



USD 439

SEDGWICK PUBLIC SCHOOLS
400 WEST 4TH ST.
SEDGWICK, KS 67135

February 5, 2024

Re: HB 2650

To: Members of House K-12 Education Budget Committee

I am writing to strongly urge you to reconsider your position on the proposed HB 2650.

Kansas education serves students from all walks of life, those who know by excelling academically they can have a brighter future, some who come to school because it is better to be at school than to be at home, others who are looking to connect with at least one caring adult in their life. For those children, the at-risk children we serve, their education is even more tantamount to their overall success in life.

Moving the expectation for at-risk students to achieve a "3" or "4" on state assessments is not logical when a "2" on state assessments is meeting expectations. A "2" on state assessments means the student is functioning exactly where he/she is supposed to be.

How can we expect students who already share many risk factors to do better than their non-at-risk counterparts? A "2" on a state assessment indicates the student is performing on par as expected to achieve college and career readiness.

Public schools throughout Kansas already have accountability plans built into the system that perform a check-and-balance for how funds are expended, how students are served and what resources teachers can use to support learning. Subgroups and certain student demographics are already tracked and reported.

Imagine if we could instead help students understand that they matter —and that they are worth it. Imagine a process that looks at the glass half-full, rather than half-empty.

Our students deserve an education system that celebrates "being on track," rather than punishing all students for trying their best. Our students, yours and mine, deserve a system that celebrates progress, rather than punishing an unachievable goal.

I would strongly urge you to reconsider your position on the proposed HB 2650 given the many perimeters already in place that provide a reporting process that supports a check-and-balance for our at-risk students and the recognition that requiring at-risk students to perform two levels above grade level is not realistic.

Sincerely,

Dr. Rae Niles, Superintendent
Sedgwick Public Schools, USD 439