

Mindy Nickles
Educator
House Bill 2420 Opposition - Written Testimony Only
House Committee on Education
Email: mindynickles@gmail.com

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Chair Estes and House Committee on Education Members:

My name is Mindy Nickles and I teach in a Kansas public school. I am asking you to vote no on HB 2420.

Students today carry more stress and complexity in their lives than previous generations. Families are stretched thin, mental health needs are higher, and students are experiencing an increasingly divided world around them. Both parents and schools know this. When students need a moment to collect themselves, talk through a situation, or reset before returning to class, schools have adults who can support them. This helps students stay in school and engaged in learning.

HB 2420 puts new barriers between students and those supports. The bill would require written parental consent for many of the basic, preventative interventions that help children regulate and stay on track academically. These are not therapy sessions. They are not long-term treatment plans. They are short check-ins, skill building, and de-escalation strategies that keep kids in classrooms rather than sending them home or letting challenges escalate.

The bill's definitions are also vague. When laws are unclear about what counts as a "mental health service," school staff become hesitant to act. Hesitation does not help kids. It turns small, manageable moments into bigger problems. It also adds confusion for families who are already trying to navigate school systems and competing responsibilities. The end result is fewer students getting timely support and more students falling through gaps that could have been closed.

Parents and schools are on the same team. We want children who feel safe, confident, and capable of learning. Families regularly ask schools for help with behavior plans, executive functioning, peer conflict, and coping strategies. HB 2420 slows that process down and creates new wait times, especially for students whose parents cannot easily respond in the middle of the workday or who share custody arrangements.

If the goal of the Legislature is to support student mental health, the most effective approach is to increase access to counselors, social workers, psychologists, and

behavior support teams. Those investments improve outcomes without creating penalties or unnecessary red tape.

Kansas students deserve timely support. HB 2420 moves us in the opposite direction. I urge you to vote no.