

19 February 2024

Kansas House of Representatives

Committee on Education:

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Rep. Samantha Koetter Parshall
Rep. Louis Ruiz
Rep. Mar Schreiber
Rep. Jerry Stogsdill
Rep. Linda Featherston
Rep. Kirk Haskins
Rep. Kylie McNorton

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Rep. Michael Murphy
Rep. Bill Rhiley
Rep. Rebecca Schmoe
Rep. David Younger
Rep. Owen Donohoe
Rep. Jason W. Goetz
Rep. Scott Hill

RE: Kansas State House Bill 2719

Dear Committee Members:

I am writing to express my support for Kansas House Bill 2719, currently requested by Representative Goetz. My support for this bill is not as it is currently written; rather, how it could and should be written.

I have previously provided testimony to the committee regarding our family's experience with inappropriate surveys and unrequested followup in the public school system in Kansas (http://www.kslegislature.org/li_2022/b2021_22/committees/ctte_spc_2021_on_education_1/documents/testimony/20211201_37.pdf).

The way I see it, after more than three years of researching the public education system in the United States, the nongovernmental organizations affiliated, the education foundations, the PTO/PTA, the AFT and NEA, UNESCO, the United Nations, etc., and the interplay between these groups to include a massive amount of potential profit, I have come to a conclusion. There are large NGOs who finance studies. These studies identify and report "problems" in education. As luck would have it, these NGOs also

have recommendations for solutions, many of which come at a large price to your local school district. They come pre-packaged and involve training for the professionals in the public school. They come with easily accessed curriculum. They also come with measurement tools and data collection. All of these parties are referred to as “stakeholders” in education. All of these solutions are paid for with money collected in the form of tax dollars from the citizens. The citizens are required to provide education for their children, and most use the public school as that means. Everyone has a voice in this process. Even you, as legislators, get a voice. You get to establish the rules, the lines that may not be crossed, the measures that must be taken. The only group in this massive web of interests that currently does not get a voice or stakeholder consideration is the parent.

As per my prior testimony, our daughter began having emotional difficulties in Fall 2021, her first semester in middle school, 7th grade. Her father and I became alarmed. This change was drastic and sudden. She became withdrawn. She began to hide herself behind her hair and oversized clothing. She became rigid when offered a hug. Her art became dark. Her tears came quick. As parents, we exhausted every avenue that we knew of, every approach, every encouragement. This was not the child that we had known for the prior 12 years.

In November, we were informed that a practicum social work student had been having meetings with our child, regular “check-in” sessions, during the school day. This was done without our knowledge or consent. We found out about this because our daughter finally pleaded with us not to let the counselor take her out of class anymore because it was causing her problems in her math class. It is obviously difficult to understand the math lesson when you aren’t in the room.

We pulled our daughter out of the public school immediately and enrolled her at a local private school. It has been two years of recovery, but the changes we saw in her were rapid, and she credits the new environment, as do we.

The reason that I’m writing to you is because these interventions were done on our daughter without our knowledge. When questioned, according to school employees, these interventions were triggered based on her answers provided on a Panorama survey. Our child was opted out of all surveys, but this was given anyway. It is my conviction that I cannot give informed consent to release a history of data for the adult my child will become. When I asked to see this survey, I was informed that parents are not allowed to see this specific survey and that it was property of Panorama.

Parenting is difficult. It is made much more difficult when parents are being purposely kept out of what their children are experiencing in the school setting, specifically these invasive surveys regarding their values, thoughts, beliefs, and feelings. This is an experiment, and parents are not being provided the opportunity to give informed consent.

Please do everything you can to ensure that parents are not kept in the dark about what is going on with their children in the public school. This seems so obvious. All I am asking is that parents be informed and be given a choice regarding participation. I would ask that you strengthen this bill even further.

Thank you for your consideration,

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