

SB 428**Proponent Testimony – in person****Senate education committee****March 13, 2024**

Hello, I am Amy Cawvey, a current school board member at Lansing USD 469. Speaking as an individual and not on behalf of the board, Senate Bill 428 has my full support.

The building needs assessment, or BNA, is one of the most important duties a school board member has, yet it is also one of the least known and one that they often receive zero training. I was elected in the fall of 2021 and received no information on the BNA or formal training. I blame myself as I should have read all of the state statutes regarding education. I also blame the board member training I received and lack of information to board members from KSDE. My initial training at KASB contained zero information on the BNA. I will say since then KASB has slowly started to add training for board members but it is not required by statute like negotiation training.

As a sitting school board member we were handed our BNA with our budget in August of 2022. Now has can a board of education conduct, and that is what the state statute says, conduct a BNA when it is not even presented to them until it is to be filed and approved with the budget. This was an incomplete building needs assessment and I had no part in it as directed by law. The following year some of our board members pressed to conduct the needs assessment and was met with resistance. We did manage one work session, but it was again already completed by admin and did not continue one of the requirements which is timeline needed to raise student achievement. We will received pushback along the way and that is why I am a proponent of this legislation to specifically dictate who takes part.

As board members our first goal should be to increase student achievement and to be good stewards of our constituent's tax dollars. We need measurable goals and to be able to directly tie those to funding. For instance if the goal is to increase elementary reading scores perhaps a reading interventionist is needed along with a timeline to do so. This helps allocate money towards student achievement as opposed to other areas like perhaps a new batting cage for sports. Although sports are important and well loved, student achievement comes first.

I all for local control but sometimes the board members are being prevented from following the law or encouraged to rubber stamp something they did not really conduct.

Proud as I am of our students, staff, and district, our achievement scores, like those in other districts, have been declining. In math and ELA, the number of students below grade level has increased since 2015, and proficiency levels are lower. This negative trend necessitates action from board members and the ability to actually conduct the BNA which is critical for student success. Senate Bill 428 supports this cause and I urge you to support this bill.