



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

March 8, 2012

Senator Schodorf 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

Cherrie Reynolds
1013 Parallel Street
Atchison, Kansas 66002
913-426-2489

Janette Keil
5347 NW Lincoln
Topeka, Kansas 66618
785-224-6530

2348 SW Topeka Boulevard, 2nd Floor • Topeka, Kansas 66611

785-233-8732 • 800-499-8732 • FAX 785-235-6659

www.facebook.com/keys4networking