive
Telephone 620-341-2270

Village Elementary
2302 W 15th Avenue
Telephone 620-341-2282

Walnut Elementary
801 Grove Avenue
Telephone 620-341-2288

William Allen White Elementary
902 Exchange Street
Telephone 620-341-2294

February 1, 2024

Chairperson Williams and K-12 committee,

Thank you for taking time to read my written testimony on HB2612. As I read this bill, it appears that you perceive that school districts are not following established laws.

I believe the state legislature should allow the State Board of Education to perform their established duties. Our district is consistently focused on school improvement for our students and to ensure that we are accredited. We know that schools are required to follow state laws and State Board of Education regulations. There are clearly outlined steps for schools in danger of not being accredited. Accreditation affects every student in a school district and should not be used as a punitive punishment based on the interpretation of a law. Accreditation should remain in the hands of the education department who have the staff, skills, understanding, and experience working with schools and school districts; the resources to support all schools.

Another concern with the bill is a state audit must be performed by KSDE to reinstate the district to accredited status. Auditors focus on numbers. They are not tasked to determine as to *why* a district's data might have changed. Adding one more responsibility to KSDE auditors will only diminish the fidelity of their work.

The focus should be on being in compliance with the law by fully funding special education and why it has taken the legislature so long to address this important issue. Knowing the past history of the Kansas budget, why did it take multiple lawsuits before the legislature fully funded general education? Possibly because of the discrepancy in interpretation of what is fully funded. Let schools do their jobs of educating students.

Please allow our local boards to monitor educators and the daily work they perform. If there is a concern, I am confident that our boards will address it.

Sincerely,
Allison Anderson Harder, Ed.D., Superintendent