



USD 507 Satanta

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February 1, 2024

Chairperson Williams and K-12 committee,

Thank you for taking time to read my written testimony in opposition to HB2650. According to my understanding, this bill would require schools to identify subgroups and monitor their progress toward proficiency on the Kansas state assessments. If 75% of the members of the identified subgroups fail to achieve proficiency (defined as Levels 3 or 4 on the state assessment), the district stands to lose at-risk funding.

This bill is a step backwards. We should have learned from No Child Left Behind that a strict emphasis on proficiency on state assessments is harmful to students. Tying funding to proficiency levels encourages teachers to focus on rote learning rather than higher order thinking; inevitably leads to decreased instructional time for science, social studies, music, art, physical education, and play; causes both teacher and student morale to decline; and defines students by a single metric rather than the considering the strengths and needs of the whole child.

We know that test scores do not define children—and they don't define schools either. We should reject legislation that evaluates school achievement in such a simplistic manner. Research shows that test scores are tied more closely to the socioeconomic circumstances of the school community than they are to student learning. This legislation fails to take into account the challenges that schools in high-poverty districts face. When schools must provide additional supports for students whose families are struggling, it simply takes more resources.

This legislation is unfair to disadvantaged school districts. Currently, statewide, less than 35% of students score at Levels 3 and 4 (which I believe says as much about the test as it does our students). Affluent districts will not see their funding cut if they fail to increase test scores, but poor districts that receive at-risk funds will. These are the districts that need more support from the state, not less.

I encourage you to reject this unfair and misguided legislation.

Sincerely,

Karen Burrows

USD 507 Superintendent

Every student, every day, whatever it takes.