

SB 271 – Repealing the Sunset Provision for High-Density At-Risk Weighting

Testimony in Support of SB 271

Submitted by: Shellaine Kiblinger of Cherryvale, KS

Dear Chairwoman Baumgardner and Members of the Education Committee:

I am providing this testimony in support of SB 271 and on behalf of the 750 students in USD 447-Cherryvale. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of our students in the rural S.E. Kansas communities of Thayer and Cherryvale are economically disadvantaged. They benefit greatly from approximately \$190,000 in High Density At-Risk Funding which provides direct supports to our students.

Continued High-Density At-Risk Weighting through the support of SB271 will allow the following services to be continued for our students. A sunset would cause such services to be discontinued:

- Kindergarten classroom aides who provide additional **one-on-one support** through various research-based programs to our youngest learners
- **Social-Emotional Supports**, including individual and group counseling, made possible through a full-time master's-level social worker
- Materials and staff to provide **research-based reading and math interventions**, such as 95% Group, which is helping us close the achievement gap between our low-income students and their non-at-risk peers.
- **On-line credit recovery** for failing students

If High-Density At-Risk Funding sunsets, our students will be severely impacted by the elimination of these and similar supports. We depend upon these funds to support our most vulnerable learners. It is my understanding that these funds are actually already allocated for this purpose in the state's budget. Therefore, I can see no reason not to support our students by allowing these critical services to continue. While not all schools receive these funds, they are critical to those of us who do, especially those of us in small, rural communities.

I urge your support of SB 271.

Respectfully submitted by



Dr. Shellaine Kiblinger
Superintendent
USD 447-Cherryvale