



Kansas Children's Service League

Giving Kids Our Best. For Over 100 Years.

**Testimony to the Senate Education Committee  
on Senate Bill No. 278  
January 31, 2012**

Chairperson Schodorf and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Kansas Children's Service League, I thank you for the opportunity to share this written information related to the implementation of Senate Bill No. 278.

The mission of the Kansas Children's Service League is "to protect and promote the well-being of children." We are supportive of schools taking action to address bullying. Although bullying is generally a form of peer-to-peer child abuse, it can also include teacher-student bullying and student-teacher bullying. Bullying is a priority of Prevent Child Abuse America, our national organization and a priority of our agency. The Kansas Children's Service League has implemented the BullySafe model with SuEllen Fried, a former member of our Board of Directors, in the Blue Valley, De Soto, Great Bend, Holcomb, Kaw Valley and Olathe School Districts with great results. This is a Rutgers-evaluated program which features student empowerment sessions and the creation of bullying prevention school building action plans. Currently, the University of Kansas Institute for Educational Research and Public Service is evaluating the BullySafe work being done in Kansas.

We believe that KSA 72-8256, which was passed in 2006 and amended in 2007 to include cyberbullying, gave Kansas a good start towards addressing bullying behaviors in our public schools. However, the statute needs revision to keep up with current best practices and to ensure that all Kansas schools are in compliance. We believe broader involvement in developing local policies would produce increased buy-in and improved implementation. Therefore, we agree with the change in SB 278 which moves from the Superintendent developing the district bullying plan in 72-8256 to parents, employees, students, administrators, volunteers and community representation on the policy committee in SB 278.

We are also aware that one of the deficiencies of KSA 72-8256 is its lack of accountability. We agree that there need to be increased accountability measures in Kansas bullying prevention legislation. We understand that increasing reporting requirements can create additional effort, and although the requirements in the bill seem reasonable to us and consistent with policies and practices that should already be in place to address other types of prohibited (damaging and inappropriate) behaviors, we would defer to the Department of Education to recommend reasonable accountability practices for inclusion in this legislation. We also support the expanded definition of "bullying" from KSA 72-8256 to SB 278. SB 278 uses the language "Kansas public schools," and we recommend it read "all Kansas schools."

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony related to the impact of Senate Bill 278. We would be happy to provide additional details as requested.

Dona Booe, President and CEO  
Kansas Children's Service League  
785.274.3100  
[dbooe@kcsl.org](mailto:dbooe@kcsl.org)

*Sen. Ed Connor  
1-31-12  
attach. 13*