



**Oral Opponent Testimony on
HB 2420, requiring parental consent prior to providing any
school-based mental health service to a student**

House Education Committee

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Chair Estes and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to HB 2420. KASB's legislative platform, adopted by our members in November 2025, recognizes that students' readiness to learn in school is inextricably linked to supporting their overall health and well-being. Our members have expressed their support of "*policies that will improve student safety, security, health, and well-being, including . . . [i]ncreasing support for the behavioral and mental health needs of students.*" They also value parents as essential partners in this work:

We support the development of relationships among local teachers, students, and families without additional legislative oversight resulting in the diversion of time and money from the classroom to bureaucratic tasks.

Unfortunately, HB 2420 undermines these goals and would significantly restrict the ability of Kansas educators to support student learning and well-being.

HB 2420 Misdefines "School Mental Health Services"

The definition of "school mental health services" in HB 2420 is extraordinarily broad and vague. As written, it captures nearly every routine action a teacher takes to help a student stay engaged, regulate emotions, or build the skills necessary to succeed in school. These activities are **not** clinical mental health services. They are everyday instructional and behavioral supports that help students stay focused and ready to learn.

What School-Based Mental Health Services Actually Are

In reality, **school-based mental health services are individualized, therapeutic interventions provided by licensed mental health professionals**—such as psychologists, clinical social workers, or contracted therapists—to address clinical mental health needs. These professionals are trained in assessment, diagnosis, counseling and therapy, and crisis intervention.

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Importantly, they are also governed by well-established codes of ethics, professional standards, and laws requiring informed consent for treatment, including for minors. Mental health professionals working in schools have clear professional guardrails determining when and how they must obtain parental consent when working with students.

What the Bill Sweeps In Instead

HB 2420 instead encompasses routine classroom supports—strategies focused on school-based skill deficits that impede learning such as emotional regulation, social skills, work habits, or organization. These strategies are instructional or behavioral supports, **not mental health therapy**. They are used to help students succeed academically, not to treat mental health disorders.

Examples of strategies that HB 2420 would inappropriately subject to extensive and onerous administrative procedures and heavy civil penalties include:

- Check-in/Check-out
- Daily behavior report cards shared with parents
- Small-group social skills instruction
- Self-monitoring systems
- Structured breaks
- Positive reinforcement systems
- Visual schedules and routines
- Increased opportunities for practice and feedback
- Individualized behavior supports

These are routine, research-supported practices in Kansas classrooms (not just in public school classrooms, but in every classroom). They are essential for helping students learn, for managing classrooms effectively, and for supporting students with skill deficits.

HB 2420 Would Have a Chilling Effect on Normal School Operations

Requiring parental consent for nearly every interaction at school related to behavior, regulation, or support would make it nearly impossible for schools to function. It would restrict educators' ability to respond to student needs in real time and would bury staff in paperwork instead of supporting student learning.

Educators **already** follow professional guidance, training, and ethics to determine when an intervention rises to the level of mental health treatment requiring formal parental consent. HB 2420 replaces that professional judgment with a legislative mandate that does not reflect how either schools or mental health services actually work.



HB 2420 Is a Significant Overreach and Would Harm School Safety

Kansas parents and educators want students to have trusted adults at school. Research consistently shows that having at least one trusted adult at school is one of the most important protective factors against bullying, self-harm, and school violence. HB 2420 would create unnecessary barriers to the ordinary, everyday interactions between students and school staff that build trust, support, and safety.

HB 2420 represents a substantial overreach into classrooms across the state and would have serious negative consequences for educators, students, and families. It mischaracterizes ordinary, developmentally appropriate educational practices as mental health treatment, imposes cumbersome procedural requirements and punishing fines, and risks reducing the support students would receive and the learning they would achieve.

For these reasons, we respectfully request that the committee reject HB 2420.

Thank you for your consideration.

***KASB is a non-profit service organization built on an abiding belief in Kansas public schools.
We have put the needs of students and K-12 leaders first since 1917.***