

Written testimony before  
House Committee on K-12 Education Budget

On

HB 2738

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Chair Representative Williams,

As a parent of students who directly benefited from special education services and a former school board member who saw the positive impacts of special education services within the district, and the challenges of meeting those needs without these services being fully funded, I urge that this bill not be passed out of committee.

As written, this bill double and even triple allocates money in an attempt to claim special education is being fully funded without actually doing so. In addition, if it were to pass, districts experiencing an increase in students with special education needs wouldn't see additional funds generated under the proposed formula. It would be up to school districts to figure out how they would meet this increasing need without increased funding.

This bill is essentially an attempt to bypass the legislature's own law establishing a special education task force to carefully study this issue and suggest some ways to adjust the special education funding formula (if needed and in a manner that actually benefits Kansas students). But this task force has only met once for just 3 hours. There has yet to be any thoughtful study of the formula. It's an end run around the law to promote a false narrative that the legislature is fully funding special education when it isn't doing so.

I know that significant evidence has been presented in the past regarding the benefits of special education services along with the negatives of underfunding it. But here are a few more.

- [The Classroom Impact of Trained Special Needs Education Teachers in Selected Schools: An Evaluation Study](#)
- [Sample records for effective special education](#)
- [Importance of special education](#)

Fully funding special education benefits all kids within a district if for no other reason than dollars aren't taken away from other general fund services to partially shore up special education services. And with districts still recovering from the pandemic, it's even more critical that our public school districts be fully funded. Here's but one example of how underfunding impacts school districts, kids and families, and their communities - <https://marcelharmon67.substack.com/p/lawrences-school-district-budget>.

I've also spent my entire adult life working in the private sector. Strong public schools are critical for attracting and keeping employees. They're also critical for maintaining / replenishing a high-quality workforce in our state over the long term. You can't have strong public schools without fully funding them. Underfunding special education hurts our kids, hurts our communities, hurts our businesses, and ultimately our state's economy.

I respectfully ask that you discard this bill, let the task force do its job, and in the meantime, fully fund special education per state law (at the statewide average of 92% of the excess costs for special education not funded by the Federal Government).