

Testimony before the
Senate Committee on Education

on
SB 527 – Eligibility for Early Childhood Programs

by

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Madam Chair and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on **SB 527**, which would do two things. First, it would expand the eligibility for services under the Parent Education or Parents as Teacher Programs from children under age three to children under the age of eligibility for school attendance. Second, it would allow children under the age of three and pregnant women to receive services through the early Head Start program, regardless of income.

The first change would provide local school districts with more flexibility in providing parent education services. As we have previously testified, KASB strongly supports expanding early education services and providing maximum flexibility in designing programs to meet local needs. We would therefore support section one of the bill, but would stress that additional flexibility will have limited impact without increased funding.

Early Head Start programs are currently not supervised by the Kansas State Department of Education, but we encourage closer coordination between these programs and local school districts. However, we are concerned about the provisions of this bill that refer to “notwithstanding any state or *federal* law to the contrary.” While we support additional flexibility, we would not want to jeopardize federal funding by failing to comply with federal laws or regulations.

Thank you for your consideration.