

February 1, 2024

Chairperson Williams and the K-12 committee,

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my written testimony on HB2612. As I reviewed this bill, there must be an assumption that school districts are not following established laws.

The state legislature should allow the State Board of Education to perform its duties. School accreditation is more than a series of numbers or disagreements on how funding dollars should be used or how a report should be completed. Schools are required to follow state laws and State Board of Education regulations. Districts can review the process if schools need to show growth or meet expectations, while KSDE provides guidance and support. Accreditation affects every student in a school district. It is not for use as a punitive punishment based on the interpretation of a law. Accreditation should remain in the hands of the department with the staff, skills, understanding, and experience working with schools and school districts, and the resources to support all schools.

Another concern with the bill is that KSDE must perform a state audit to reinstate the district to accredited status. Every auditor I have ever come in contact with only sees numbers. Their job is to review those numbers, not why our numbers might have changed. The auditors are already overwhelmed with the caseload, and adding to their duties will only diminish the fidelity of their work.

When considering the proposed bill, I ask you to consider why the legislature has been able to break the law for so many years by not fully funding special education. Knowing the 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 meant by "fully funded." Schools should refrain from being caught up in the middle of interpreting the laws, which diverts us from our actual role of educating the students of Kansas.

In summary, the schools are governed by the State School Board and **locally** elected boards of education. Please allow our local boards to monitor educators and their daily work. If schools intentionally break the law, our esteemed and respected local school boards are fully capable of handling the issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eryn A. Norton Moland". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Eryn" being particularly prominent.

Mrs. Eryn A. Norton Moland
Kansas Educator, 2009-Present