



Oral Neutral Testimony on
HB 2444,
Mental Health Intervention Team program
In
House K12 Education Budget
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Madam Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to appear as neutral on HB 2444, which places the Mental Health Intervention Team program in statute.

KASB's 286 member districts representing nearly 500,000 Kansas children have legislative priorities that support efforts to address student mental health issues. We are grateful to Rep. Landwehr, the legislature, and the Governor for establishing the very successful MHIT pilot program, expanding it, and continuing to fund it through budget provisos. This program saves lives. Establishing the program in state law would remove the year-to-year budget uncertainty associated with a pilot program, and we support that intent.

We have reservations, however, with the bill's apparent preference for a single provider entity tasked with delivering services in each of the 286 school districts in Kansas. Many of our districts have partnerships with local community mental health centers in addition to other providers such as Children's Mercy in the Kansas City area, rural health centers, community health centers, and other local nonprofit providers. KASB's long-standing policy preference for local control over school district matters prompts us to urge the committee to consider amending HB 2444 to allow flexibility in the type and number of qualified providers under the MHIT program.

If these concerns are addressed KASB will be able to support HB 2444.

Thank you, and I'll stand for questions at the appropriate time.

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.

Kansas Association of School Boards

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