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KANSAS NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION / 715 SW 10TH AVENUE / TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612-1686

Timothy R. Graham  
Director of Government Relations & Legislative Affairs  
House Bill 2420  
Oral Testimony – **Oppose**  
House Committee on Education  
January 22, 2026

Chairperson Estes, members of the Committee:

**Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to House Bill No. 2420.**

Kansas NEA is a member-driven organization representing nearly 22,000 educators across the state of Kansas. Our members are organized into more than 275 local associations and work in schools and communities across nearly all 105 Kansas counties, serving students in urban, suburban, and rural districts alike. The positions we advocate for are proposed, debated, and adopted by hundreds of educators selected by their peers to attend our annual Representative Assembly, reflecting the collective voice of education professionals of all political parties, beliefs, and backgrounds who are united by a commitment to Kansas public schools and the students they serve.

House Bill 2420 lies at the intersection of two critically important issues: student mental health and parental involvement in education. These are both areas where Kansas NEA has clear and long-standing positions reflected in our Book of Resolutions.

**Resolution C-3-2, as reflected in the Kansas NEA Book of Resolutions, states:**

*C-3-2. PARENTAL/GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT*

*Kansas NEA believes that the involvement and support of parents/guardians is imperative for students to perform at their optimum levels. Parental/guardian involvement in a child's education is key to academic success and academic development. Parents/guardians, teachers, and schools must share in the responsibility to maintain positive and effective working relationships. KNEA supports actions and programs that enhance parents'/guardians' ability to participate actively in their children's education.*

**Resolution C-2-12, as reflected in the Kansas NEA Book of Resolutions, states:**

*C-2-12. SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION FOR YOUTH*

*Kansas NEA believes social/emotional and health education which provides children and youth with information appropriate to their age is basic to healthy, well-adjusted mental attitudes.*

*KNEA further believes that its affiliates and members support appropriately established and mandatory social and health education programs, which include, but are not limited to, information on AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections, abstinence, contraception, and problems resulting from preteen and teenage pregnancies.*

*KNEA further believes that age-appropriate units dealing with traumatic events in children's lives should be included in the school curriculum.*

*KNEA further believes that parents/guardians have a right to preview the content of these courses including supporting material, but educators who teach the courses must be legally protected from censorship.*

*KNEA further believes in the utilization of evidence-based instructional methods and adequate staffing of specialized instructional support personnel (school counselors, social workers, mental health workers, nurses, and/or psychologists) to provide services, including peer support, designed to develop and promote healthy social emotional skills in all students for their lifelong learning process.*

**The bill is written too broadly and captures routine classroom practices.**

House Bill 2420 uses an overly broad definition of “school-based mental health services” that would sweep in many routine tier 2 and tier 3 strategies used daily in classrooms. Educators across Kansas have raised concerns that simple, short interventions—such as pulling a student aside briefly to de-escalate, offering a quiet reset, or using a focused one-on-one activity—could trigger requirements for verbal notification and written parental consent. These are not formal mental health services, but common classroom management tools, and requiring advance notification and dual consent for these moment-to-moment practices is not workable.

**The bill would undermine classroom management, safety, and instruction.**

Educators rely on de-escalation strategies every day to maintain safe and productive classrooms. These practices protect students, staff, and the learning environment, and parents reasonably expect schools to have systems that allow educators to respond quickly. House Bill 2420 would make classrooms less safe by limiting educators' ability to act in the moment.

**The penalty structure is disproportionate and punitive in effect.**

The bill imposes a \$5,000 civil penalty per violation on school districts. While the fine is assessed at the district level, educators understand that the consequences will flow downward through discipline and increased scrutiny. This penalty is heavy, arbitrary, and disconnected from classroom realities, creating fear rather than clarity for educators exercising professional judgment.

KNEA respectfully urges the Committee to oppose House Bill 2420 as written. We are willing to engage in serious, good-faith discussions on this issue, but if this bill is going to move forward, the definition of “school-based mental health services” must be significantly tightened so routine classroom management and de-escalation practices are not swept in. Without that clarification, the bill will continue to create confusion and limit educators' ability to do their jobs safely and effectively.

**Thank you again for the opportunity to testify in opposition to House Bill No. 2420.**