

## **House Education Committee**

### **Testimony on**

### **House Concurrent Resolution 5019**

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**March 8, 2011**

The mission of United School Administrators of Kansas (USA|Kansas), through collaboration of member associations, is to serve, support, and develop educational leaders and to establish USA|Kansas as a significant force to improve education.

I am here today in opposition to HCR 5019, a resolution requesting the study and recommendation of administrative reorganization of school districts by the State Board of Education

There are currently 284 superintendents serving the 289 school districts in Kansas. Among these:

- Five (5) superintendents are currently serving more than one school district.
- Forty-six (46) superintendents serve as the building principal in a least one building in that same district
  - 17 of these superintendents serve as the **only** principal in the district
- Seven (7) superintendents in Kansas currently serve in districts with more than 10,000 students

In many of our rural communities, the superintendent takes on a number of other jobs and responsibilities, including curriculum director, special education director, transportation director, technology director and (in some cases) teacher.

### **District leadership matters**

Research has shown that there is a statistically significant relationship between district leadership and student achievement.<sup>1</sup> Long gone are the days when superintendents were responsible only for the business operations of the district. Now, we see superintendents and local boards of education working together to ensure high levels of student achievement.

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<sup>1</sup> Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (2008).

Accountability for preparing students for post-secondary education and the workforce has never been higher. At both the federal and state levels, Kansas has supported policies that increase expectations for student performance and establish rigorous goals for student outcomes. Ultimately, it is our local school boards, administrators and teachers who are accountable to the State Board of Education, the U.S. Department of Education, the community and most importantly – the students.

Decisions about the instructional leadership of our school districts are best made at the local level. It is for this reason that the selection of a superintendent is a very inclusive process – involving parents and community leaders. The ideal candidate will reflect the values and priorities of the board and the communities.

**What is the desired outcome? What is the intent?**

If the intent is to continue our tradition of strong academic achievement, putting more distance between the chief instructional leader and instructional staff and students will not be effective.

If the intent is to save money, simply reducing the number of superintendents will do very little to help in this endeavor. The subsequent and increased costs associated with travel throughout the district; separating roles (no more dual roles in the same building) and other organizational adjustments will absorb whatever savings there may have been. Furthermore, administrative efficiencies are changed through systemic reform – not removal of individual positions.

If the intent is to create mandatory consolidation, then this resolution does little address that – in fact, this resolution doesn't ask the State Board of Education to consider consolidation at all.

I encourage you to vote against HCR 5019 and would be happy to answer any questions you may have.