



February 29, 2012

Representative Gordon and Committee Members,

My Name is Cammie Braden. I am the Coordinator for Keystone Parents as Teachers (PAT). Keystone PAT provides services to 18 rural and small town school districts in Northeast Kansas.

Keystone PAT has experienced a significant reduction since 2009. In 2009, we served over 680 families. We are currently contracted to serve 570 families, 110 fewer. We are serving more at-risk families. The number of families who have at least 1 risk factor identified has increased by 18% since 2009. Sixty percent of those families have 2 or more risk indicators.

A reduction of 31% would equate 177 fewer families for Keystone PAT. However, that figure does not accurately reflect the most likely reduction for our rural school districts. With previous school funding cuts, our districts have also reduced their PAT services by 50% or more. Four of our districts can only afford to contract PAT services for 9 families. Five of our districts can only afford PAT services for 18 families. And, 4 of our districts contract for 27 families. A 31% reduction in funding would most likely force these districts to eliminate PAT services. Elimination of our smaller districts would equate to 234 fewer families or a 41% reduction. This reduction will be even greater with further school funding cuts.

In many of the rural districts, Parents as Teachers is the only resource for early childhood education, parenting information, resource and referrals. Most of our rural families have limited access to internet. They also have limited access to community libraries and other places where they could gain information about parenting their young children. Rural families are more isolated in hard economic times.

Parent educators provide families with timely, researched-based information at home visits. They help parents with problem-solving skills, child development, and family support. Parent educators meet with families at times that are helpful for them allowing for fathers to be at the home visits. Parents as Teachers provide the help families need to be their child's first and best teacher. PAT children are more ready to start school. Third graders who received PAT services score higher in reading and math.

We are asking that Parents as Teachers continue to be funded at \$12.5 million. We are asking that the Legislators reinstate the \$56M to the CIF (Children's Initiative Fund) as recommended by the Attorney General's Office and the Children's Cabinet.

Thank you for your consideration. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Cordially,

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