



Written Only
Opponent Testimony – HB 2486
House Committee on Education
January 29, 2026

Chair Estes, Vice Chair McNorton, Ranking Member Stogsdill and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding HB 2486. My name is Kristalle Hedrick, and I serve as CEO of the Children's Alliance of Kansas, the statewide association representing private nonprofit child welfare providers across the state.

While the intent of this bill may be to address classroom management concerns, we respectfully oppose HB 2486 because it creates unnecessary barriers to early education, risks excluding our state's most vulnerable children, and places school districts in the position of making subjective determinations about child readiness that are better addressed through supportive services rather than exclusion.

Toilet training is a developmental milestone, not a universal prerequisite that occurs at the same age for all children. Children achieve toileting independence along a broad developmental spectrum influenced by neurological development, trauma history, family stressors, and access to early childhood supports. Conditioning kindergarten enrollment on toileting status fails to reflect this reality and risks delaying educational engagement for children who would otherwise benefit from early learning environments.

Although HB 2486 includes exceptions for children with an individualized education program (IEP), a Section 504 plan, or a verified medical condition, these safeguards do not adequately protect many children whose needs have not yet been formally identified. Children involved in the child welfare system, children who have experienced trauma or instability, and children from families with limited access to pediatric or developmental care may not meet these narrow exceptions despite clear developmental need.

Requiring parents to provide written assurances of toilet training or medical verification places additional administrative and financial burdens on families already facing systemic barriers. In practice, this may delay or deny access to kindergarten for children most in need of stability and routine.

HB 2486 also fails to consider the practical realities of foster care. Foster parents in Kansas are required to be gainfully employed, and many rely on access to public education and early childhood programs to maintain stable employment. Children entering foster care have often experienced significant trauma, which is well documented to contribute to developmental delays, including delays in toilet training.



By conditioning kindergarten enrollment on toileting status, this bill may unintentionally remove access to educational supports that foster families depend on. This creates a real risk of destabilizing placements or discouraging families from accepting placements altogether. Policies that reduce flexibility for families caring for high-needs children undermine the state's broader goals around child and family well-being.

HB 2486 authorizes school districts to determine that a child is "not toilet trained" based on the frequency of accidents and their perceived impact on peers. This standard is inherently subjective and likely to vary widely across classrooms and districts. The bill further authorizes districts to remove a child from kindergarten and reintegrate the child only once the child is deemed toilet trained.

This approach raises serious concerns about consistency, fairness, and procedural safeguards for families. Removal from kindergarten should be a last resort, not a mechanism for addressing developmental delays.

While the bill references referrals to counselors or social workers, these supports are not uniformly available or funded across districts. Schools should function as an access point for identification and support, not as a gatekeeping system that excludes children until they meet rigid developmental benchmarks.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to oppose HB 2486. Rather than restricting access to kindergarten based on toileting status, Kansas should invest in early childhood supports and school-based resources that meet children where they are developmentally and strengthen families' ability to care for them.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kristalle Hedrick

A business card for Kristalle Hedrick, LMSW, Chief Executive Officer of Children's Alliance of Kansas. The card features a circular portrait of Kristalle Hedrick on the left. To the right of the portrait, her name and title are listed, followed by contact information: address (627 SW Topeka Blvd, Topeka KS 66603), phone number (785) 764-7465, email (khedrick@childally.org), and website (www.childally.org). The Children's Alliance of Kansas logo is positioned to the right of the contact information. Below the logo is a circular seal that reads "CERTIFIED SWAPP LEADER". At the bottom of the card, the text "Individualization | Relator | Strategic | Futuristic | Responsibility" is displayed.