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# Pratt Schools USD 382

small schools, BIG OPPORTUNITIES

Tony Helfrich, Superintendent ~ David Schmidt, Assistant Superintendent

To: House Committee on K-12 Education Budget  
From: Tony Helfrich, Pratt USD 382 Superintendent  
Subject: HB 2662  
Date: 15 February 2022

In short, HB 2662 will negatively impact public education in KS. Because public education quality is regularly cited as a top reason for companies to choose a location, it will ultimately hurt our state's ability to recruit and retain business for our state.

HB 2662 places unnecessary and onerous burdens on school systems. These burdens take resources out of the classroom and shift more energy to administrative and clerical work. Schools regularly report on curriculum through parent teacher conferences, class syllabi, board meetings, and other miscellaneous communication. Adding an additional mandate from a centralized authority creates an additional burden on educators, which does not benefit students.

HB 2662 damages morale because it feels like an attack on educators and damages our ability to recruit and retain good teachers in the state of KS. We are at a crisis point with recruiting and retaining good people in education. Putting energy towards hurting our efforts to recruit and retain great teachers and administrators will damage KS education and be difficult to recover from. It reminds me of Reagan's great line, "Government is not a solution to a problem, it is the problem."

HB 2662 places limits on a school district's effectiveness at maintaining teacher accountability for the very narrow purpose of answering a potential problem—a problem that is being invented by misinformation. Again, President Reagan's line is instructive here. Furthermore, local control allows a school board to fix this potential problem should it occur as our founders intended. And, by not placing limits on a school board, it allows the school boards the authority to maintain accountability in their districts. We have wisely given more power to school boards to remove ineffective teachers, but this legislation would call that authority into question and weakens school board control.

HB 2662, with no consensus of medical professionals, puts the health of students and the wider community in danger by taking a populist stance with vaccinations. Our schools have always protected student health and been a benefit for community health. This move to placate a vocal minority (with no credible medical foundation or medical community support) is a shortsighted effort and will lead to long-term health issues for students and our local communities.

Again, HB 2662 appears to be an attack on educators and the very process of deliberating it will cause short term and long-term damage to the system. Passing it would overwhelmingly negatively impact Kansans.

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