



Oral Opposition Testimony before the Senate Education Committee

On

HB 2236, an act concerning education; relating to school districts; establishing parents' right to direct the education and upbringing of their children.

by

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Our school board members absolutely support building strong partnerships with parents, which is one of the State Board of Education's Kansas Can goals and school redesign principles.

Most of our members became involved with school boards because they are parents, grandparents or somehow connected to current or former students. School board members are our neighbors and are the representatives of parents in our K-12 system.

Why do we appear in opposition to this bill? We are concerned about the language that says if a parent withdraws their child from a class or program then the student's academic records cannot be adversely affected by that withdrawal. (Lines 18-20: No student's academic records shall be adversely affected by withdrawal from a class or educational program pursuant to this section) We believe this language could allow students to withdraw from a core class, such as science or English with no requirement to learn any coursework through an alternative assignment.

With the assistance of our legal staff, we would recommend additional language to continue the sentence cited above to say "however, exemptions from required instruction granted pursuant to this section do not excuse a student from the responsibility to complete alternative assignments offered to obtain credit in the course, the total semester hours required for attendance, or required courses for graduation."

KASB has many policies that mirror the same rights as in this bill. I will include just one that deals with textbooks and instructional materials:

***Textbooks, Instructional Materials and Media Centers IF***

All textbooks, instructional materials and the selection criteria for district media center materials shall be subject to board approval.

Textbooks and instructional materials shall support the district's instructional program. Media center materials shall support and supplement the curriculum, promote wise use of leisure time, develop literary discrimination and appreciation, and encourage students to become productive citizens.

Kansas Association of School Boards

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### ***Selection Criteria: Textbooks and Instructional Materials***

- Textbooks and instructional materials shall provide:
- An effective education for all students;
- Factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, and ethical standards;
- Practice for students to develop abilities in critical thinking, communication, mathematics, and science skill;
- Information which helps students develop an appreciation of American cultural, ethnic and racial diversity, and balanced views concerning international, national, state, and local issues and problems; and
- Sufficient flexibility for meeting the special needs of individuals and groups.

The superintendent shall develop selection procedures which meet the above criteria, which shall include a review of available material by appropriate staff members.

### ***Selection Criteria: Media Center Materials***

Materials shall be chosen for accuracy, artistic quality, format, and authoritativeness.

Materials shall be chosen on various reading levels presenting different points of view, including current issues.

Books and other media materials shall be evaluated before purchase, either through direct examination or by using reputable, unbiased, professionally prepared selection tools.

The media center(s) shall obtain, process, and circulate materials and equipment and provide references and other services to students and faculty. Media specialists shall work toward providing resources so that students have an opportunity to achieve high levels of performance.

### ***Collection Development***

The media collection shall be developed systematically, be well balanced in coverage of subjects, and include various types of materials and diverse content in multiple formats.

### ***Textbooks, Instructional Materials and Media Centers IF-2***

The collection shall reflect, enhance, and complement the broad interests represented in the curriculum. The collection should be large enough to allow materials to be placed in classrooms for extended periods of time.

### ***Challenges of Materials***

Any student, parent, or legal guardian of a student currently enrolled in the district having a complaint about textbooks, media center, or other instructional materials shall meet with the teacher, media specialist, or principal. If the concern is addressed to a teacher or media specialist, they shall report the matter to the principal. If the matter cannot be resolved, the principal shall notify the superintendent and ask the complainant to complete a request for review form which is available through building principals or at the district office. After receiving the completed form, the superintendent shall review and consider the request.

If the issue outlined in the request is not resolved after review by the superintendent, the requestor may seek review by the board. If the board chooses to consider the request, it shall forward all appropriate written materials to a review committee.

### ***Composition of Review Committee***

When a review committee is established to handle requests for review concerning textbooks, media center, or instructional materials, the review committee shall be composed of:

The building principal, library media specialist, two subject area specialists, two community members, and one student. If the request for review proposes that the material is inappropriate for minors, the student representative may be left off the committee. The superintendent shall be responsible for appointing review committee members, unless otherwise determined by the board on a case-by-case basis.

### ***Purview of Review Committee***

The review committee shall examine and evaluate the material as a whole; consider the district's policy, procedures, and philosophy for selection of textbook, instruction materials, and media center materials; weigh strengths and weaknesses; and form opinions based upon the selection criteria.

### ***Written Report***

Within 30 days of receiving access to the challenged materials, the review committee shall review the material and prepare a written report containing conclusions and recommendations for the board of education.

If the board receives simultaneous challenges of multiple material or if circumstances render the 30-day timeline impracticable, the board may extend the committee's deadline to complete its review.

No reviews will be conducted during summer break or when school is not in session for one week or longer. The timeline for any review shall be tolled during such breaks.

### ***Board Review and Action***

The board shall review the recommendation of the review committee within 30 days of receipt thereof and may accept the review committee's recommendation, reject the review committee's recommendation, or make its own determination regarding the challenged book or material.

The decision of the board is final.

### ***Removing Challenged Materials***

Challenged materials may be removed from use during the review period at the discretion of the superintendent.

### ***Impact of Simultaneous Requests***

If more than one request for review is received simultaneously, or, if one or more requests for review is received while another review is pending, timelines established in this policy may be extended by the superintendent or the board to allow the requests to be processed in turn. When more than one request for review is received on the same book or material, such requests may be consolidated to reduce redundancy in review at any stage of this process.