

Chairperson Williams and K-12 committee,

Thank you for taking time to listen to my written testimony on HB2612.

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the proposed bill that seeks to strip schools of their accreditation if they are found to be in violation of the law. While the intention behind this bill may be to ensure accountability, it is crucial to consider the potential unintended consequences and the impact it may have on the educational system in Kansas.

Accreditation is a vital component of our education system, focusing on student and staff growth, grounded in school improvement plans. The accreditation process serves as a mechanism for continuous improvement, fostering a commitment to excellence within our schools and communities. It is important to emphasize that accreditation has no direct bearing on the legal operations of a school; rather, it is centered on fostering a culture of ongoing improvement.

In Kansas, the oversight of professional school operations is entrusted to the Kansas Department of Education and locally controlled boards. These entities are well-equipped to ensure that schools adhere to legal requirements and operate in the best interest of students. Placing the power to strip accreditation solely in the hands of legislative bodies may undermine the existing system of checks and balances.

It is crucial to acknowledge that no school intentionally violates the law, and the current oversight mechanisms are effective in addressing any issues that may arise. This proposed bill seems to introduce a new, potentially punitive measure that could inadvertently harm the educational experience of Kansas students. Trust in the professional operation of schools and confidence in the accreditation process should remain within the purview of the Kansas Department of Education and locally controlled boards.

Furthermore, it is essential to consider the broader context of this proposed legislation. The timing and nature of the bill raise questions about whether it may be driven by political motivations, rather than a genuine concern for the welfare of Kansas students. Using accreditation as a weapon to settle disputes over funding or other political disagreements is not in the best interest of our education system.

In conclusion, I urge you to reconsider the implications of this proposed bill and to place trust in the existing oversight mechanisms provided by the Kansas Department of Education and locally controlled boards. Our focus should be on collaboration and support for our public schools, ensuring the continued growth and success of our students. Thank you for your ongoing support of Kansas public schools.

Sincerely,

Tim Hayden  
Professional Educator