

House Education Committee
Proponent Testimony for Hb 2420

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By Linda Highland

As a parent I was always busily involved in our children's public schools. My work included being involved with the parents' organizations, helping to establish a support group within the schools for children with special needs, and even volunteering when asked to help some of these children. I was known as the "picture lady" who led classroom discoveries of famous artists works. As time moved on, so did my trust in the public schools because our children were harmed there and crimes happened there. While I will not go into the details of the atrocities that happen to our children, I can attest here today that all these years later the hurt is still sharp and painful.

It took some time for me to discover that we had rights as parents. This happened when I began to look at federal and state statutes, and US Supreme Court rulings pertaining to the rights of parents. As a teacher myself, I feel that our profession is overrun with rules and regulations and paperwork and agendas and associations, all with their force coming upon teachers. The systems driving education today were planned out long ago by individuals with clout and a following, and NGOs like the National Governors Association.

Rockefeller funded John Dewey and Alfred Kensey to go into America's universities to promote their philosophies. John Fetzer was a New Age worshiper, whose institute fosters "*natural spirituality*" in schools and helped in the founding of the Collaborative to Advance Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) to add "*pluralistic, spiritual development into whole child curricula.*" Kansas was the first state to adopt comprehensive SEL, that became the first requirement for school accreditation. The implementation of it has brought behavioral problems and the lowest academic scores in our state's history.

When you look at the history of education in America from our founding until now, as I have done, you will see how it all has fallen into place by the few with power to work the plans, many of which, became federal laws that need to be repealed. Without this effort by Congress, USDE will not go away, but instead be outsourced to other agencies.

I'm here today to advocate for students, parents, and teachers who must fulfill directives that get in the way of their academic teaching. Support is not a strong enough word when I ask you to please vote for Hb 2420 that requires parental consent prior to providing any school-based mental health services.

Most parents do not know that all students are divided into one of three levels in a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) for "behavioral assessments" encompassed along with the math and reading screenings and data collection driven by Kansas Technical

Assistance System Network (TASN). Why does KSDE believe they have the right to ask teachers to use Panorama and SAEBRS to “investigate” our children? A school has no right to screen, survey, or ask offensive questions of its students. Many of these costly learning management systems are working in secrecy under the cover of “patented content.” What is hidden?

Universal screeners such as those used by KSDE in MTSS gather information regarding behavioral and mental health issues by either reviewing existing data/input from educators or by asking questions directly from students. Schools receiving federal funding and requiring a student to use a universal screener asking even one question from one of the 8 protected areas under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) must obtain permission from parents/guardians. Hb 2420 will increase limitations on universal screeners with a state statute.

SEL, MTSS, and PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention System) all work together in the collection of data on our students and create turmoil in their lives. *The partial timeline report below shows the development of the MTSS system in Kansas.* This report begins with Quality Practice Accreditation (QPA) that was adopted as our first outcome-based program by the Kansas Board of Education in 1992 and was pushed by Dr. Shirley McCune (see her outlandish speech in Wichita online) who was hired by the board.

It shows the progression of the required Social Emotional Character Development Standards, surveys, changes in state accreditation, and ends with the structure completed by combining everything under the MTSS framework. Notice their wording, “established a state structure to support MTSS.” Why is KSBE not interested in a “structure” to support academic achievement for students instead of support for MTSS? They protect the established systems at the detriment of student achievement.

Also notice in 2024 they hosted a full day “session on the Power of Student Voice.” Apparently, students only have a voice if it fits the agendas of MTSS taught by the counselor, as happened in Eureka schools. Now it is discovered that MTSS trained schools “on creating and implementing cohesive systems” for students to have the right voice.

Timeline to Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports and Alignment Prepared by Kansas MTSS and Alignment, Updated 12/19/2024.

In 2024, provided a full-day pre-conference session on the Power of Student Voice. In partnership with Quaglia Institute for Student Voice and Aspirations, and Drs. Russ Quaglia and Lisa Lande, *initiated a cohort of schools focused on creating and implementing cohesive systems that accurately define, and are inclusive of, student voice and aspirations.*

In 2023, in partnership with InnovateEd and Corwin, continued Leading for Impact training *focused on creating cohesive systems engaged in frequent data-based decision making* to drive school improvement efforts.

