

Hello my name is Shawn Cardin. I am a school board member of Central Heights USD 288 in Richmond, Kansas. I am speaking today in opposition to House Bill 2504.

After hearing from and speaking to a number of teachers, parents, and patrons within our community I felt compelled to share some serious concerns within my district. In Franklin County there are currently four school districts, West Franklin, Central Heights, Wellsville and Ottawa. If HB 2504 were to become law realignment could force our four districts to become one. I have heard over and over again, "if I wanted my kids to go to Ottawa, we would live there". Most families while living within their means still financially struggle and are living paycheck to paycheck. They cannot handle the additional tax increases our district would have due to our bond debt.

There is fear class size would increase due to realignment. We have a large number of students with IEP's. Increased class size or placing them in classes with students and teachers whom they don't know would be detrimental to their education. These kids know and trust their peers, their educators, and their administrators.

HB 2504 states, the district will be required to inventory real property and vehicles for the central office and all excess property not required for the new central office will go to the state to be sold. Who will determine what is excess? Does the original district have the option of sell its excess property in lieu of it going to the state's general fund? If a building is considered excess will the school close and students be required to have additional time on a bus getting to and from school? (Students within our district are currently on the bus up to 45 minutes.) Will the money from the sale of real property go to pay the bond debt (for districts who have bonds)?

HB 2504 also reads, "The number of school administration and supervisory service employees employed by a realigned school district shall not exceed 120 percent of the number of school administrators and supervisory service employees of the school district with the largest enrollment in the prior year." How does this seem like a good idea to consolidate four current districts in to one and yet only have no more than 120 percent of administrators and supervisory service employees? Do you think it is possible to still efficiently run a district which will essentially double in size but with only 20 percent more staff currently at Ottawa USD 290?

Central Heights prides itself on being a tight knit community where everyone knows and cares about everyone. Each student is recognized in the hallway and they aren't known by a student ID number but rather by face. This is a majority of the reason districts like Central Heights exist throughout Kansas, families choose to send their children to smaller districts where there are less incidents with drugs and violence. Families continue to attend the same district generation after generation because they know when their child gets on a bus to go to school they will be safe with some of the same staff who were there when they attended, whether it be their

peers or teachers in the same class rooms they had. To the Kansas legislature this may seem like a waste of money to keep so many rural schools across the state separate but these rural schools were built in and by the very communities you were elected to serve. I understand the money to continue funding these schools is not without hardship to the state however, realigning and cutting the number of administrators and staff is not the answer. I have been told if this happens, families with the means will either move to other areas or states or choose to homeschool their children. Please consider what is best for the students, parents, families, teachers and staff at not only my school district but across the state. The decision to approve HB 2504 could have negative impacts across the state financially for individuals with increased taxes or districts who can't handle the additional burden of additional students.

Additional questions:

1. What about clubs (FFA, FBLA, FCCLA, Key Club, etc.), do they all attend at the larger school since it would be one district?
2. Athletics – Would this require KSHAA to restructure? We have schools within Franklin County which are both 3A and 4A, wouldn't all of the schools statewide (with the exception of those not affected) to become larger therefore essentially being closer to the same size?  
Would students be required to attend practices at the main campus for volleyball, football, basketball, cheer, dance, cross country, wrestling, track and field? Who is responsible for transportation? This would extend the student athletes day to well over 12 hours daily to account for practice before and/or after school (if multi-sport) possibly additional time depending on transportation times.
3. How would funding for out of district students be decided? If the district the student resided in needed the pupil for enrollment purposes to ensure realignment wouldn't be required for said district would they be able to attend an out of district school, or be required to remain in district?

#### Franklin County School District Enrollment 2015-2016

USD 287 West Franklin	592
USD 288 Central Heights	566
USD 289 Wellsville	787
USD 290 Ottawa	2477