

TESTIMONY BEFORE HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE ON SB 260 – 3/7/2012

My name is Doug Bowman, and I serve as staff to the Kansas Interagency Coordinating Council on Early Childhood Developmental Services (Kansas ICC).

We wish to thank the Committee for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 260.

The provision that is in question is scheduled to go into effect for the upcoming 2012-2013 school year and it causes us grave concern. The proposal is to calculate an average amount of categorical aid reimbursement per student enrolled. The current statutory language then would reduce those payments of categorical aid reimbursement for school districts (or special education cooperatives) that exceed 150% of the statewide average. The bill before you (SB 260) would eliminate this troublesome provision. Categorical aid reimbursements would not be modified, but paid according to the traditional method.

The proposed reduction of categorical aid reimbursements would serve as a strong disincentive for local school districts to serve children aged birth to three years with special needs. The funds used to serve these youngest children would be factored into these calculations, however those young children served (aged birth to three years) would not be considered in the same formula.

Almost one-third of the 37 tiny-k networks (Part C of IDEA) are currently administered by a local school district or special education cooperative. All of the others (except one) access special education funding through categorical aid reimbursements arranged collaboratively with a Local Education Agency (LEA). Special education categorical aid reimbursement is in fact, the single largest source of funding for the tiny-k system. [The tiny-k system has been historically underfunded, and reliant upon the collaborative efforts of our local partners. Anything which puts at risk the largest funding stream could jeopardize the entire tiny-K system](#)

Our concern is that the implementation of that one section in the original SB 359 may disrupt these carefully constructed collaborations that often took years to establish. LEAs that find themselves at (or near) that 150% benchmark established by current statutory language will hesitate to continue supporting vital services to young children and their families.

The Kansas Interagency Coordinating Council on Early Childhood strongly advises your careful scrutiny of SB 260 before the implementation next school year of those provisions that we think will be harmful to Kansas children. Thank you again for the opportunity to provide this advice and assistance. I will gladly stand for questions.