In 2021, partnered with KSDE to *refine the Kansas Education Systems Accreditation process* and provide regional training on the refined process to a pilot group of school districts.

In 2018, expanded partnership with Pathstery, MasteryConnect, Certica and several school districts to beta test and externally evaluate a diagnostic cognitive model of assessment. Expanded the Pre-K State Training team to four specialists. Became members of the Kansans Can Redesign Policy Advisory Team.

In 2017, in collaboration with KSDE leadership, expanded Kansas MTSS and Alignment to focus on system alignment within districts, now call Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports and Alignment. Participated in the Kansans Can Redesign Committee. Added a psychometrician as a Kansas MTSS and Alignment State Trainer to allow the team to appropriately engage in the new Kansas Interim Assessment Initiative. Collaborated and assisted KSDE in training on Kindergarten Readiness screening tool (Ages & Stages Questionnaire, 3rd edition). Participated in KSDE Social-Emotional and Character Development (SECD) workgroup related to State Board initiatives and the SECD standards designed to help keep children safe and successful while developing their academic, social emotional, and postsecondary skills. served on Kansas Education Systems Accreditation (KESA) Outside Visitation Team (OVT) committees in 24 districts. Divided the training team into four groups based on geographical regions, with a reading specialist, math specialist, behavior/social-emotional learning specialist, and early childhood specialist dedicated to each region in order to better accommodate the needs of districts throughout the state. Collaborated with TASN Evaluation to create the 2016–17 Kansas MTSS and Alignment evaluation brief.

In 2016, collaborated with Kansans Can Competencies as a guiding source for teaching social-emotional skills.

In 2015, contract awarded by KSDE to Kansas MTSS to continue scale-up and promotion of academic, behavior, and social-emotional learning.

In 2014, participated in cross-state collaboration to advance efforts in Kansas, Michigan, Oregon, Illinois, and Tennessee.

In 2013, collaborated with Michigan's Integrated Behavior and Learning Support Initiative (MiBLSI) to provide the session Cross-State Perspective of MTSS at the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) Annual Conference to advance MTSS at a national level. Established teams across Kansas trained in TASN Tertiary Behavior Supports.

In 2012, established new level of MTSS Facilitator (Content Area Specialist) to provide training and support to districts. Addressed reading, mathematics, and behavior for PreK–12 through the Kansas MTSS: Implementation Guides. Amended Kansas MTSS: Innovation Configuration Matrix (ICM) Version 3.0 to align with revisions to the KSDE accreditation model.

In 2011, Kansas State Board of Education, on a nine-to-one vote, approved KSDE providing support for statewide implementation of MTSS. In 2010 KSDE Special Education Services funded proposal to continue support for the development of a statewide infrastructure to support MTSS. Created and/or updated the following guides: Kansas MTSS: Structuring Guide Ver. 3.0—K–12. Kansas MTSS: Structuring Guide Reading Supplement—K–12. Kansas MTSS: Structuring Guide Math Supplement—K–12. Kansas MTSS: Structuring Guide Behavior Supplement—K–12. Kansas MTSS: Implementation Guide System. Kansas MTSS: Implementation Guide Reading. Kansas MTSS: Implementation Guide Math.

In 2009, developed Kansas MTSS: Academic Structuring Guide Ver. 2.0—K–12 literacy and math and Kansas MTSS: Elementary Implementation Guide Ver. 2.0. Established state structure to support MTSS. Formally established the Kansas MTSS Leadership Structure for the state, including an MTSS Core Team and Transformational Team. Full-time staff added to the team to address behavior and leadership. KSDE Special Education Services began addressing special education reimbursement as related to MTSS.

In 1992, the Kansas State Department of Education began piloting the Quality Practice Accreditation process, which focused accreditation on student outcomes.

Accreditation drives much of what happens in our schools. What follows is information about only four of those accrediting NGOs and the biases they have shown that force compliance within our schools. NGOs have a stronghold on public education with their causes and agendas, and students are suffering emotionally while missing out on a proper education.

Kansas teacher training programs at universities are accredited by the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) and the **Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP)**. Thirty-four states use CAEP for teacher training accreditation for educator preparation. The first standard listed by CAEP is that our universities must “facilitate candidate’s reflection of their personal biases to increase their understanding and practice of equity, diversity, and inclusion.” University students have reported on very uncomfortable situations in teacher training. An advanced layer of accreditation is the **Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA)**, an American organization of degree-granting colleges and universities based in Washington D.C.

