

Proponent Testimony of SB 338
For the Senate Education Committee
January 21, 2026
Jennifer Woodward
The Homeschool Community

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony in support of Senate Bill 338 on behalf of the homeschool community.

My name is Jennifer Woodward and my family has been homeschooling for a decade now. We have enjoyed the freedoms that the state of Kansas has provided us to pursue activities that build and strengthen our children's development and character. Since before any of our three children were of school age, a friend shared a homeschooling blog with me that I looked forward to reading each day during naptime. This resource led to a variety of books on education that I devoured as well as veteran homeschool examples to glean from. Over the past 10 years I have learned and grown as an educator seeing that progress in a child's education is marked by growth, memorable experiences and a desire to come back for more. We didn't know that we would become homeschoolers, but the closer we got to that kindergarten milestone, the more it made sense that our home was where we wanted to learn. A few people we knew homeschooled and we went on the free invitation for parents of preschoolers to the Midwest Parent Educators spring conference. We learned that by age 7 we needed to register our school with the state of KS. We did and jumped in excited about this adventure to direct our children's learning. Those first few years it was mostly me following lessons and creating hands on activities. We had lots of time to read, to explore outside, to visit with family. Our daily reading time brought other worlds and times into our living room. We joined other families for hikes and nature journaling to bring science in through all our senses. We roadtripped to MO and IL to see grandparents and great grandparents which has made our children flexible, social, and considerate. Now we are relying more and more on our wider community to enhance the children's education. In middle school we utilize co-ops and online classes to round out our lessons. We have a club that meets in the spring to listen and discuss whichever Shakespeare play is going to be presented in J.C. Nichols Park in Kansas City. It was one of the best compliments last summer to chat with another attendee about our group and for him to say that he could tell our children knew what was happening in the play. They weren't there just being entertained, they were engaged with the content. The last few Februarys we've come here with friends during Homeschool Capitol Day. We have meet our Senator and Representative. This day has become a tradition for us that has made Topeka and the Capitol building familiar. Our teenage girls now volunteer on this day to help other homeschool families get accustomed to the building and put them at ease when meeting their legislators. They have both paged for our Senator. I can tell our Senator nearly has celebrity status among the children because of the enthusiasm they express when we've seen her at the Capitol or if I mention having run into her out and about in our city. All this is to say

that the proposed definition for homeschoolers stating that we “direct the private instruction of our children” is a way to clearly define and reflect the realities of homeschoolers. The verb direct encompasses the many avenues in which our homeschool community accomplishes the goal of educating our children. Direct like manage, delegate, and oversee illustrates that there are many ways we support our children often by calling upon our community to join us for clubs and classes, to find tutors, to participate in groups and co-ops while also performing individual activities on our own. Kansas has a fabulous reputation for homeschool freedoms. We see you have the ability to continue that reputation by clearly defining home school in a way that reflects the reality of our community. Thank you for your time.