

House K-12 Education Budget Committee
HB 2612
February 5, 2024
Written Opponent Testimony by: Bryce Wachs

Chairperson Williams and K-12 committee,

Thank you for taking the time to read my concerns regarding HB2612. After a thorough review, I find several aspects of the bill troubling, particularly in how it might alter the dynamics of school accreditation and oversight.

The bill appears predicated on the assumption that school districts may not be in compliance with existing laws, a standpoint that arguably misrepresents the dedication of our schools to uphold legal and educational standards. I would like to draw attention to several key points in this discussion.

The State Board of Education already plays a crucial role in overseeing school accreditation. This process involves more than a simple analysis of numbers or financial considerations; it requires a deep understanding of educational practices and standards. Accreditation should not be used as a punitive measure based on subjective interpretations of the law but should remain under the purview of those with educational expertise and experience focused on continuous improvement.

Another proposal within the bill that raises concern is the establishment of a process allowing individuals to challenge determinations of school district compliance or noncompliance with state laws and regulations. While accountability is vital, such a process could potentially lead to a proliferation of challenges based on varied interpretations of compliance, potentially overwhelming the system and diverting resources from educational improvement efforts. Ensuring fairness and objectivity in this process is critical to prevent it from becoming a tool for undue interference in school operations.

Reflecting on the broader legislative context, historical challenges such as underfunding special and general education highlight the complexities of interpreting and meeting legal obligations in education. It is imperative not to entangle schools in these complexities further, detracting from their core mission of educating students.

In conclusion, I urge you to consider the pivotal roles that local boards of education and the State School Board play in governing our schools. They are best equipped to monitor, evaluate, and address any issues of legal compliance within our education system. Introducing additional, potentially counterproductive legislative mandates could undermine their work. Empowering these entities to continue their efforts without undue legislative interference is crucial for maintaining the integrity and effectiveness of our educational system.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my perspective on HB2612 and its implications for our schools.

Sincerely,



Bryce Wachs
Superintendent of Schools
Fort Larned USD 495
bryce.wachs@gmail.com