

Senate Education Committee

Senator Steve Abrams, Chairman

Hearing on SB 103

Tuesday, February 12, 2013

Proponent Testimony on SB 103

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee,

I am Darlene Cornfield, representing Northfield School, Wichita, Kansas.

Education is important to all of us. The adequate funding of education is equally important. That is why I am here as a proponent of SB 103 to change the definition of "at risk". It is extremely important for legislators to be prudent managers of the peoples' money. The current definition is so broad that we are allocating money for children who are not at risk. I believe that having a more accurate measurement would be in the best interest of the children served and the taxpayers who fund the education of these children. It is quite a jump to say that because your parents are not wealthy that you are "at-risk" of not being able to learn with the same capacity as your peers.

I have a personal example: my son recently married a sweet lady with a 9 year old daughter. She goes to a public school and qualifies for the free lunch program. She also is in all of the advanced classes and writes for the school newspaper. That "at-risk" weighting should not be assessed to her.

As overseers of the taxpayers in Kansas you should strive to find the best ways possible to adequately fund education and allocate the monies in the best possible way. I believe this change is just one of the positive decisions to make the funding of education in Kansas better. I support SB 103. Thank you.

I would stand for any questions.

Northfield School, Wichita, Kansas, is a classical liberal arts school, grades 6-12, in the intellectual tradition of western civilization and the Socratic method of investigation including guided inquiry and familiarity with the Great Books/Great Conversation approach, and an equal emphasis on programs rendering service to our neighbors and extended community,

Northfield has over the term of twenty years (est. 1993) annually carried approximately 12 students in each grade, totaling 84 students, both male and female, and another 6-10 part-time students, from the home schooling community. Graduation from the program has consistently accomplished an annual rating of 85-90%.

Northfield's goals are best understood by exploring the traditional seven liberal arts included in the trivium (grammar, logic, rhetoric) and the quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music). The trivium, or the discipline of communication through language arts, provides the student with a way of seeing the world as it is, questioning the world that has been observed and gaining mastery of that which has been examined and questioned in order to explain and teach. The quadrivium comprises the traditional fields of inquiry on which the tools of the trivium are exercised. Work Wednesday/community service programs are accomplished each week through visits to area charities and personal residences encouraging students to encounter the larger world of people, places and needs around them.