

Oral opponent Testimony, before House Education Committee
To
HB 2224 An Act concerning education; increasing the number of school
days and hours that must be provided by school districts each school year.

Presented to House Education Committee
Wednesday, February 15, 2023
1:30 PM Room 218-N
By Jim Karleskint, United School Administrators of Kansas

Chairman Thomas, Members of the House Education Committee

I appreciate the opportunity to speak with the committee today. The United School Administrators of Kansas opposes the intent of HB 2224.

The school administrators of Kansas are very concerned when it comes to adding an additional 444 hours to the school year. At the time of writing this testimony there was no fiscal note provided with the bill. The expenses to the school districts in Kansas are difficult to figure. There are 286 school districts in Kansas, by adding 444 additional hours to the current school year the cost of personnel alone would be astronomical. Not only should the cost be considered but what would an 8-to-10-hour school day do to the students and staff? The attention span for anyone for 8-to-10 hours would be nearly impossible. Imagine what it would be like to sit through committee meetings for 8 to 10 hours per day.

As the bill is written the provision for Parent-Teacher conferences and professional learning for staff has been removed. Parent-Teacher conferences provide valuable communication time for parents to meet with their children's teachers. Professional learning is key to improvement of the teacher. When a teacher has completed a college degree for entry to the teaching profession they have completed a basic preparation program. Much additional learning is needed, this can be done through working and learning with peers. Both these activities are key to successful students.

It is our assumption HB 2224 has a goal of improving student achievement. There are many proven ways to improve public schools such as reducing class sizes, offering a well-rounded curriculum, and increasing parental engagement. Providing resources to public schools so students have inviting classrooms, well-trained teachers, and support services such as health care, nutrition, and after-school programs will ensure our children can compete in the global economy. We do not feel extending the school year by 444 hours will provide for improved student achievement.

If there is a desire to extend the school year it would be feasible to pilot the program in a small number of schools and districts with varying populations and locations to get an understanding of the pros and cons.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with the committee.