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**STEPHEN LINKOUS**  
CHIEF OF STAFF

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February 1, 2022

Written Testimony In Opposition to HB 2550

Submitted by Stephen Linkous, Chief of Staff, Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools

Dear Chairperson Williams and members of the committee:

HB 2550 will shift tax dollars from Kansas public schools to school entities not fully accredited by the Kansas State Department of Education. The lack of accountability will adversely affect the quality of education for Kansas students and their families. Without state accountability, the ability to provide equitable opportunities to all students will be hindered.

The new language in HB 2550 greatly expands the number of students eligible and is a fundamental shift away from holding schools accountable to Kansas State Department of Education's state standards. This appears to be another effort to greatly expand the reach of the program with the action of not holding all institutions to the same standards of accountability.

The increased eligibility will inevitably shift more tax dollars away from public schools to this new program. This change would take public tax dollars away from existing schools that educate any and all students.

Please note the impact of this funding has been evident in Kansas City Kansas Public Schools, especially Pre-COVID 19, as we continue our new direction with a new stability in leadership. Pre-COVID 19, we saw significant gains in student proficiency levels in the areas of Language Arts, Mathematics and Science as measured by the KAP. Respectively, our Language Arts rose 4.3% points, Mathematics 6.2% and Science 3.9% points. Our pre-pandemic 2019-2020 KAP Interim scores were projecting growth of 5%-8% points in those same academic areas. We understand we continue to face challenges, but we believe if the KCKPS community continues to work cooperatively and the resources continue to meet the needs of all students, we will see continued positive results for our students.

As you work through legislation in this committee, please consider the impact your decisions will have on the achievement of our students in KCKPS and across the state of Kansas, as all districts work to make every student in Kansas College and Career Ready.