

Testimony before the
Senate Education Committee
on

SB 271
by

Renee Scott – Superintendent - Atchison USD 409 -

Proponent Testimony

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding SB 271. USD 409, Atchison, Kansas is a proponent of this bill.

Based on 2018-19 actual data, our district received \$396,508 dollars in high-density at-risk funding. This funding not only is distributed to teacher's salaries that work directly with at-risk students, but also is utilized to purchase programs specifically targeted to at-risk students. For example, our social-emotional learning curriculum, Second Steps, was purchased with at-risk funds. In addition, we utilize at-risk funds for our alternative education program and summer school credit recovery program, which specifically targets at-risk students. During our summer school session 52 high school students attend regularly with 94 credits towards graduation earned. 12 8th grade students earned 24 credit to jump start their high school careers. Our alternative school served 38 students last year. Of the 38 students K-12 grade, 9 seniors were able to graduate with their cohort. These students would not have graduated without staff and programs geared specifically towards meeting their needs.

If we were to lose the high-density at-risk funding, this would be the equivalent of eight teaching positions in our district. This would be the equivalent of all of our alternative school staff positions (six certified) plus two additional staff members, such as our social worker that serves our elementary school and additional programs that support at-risk students, such as Odesseyware and interventions for math and reading.

As a 4A size school district in a mostly rural community, our demographics support the need for these funds. We have a high rate of foster students, 65.70% of our students are identified as economically disadvantaged, and accountability scores for our diverse populations are well below the district and state averages. With our district experiencing the suicide of a student a little over a year ago, we understand the importance of supporting at-risk students. Cuts to high-density at-risk funding would be detrimental to the students in our district. We would have to cut approximately eight certified teaching positions that directly impact at-risk students. It is our request that SB 271 is approved by the Senate and the sunset clause is removed.

Thank you for your time.

Renee Scott
Superintendent of Schools
USD 409 Atchison