



Schools for Quality Education

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Senate Education Committee

February 19, 2021

Senate Bill 144

Proponent Testimony by

Donalyn Biehler, Superintendent

Herington USD 487, a member of Schools for Quality Education

Chair Baumgardner and members of the committee. Herington USD 487 is a small rural school district in Central Kansas. We serve students from PreK-12th grades and have a current head count of close to 450 students. The median household income in Herington is \$35,081. Currently, 51.66% of our students qualify for Free lunch (live below the federal guideline for poverty).

I'd like to provide testimony related to the effects of the sunset provision currently included in SB144 on Herington USD 487.

We utilize at-risk funds for the following purposes:

- Providing research-based intervention materials to be used with students identified as at-risk based on reading, math, and/or social-emotional screening scores at all levels (PreK-12)
- Supplementing the funding we receive for the 4-year-old at-risk grant program (currently serving 30 students in our community)
- Covering the federal funds shortfall within our Title I programs at the elementary school

The above list is certainly not exhaustive, but gives an account of the larger budget items that would be effected in our district, if High Density At-Risk funding were allowed to sunset.

I understand that the usage of at-risk funds has become a polarizing topic. Please understand that in Herington USD 487 we are attempting to leverage every one of our at-risk dollars to meet the increased needs of our students. A loss of the High Density At-risk funding could prove devastating to the programs I've listed above. I would ask this committee to repeal the sunset provision in SB144; my district and others like it would struggle, or be unable, to provide services and programs that help our most disadvantaged students achieve success.

If there are any questions regarding this testimony, I would be happy to confer by telephone at the following number: 785-258-4193

Respectfully Submitted,
Donalyn Biehler, Superintendent
Herington USD 487

"Rural is Quality"