

SB 428 Proponent Testimony – in person

Senate Education Committee

Robert Merritt

March 13, 2024

Madam Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

I appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 428, as these issues are near to my heart as a former secondary teacher and a two-term board member for USD 265 in Goddard.

During my tenure on the board between 2011 and 2020, the district did not include board members in the building needs assessment process. We were just expected to approve what staff gave us. Board members should be involved early and often, and hear directly from teachers about barriers kids face so we can make informed decisions on budget changes.

Board members should also be given extensive details on student achievement. The requirement to provide percentages of students who are proficient and those who are not proficient is the bare minimum.

Finally, it's a shame that documenting budget changes to improve achievement has to be put in statute, but there should be a clear trail of how money is reallocated to get better outcomes. The details might be buried in the mountain of spreadsheets, but board members and the public should not have to go through a mind-numbing exercise to find that information.

Please support the important changes in SB 428.

Thank you.