



Keys for Networking, Inc.

Kansas Parent Information and Resource Center • www.keys.org

The State Organization of the Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health

February 2, 2012

Chairman Kiegerl and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am the director of Keys for Networking, Inc. We are the statewide nonprofit that assists parents who have children who have or who are at high risk of serious emotional disabilities.

As director of Keys for Networking I am a proponent of HB 2444. I am here with two parents who will help explain why guidelines are not strong enough. We hoped practice would change and I am sure in many places it has. Keys for Networking supports HB 2444 because seclusion and restraint, when practiced by untrained people, causes emotional and physical trauma. Districts and schools within districts may choose to follow or disregard the guidelines.

Our agency has witnessed remarkable changes in many districts/schools in the last three years. Parents are here today to talk about changes made at Atchison, USD 409 and Seaman, USD 345. Teams from these two districts have worked for months, years actually, to reframe their work with students who were formerly identified as "unteachable and unwelcome in the schools." For both of their children, mental health and school staff connect the resources of both agencies to support the child. Mental health experts provide training to the school and to the child's teachers specific to promoting peer relationships, learning social cues, managing impulsive behaviors and monitoring medication side effects. Teachers work closely with parents to practice the same discipline techniques and reward structures in both home and school.

Cherrie and Janette will talk to you about how avoiding seclusion and restraint and substituting teacher/parent training in positive behavior supports just works. They can also talk to you about how long and how hard it was to put all this in place. We had guidelines. We need regulations so that the expectations are clear when-- children are ill, we take good care of them. Thank you for listening to me. I came because I wanted to help you see what happens when good practice, research demonstrated practices are in place. I would like to introduce

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Thank you for allowing me to testify today. I am Cherrie Reynolds. I drove from Atchison to support HB 2444. I want to tell you why these regulations are so important.

My adopted son, Jacob, is 16. He is halfway through his first year of high school at Atchison High School. We are very proud that he is in this school. Jacob has physical and mental health and developmental problems. He has a pacemaker and is diagnosed with Asperger's and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Several years ago, Jacob was the victim of repeated seclusions and restraint that were delivered by untrained people. He was constantly restrained. They did not believe me when I said he had a pacemaker and manhandling him could kill him. In fact he had to do all his work from a closet. One day a substitute put her hands on him. She had never seen his IEP that said under no circumstances should he be touched. She had no training to work with him. She got hurt. He went to the Atchison County Jail, at the age of 9. His wonderful probation officer helped us. We found a residential placement for him at Marillac. They helped us.

Marillac staff worked closely with Atchison, USD 409. Under the capable direction of Dr. David Meyers, Special Education Director, Marillac staff led by Annie Erickson (his therapist) and Dr. Cooley from Wyandot Mental Health Center, Jacob is now on grade level and is in real school all day. He has been on the honor roll for two years.

This was a long and expensive process. We had to threaten due process before the school would recognize that his behaviors and his inability to learn were a direct result of his disabilities.

Marillac staff met with the school staff. Atchison staff visited the program at Marillac to learn how to work with Jacob. We developed a shared IEP. Slowly we transitioned him home for half days, then whole days with some refresher days. We developed a meaningful, long Individual Education Program, used functional behavioral assessment to write a behavior intervention plan and Marillac trained us all in how to use it. We needed the guidelines and we used them. In our case they worked.

A lot of money would have been saved had we had regulations so this could be done right the first time. I like many parents was afraid and unable to challenge the district without the help of advocates at Keys for Networking. I did not even know I could. I was told he could not and should not ever be in public school.

I am here to ask you to pass this bill so that regulations will protect teachers and students. I now serve on the Board of Directors for Keys for Networking, I have taken calls and helped other parents through this process. We really need help to help our children. We need regulations. Thank you for allowing me to testify today on behalf of this bill.

OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT

ATCHISON MIDDLE SCHOOL

STUDENT NAME: Reynolds, Jacob Morgan

301 North 5th
Atchison, KS 66002
913-367-3363

CONFIDENTIAL BIRTH DATE: 11/26/1995

	SEMESTER 1	SEMESTER 2	SEMESTER 1	SEMESTER 2
10-11 Atchison Middle School				
Communications 8	C- 1.00			
IRC Algebra 8A	B 1.00			
IRC Am. History 8A	B 1.00			
IRC English 8A	B+ 1.00			
IRC Reading 8A	B+ 1.00			
IRC Science 8A	A- 1.00			
IRC SIP 8A	A- 1.00			
Physical Fitness 8	B 1.00			
09-10 Atchison Middle School				
Art 7 I		B- 1.00		
Braves Lab 7		P 0.00		
IRC Language Arts 7B		B- 1.00		
IRC Pre-Algebra 7B		B 1.00		
IRC Reading 7B		C- 1.00		
IRC Science 7B		B+ 1.00		
IRC SIP 7B		B- 1.00		
IRC Social St. 7B		B 1.00		
Phys Ed 7		A+ 1.00		
08-09 Atchison Alternative School				
*Reading 6	B 1.00			
IRC Resources 6	D 1.00			
Language Arts 6	B 0.25			
Math 6	F 0.25			
Science 6	F 0.25			
Social Studies 6	C+ 0.00			
A = 4.00 B = 5.00 C = 2.00 D = 1.00 F = 0.00 PAS = Passing NC = No Credit				

Days Present 155.000/178