CAEP Standard 1: Content and Pedagogical Knowledge

“The provider ensures that candidates develop an understanding of the critical concepts and principles of their discipline and facilitates candidates’ reflection of their personal biases to increase their understanding and practice of equity, diversity, and inclusion.”

CAEP Standard RA (Revised Advanced).1 Content and Pedagogical Knowledge

“The provider ensures that candidates for professional specialties develop an understanding of the critical concepts and principles of their discipline and facilitates candidates’ reflection of their personal biases to increase their understanding and practice of equity, diversity, and inclusion.”

The Commission on Accreditation (COA) of the **Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)** is recognized by the **Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA)** to accredit baccalaureate and master’s degree programs in social work education in the United States and its territories. The COA formulates, promulgates, and implements the accreditation standards for baccalaureate and master’s degree programs in social work.

“ **Values:** Service, social justice, the dignity and worth of the person, the importance of human relationships, integrity, competence, human rights, and scientific inquiry are among the core values of social work. These values, along with an anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspective, underpin the explicit and implicit curriculum and frame the profession’s commitment to respect all people and the quest for social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.”

“**Educational Policy 2.0: Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) Social work programs integrate anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion (ADEI) approaches across the curriculum.** Programs provide the context through which students learn about their positionality, power, privilege, and difference and develop a commitment to dismantling systems of oppression, such as racism, that affect diverse populations. Programs recognize the pervasive impact of White supremacy and privilege and prepare students to have the knowledge, awareness, and skills necessary to engage in anti-racist practice. The dimensions of diversity, equity, and inclusion are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, caste, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, generational status, immigration status, legal status, marital status, political ideology, race, nationality, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Faculty and administrators model anti-racist and anti-oppressive practice and respect for diversity and difference. Faculty and administrators also foster an equitable and inclusive learning environment by facilitating important ADEI discourse. The program’s commitment to ADEI is reflected in its explicit and implicit curriculum. Together the implicit and explicit curricula are informed by the program context and learning environment. The program recognizes the important role of the learning environment in the education of program participants, especially with respect to the value and meaning of anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion, and the development of cultural humility. The program has an inclusive approach to addressing the vast range of student learning needs, including intentional planning and implementation of inclusive practices and pedagogies in the explicit curriculum that reduce barriers while optimizing accessibility and equity for students. Students are responsible for their learning, collaborating with peers and colleagues, and practicing with historically and currently oppressed populations through an anti-racist lens.”

Kansas has **American School Counselors Association (ASCA) National Model Alignment**. Below are **ASCA's Ethical Standards for School Counselors**. ASCA Student Standards Crosswalk with the CASEL Framework 5.

A. 3. Comprehensive School Counseling Program

School counselors:

- a. Provide students with a culturally responsive school counseling program that promotes academic, career and *social/emotional development and equitable opportunity* and achievement outcomes for all students.
- b. Collaborate with administration, teachers, staff and stakeholders for equitable school improvement goals.
- c. *Use data-collection tools* adhering to standards of confidentiality as expressed in A.2.
- d. Review and use school and student data to assess and address needs, including but not limited to *data on strengths and disparities that may exist related to gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability and/or other relevant classifications*.
- e. Deliver research-based interventions to help close achievement, attainment, information, attendance, discipline, resource and opportunity gaps.
- f. Collect and analyze participation, *ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors and outcome data* to determine the progress and effectiveness of the school counseling program.
- g. Share data outcomes with stakeholders.

ASCA Student Standard Mindsets/Behaviors Social Justice Standards--Action

"20. Students will plan and carry out *collective action against bias and injustice in the world* and will evaluate what strategies are most effective."

With the statutes in place now and the important addition of Hb 2420, parents have the right to control what is appropriately taught to their children, and to say no to all the rest. The light is exposing the darkness happening in our public schools. We must return to academically strong schools as we once had in Kansas. Our tax money is being wasted on programs like MTSS, SEL, and PBIS that want data on our children with no accountability. Those days can be over when we choose to end these programs' destructive agendas. Begin that process now by voting for Hb 2420 out of committee and for passage in the House Committee of the Whole.

Thank you for your service.

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