

DCF LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY



2/3/2021

TESTIMONY OF

Melinda Kline, Deputy Director of Permanency
Kansas Department for Children and Families

TESTIMONY ON

SB 51

Chair

Baumgardner

Vice Chair

Erickson

Ranking Member

Sykes

and

Members of the Committee

SUMMARY OF ISSUE & DCF POSITION

Senate Bill 51 establishes in statute the requirement for DCF and the Kansas State Department of Education to jointly prepare a Kansas foster care children annual academic report card.

DCF supports SB 51 as it will codify the contents of Executive Order No. 20-53, ensuring that the foster care children annual academic report card continues regardless of decisions made by future administrations.

CONTEXT & HISTORY

Executive Order No. 20-53, issued by Governor Kelly on July 7, 2020, requires DCF and KSDE collaborate on an annual report on certain educational outcome data for students in foster care. DCF worked with KSDE to assemble the report and submitted the 2019-20 Foster Care Report Card to the House and Senate Education committees on January 15th as required by the Executive Order.

The report was created by matching DCF data on the identities of youth in foster care to KSDE records. DCF thanks KSDE for their willingness to collaborate and work on the report itself.

The data required to be in the report by Executive Order No. 20-53 is the same data as required by SB 51, and includes:

1. The graduation rate of students in foster care
2. The number and percentage of student sin foster care who were promoted to the next grade level
3. The number and percentage of students in foster care who were suspended during the school year and the average length of time of such suspensions
4. The number and percentage of students in foster care who were expelled during the school year
5. State standardized scores for students in foster care
6. The number and percentage of students in foster care enrolled in any preschool-aged at-risk program
7. The number and percentage of students in foster care participating in the Mental Health Intervention Team Pilot Program or similar program
8. The total number of students in foster care enrolled
9. De-identified disaggregated race and ethnicity data for each data set
10. Any additional data elements KSDE and DCF deem appropriate to include in the report.

EFFECT OF LEGISLATION

SB 51 would codify the requirement for DCF and KSDE to collaborate on an annual foster care academic report card. Because the data the bill requires to be in the report card is the same as the data required by Executive Order No. 20-53, the passage of SB 12 would have no effect on the work DCF does to assemble the report.

DCF supports providing as much educational outcome data to the Governor, legislature, and public as possible. This data can be used to identify and address gaps in service delivery and make practice improvements related to the education of students in foster care. Requiring the report in statute ensures the report will continue regardless of whether future administrations choose to require the report card.

FISCAL IMPACT OF LEGISLATION

DCF assumes there will be no fiscal impact to the agency should SB 51 be passed as the work to produce the report has already been absorbed in the department's existing budget.

DCF POSITION

Ensuring educational stability and outcomes for students in foster care is a high priority for DCF. The annual Foster Care Report Card is a valuable new tool to support these efforts. The department stands in support of Senate Bill 51 as it will ensure the Foster Care Report Card continues into the future.