

Superintendent Nancy Crowell – Elkhart – USD 218

Reference: SB 452

Thank you Mr. Chairman and Committee for allowing me this opportunity. Elkhart - USD 218's virtual school is Kansas Connections Academy also known as KCA. KCA is an accredited K-12 school with it's own building number. It is not a program as others in the State who offer electronic courses with no certified teacher support and just an aide, if anyone, to assist the students. KCA employs 17.9 full time equivalent certified staff members. We have a full time principal and counselor as well as two administrative assistants. KCA has a Kansas certified teacher for every subject and grade level who is available to assist students and keep them on track. Many of these teachers are full time while others work part-time. KCA also offers special education services and employs a certified special education teacher. All teachers are required to participate in professional development weekly to continue their professional growth.

All KCA students live in Kansas and are required to provide proof of residency. The students work from home, but also participate in live lessons with their classmates weekly. These students are able to meet their classmates in person through several school-sponsored field trips though out the year. The students also come together for all required proctored exams. Students who have met the State requirements for graduation participate in a graduation ceremony in May and receive a diploma from USD 218.

Reducing the funding for virtual schools would drastically harm KCA if not, close it. We feel we are offering a quality education for students who need an alternative school choice. For the majority of students traditional classrooms may be a fit, however this alternative is better for some students who have special needs. Examples of this are students with illness, advanced learners, students who need the extra time to complete the course work, and students who feel they are bullied in the regular school setting. Some students may have aspirations of competing in national competitions and the virtual school allows them an alternative means of education while continuing to work toward their athletic goals as well as their academic goals.

We appreciate your support in preserving the quality education Kansas Connections Academy offers our students by not reducing the funding for virtual schools. Once again, thank you for your time.