

My name is David Drovetta and I live at 735 N. Mulberry, Gardner KS. This is my written testimony to the Task Force on Special Education and Related Funding Services.

Since retiring from the laboratory industry in 2022 I've worked in the USD 231 School District as a paraeducator and I must say it is a joy to work with children from our community who succeed with the help of programs provided by our schools. The continued success of those programs requires adequate funding.

Our state continues to have a budget surplus, which is projected to be more than \$2.5 billion by the end of the fiscal year. This surplus provides more than enough dollars to fund special education at the state required 92%, which would allow our district to stop diverting funds from other programs.

I strongly advocate for fully funding SPED in Kansas. I've witnessed that investing in these programs ensures that every student, regardless of their unique needs, receives the tailored support required for academic success. Adequate funding is essential for creating an inclusive educational environment that fosters growth, empowers students with diverse abilities, and contributes to a more equitable and compassionate society.