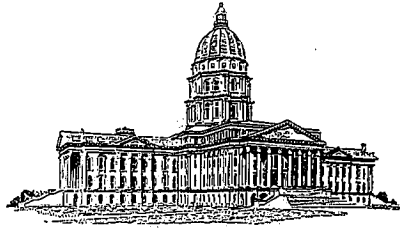


STATE OF KANSAS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STATE CAPITOL, ROOM 167-W
TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612
(785) 296-7631
pat.colloton@house.ks.gov

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS
CORRECTIONS AND JUVENILE JUSTICE, CHAIR
EDUCATION
JUDICIARY
JOINT COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS AND
JUVENILE JUSTICE OVERSIGHT, CHAIR



2513 W. 118TH STREET
LEAWOOD, KANSAS 66211
(913) 339-9246
pat@patcolloton.com

PAT COLLOTON
28TH DISTRICT

February 6, 2012

Hon. Clay Aurand, Chair
House Committee on Education
State Capitol
Topeka, KS 66612

Re: HB 2477

Dear Chair Aurand and Committee Members,

The purpose of HB 2477 is to address in one small part the findings of the January 2011 Final Report of the Kansas Commission on Graduation and Dropout Prevention and Recovery (hereinafter "Dropout Commission"). The bill requires that a student who is dropping out of high school be advised of the alternatives for continuation of his/her education apart from attendance in high school.

Under the current procedure, K.S.A. 72-111, a child is exempt from the state's compulsory attendance requirements if the child is 16 or 17 and the parent or guardian has attended a final counseling session with the school district where a form is signed by the both. The current advice given in this session includes (1) the loss in earning power of a high school dropout compared to a high school graduate and (2) a list of alternative education programs approved by the school district. This bill would increase the required information to include other programs the student might access to obtain a vocational or educational degree/certificate including virtual schools, vocational schools or other adult education programs available in the area.

The Dropout Commission was co-chaired by our Commissioner of Education, Diane DeBacker, and found that among the reasons that students dropout is the need to financially support themselves, to care for a family member, to become a parent themselves or simply having parents who were unaware the child was about to dropout. There are many students whose parents have substance abuse, mental or financial problems that impact the ability of the child to remain in school. This bill seeks to insure that in the final school interview the school counselor gives the child an outline of how they can continue their education either then or in the future. It leaves them with the possibility that they have not dropped out of a hopeful future even if it is not the standard path.

In visiting with Commissioner DeBacker, who graciously took the time to review the bill, she suggested that the form signed by the parent and child could simply be changed to include a fourth block indicating that the counselor, parent and child had reviewed the options for pursuing a vocational or educational program appropriate for that child and available in his/her locality.

With the Governor's emphasis on expanding vocational options in the state, HB 2477 could help insure that even those who dropout have the knowledge to choose not to be left behind. I urge you to adopt HB 2477.

Respectfully submitted,

Rep. Pat Colloton