

Proponent/Written Testimony of **SB428**

Senate Education Committee

March 13, 2024

Dr. Janet Neufeld, Graduate School Professor, retired Kansas administrator

Greetings Legislators:

I appreciate this opportunity to provide written testimony in support of SB 428.

We need strong laws and statutes for school districts to design and complete comprehensive district and building needs assessments. The needs assessment process must include input from teachers, principals, and board members in a school district. Superintendents and school boards must devote time for collaboration as a part of the school board leadership process to communicate student learning targets and create needs assessments that are viable and goal-orientated. All school board members should be kept up to date about the district needs assessment, collection of data, and how budget resources will be directed towards student learning and achievement.

Last spring, the USD#418 Superintendent presented the district data to the board in the superintendent report. The district needs assessment and the district student achievement data were among the data posted with the agenda. The official agenda listed ten minutes for this presentation. In this presentation, we learned the school district students were 83% non-proficient, levels I and II, in Math, and 82% non-proficient, levels I and II, in English at McPherson High School. Those of us listening were not allowed to ask any questions. This is the only presentation the public received about the district data driving student learning.

State law requires the district needs assessment reports to be published on the district website, but USD #418 does not have the 2023 district needs assessment posted. Also, at board meetings information was not transparently shared on how the district “conducted” the assessment meetings as required in state law and some board members were not aware of a district needs assessment survey posted for parents and guardians to participate in January 2023.

School district leaders should transparently share achievement reports that identify students who are proficient and not proficient. This information should be shared annually with the school board in open board sessions. This promotes communication between the superintendent and school board about identified learning targets for students, how learning targets will be achieved, and how school district and taxpayer funding will be used to address these goals.

Budgets should be allocated to address student learning. Superintendents and boards must communicate student learning goals and how the school district budget will be allocated to increase student learning goals.

Senate Bill #428 ensures that school district leadership will be required by law to include teachers and board members in the needs assessment meetings and to share the most important information about a school district with the school board and public openly and transparently. School district patrons who pay the taxes that fund schools, deserve to have the school district leadership present, post, and communicate the district learning needs of faculty, staff, and students.

Senate Bill#428 will provide that district funds are clearly articulated to the school board and public how taxpayer funds will be allocated to address the student learning needs in a school district.

Thank you for your consideration. Please approve SB 428.